

HIGHLIGHTS TO COMMUNICATE ON THE  
**NEA POLICY STATEMENT ON TEACHER EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Presented by the NEA Work Group on Educator Excellence

- Last fall, President Van Roekel challenged NEA leaders across the organization to bring their best thinking on the major education policy issues facing us as an organization.
- A group of leaders representing several states, large urban locals, the Resolutions committee and the NEA Board, came together to do just that. They formed the Workgroup on Educator Excellence – affectionately called WEE – comprising state leaders, presidents and execs from:
  - KY, UT, TN, IL, PA, CA and CT
  - As well as
    1. Tony Crawford of Oregon who represented the Resolutions Committee
    2. Chris Maza of Arizona representing NCUEA
    3. And Jody Doshier of Colorado representing the NEA Board
    4. CTA president-elect Dean Vogel and myself served as co-chairs
    5. NEA General Counsel Alice O'Brien as staff lead
- Over several weeks, this Group reviewed existing NEA policies, third-party research and analyses on Teacher Evaluation and Accountability in order to inform its thinking.
- The Group gave considerable analysis to state-based developments on evaluation, the use of multiple indicators in those evaluations including student growth, tenure or non-probationary status, dismissal, and other matters.
- **\*For Internal Conversations with Resolutions Committee members/delegates\***  
The RA has intentionally defined Resolutions and Policy Statements differently. They serve two different purposes. According to the RA (Standing Rule 10) Resolutions are meant to be **broad** in nature, **positively stated**, and **concise**. On the other hand, Policy Statements are designed to address complex matters in a detailed and comprehensive way.
- Tony Crawford, resolutions chairperson (who served on the workforce) provided a great deal of guidance to the workgroup and in most cases the resolutions and the policy statement are in accord.
- The Policy Statement aligns and updates our current policies as reflected in our resolutions, legislative program and other documents.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POLICY DOCUMENT - 10 key points**

1. The policy statement puts the focus on what is best for the **student** and the profession of teaching.

2. It puts NEA on the record, for the first time, as calling for a comprehensive overhaul of both teacher evaluation and accountability systems to advance **student** learning
3. The Policy Statement establishes a broad framework for improving teacher evaluation and accountability systems. It leaves to local bargaining, where available, or state and local affiliates, the decisions as to how to proceed within that framework, including the weight any particular component should bear.
4. It includes **student** learning and growth indicators as one of 3 key components of the evaluation system as measured by indicators chosen at the state or local level.
5. States and locals decide what indicators to use for all three components. For example, states and locals can decide to use – or not use – standardized tests to measure student growth. The Policy Statement would support a state or local choice to use such tests, if, and only if, the standardized tests are valid, reliable, high quality and meaningfully measure student learning and growth.
6. It protects students assigned to struggling teachers by calling for accomplished teachers to work with the struggling teachers.
7. It provides for the acquisition of career status only if a teacher meets or exceeds expectations on his or her evaluation. It also allows teachers who meet or exceed expectations to challenge a district's refusal to grant career status.
8. Once a teachers has career status, she or he cannot lose that status based on evaluations, but can be subject to a fair dismissal process.
9. It calls for a well-designed system for improving a struggling teacher's practice. Should that teacher not improve within a specific time, the policy statement provides for a fair and expedient dismissal process.
10. And the policy statement calls for support for beginning teachers so that they will not just stay and survive, but thrive in the profession.

### **Why Approve this Statement?**

- Here is what I think you will find:
  - You will find Policy Statement that is bold but true to our values.
  - You will find the Statement provides for systems that honor and support the complexity of teaching.
  - You will find flexibility to meet local conditions, but no compromise on the role of our Association and the voice of our members.

- You will find ideas that firmly reposition our organization as in charge of the profession we love.
- This issue – teacher evaluation and accountability – has increasingly become the defining issue of our time.
- People out there who have no respect for teachers, for unions, or for students needs are using ridiculous teacher accountability schemes as clubs to beat down our members and eviscerate the profession.
- We cannot let that happen. The Policy Statement offers an alternative vision for a better path for our schools, education policy and the country.
- I look forward to hearing your views about this and to our discussion. I hope you will support the Policy Statement.

### **Process (for May Superweek)**

- The NEA Executive Committee has reviewed the Policy Statement and recommends its approval.
- The NEA Board will discuss and vote on the Policy Statement in executive session on Saturday.
- Should the Board approve the Policy Statement it will go to the RA for final action.

### **Why this Policy Statement**

- Within the past 2 years, 24 states have moved to reform teacher evaluation and accountability systems. States have done so in one of two ways: with approaches that threaten students, the teaching profession and schools...or with thoughtfulness that promises high quality systems.
- Frankly, millions of NEA members and their students are being dealt badly crafted laws.
- In addition, NEA policies do not give sufficient guidance to help us navigate the challenging and complex environment we are in – at the national, and state and local level.
- NEA state leaders have demanded more. They asked that NEA become clear and prominent in the current debate. State leaders called for NEA to be bold in articulating ideas and inserting itself into and leading discussions to advance the interests of members and students.
- That call has prompted NEA to work with states on a series of actions, and among these was a process to look into a critical issue: teacher evaluation and accountability.

- We know that the focus on teacher evaluation and accountability is just one part of a broader goal: We intend to take control of the profession of teaching from those who aim to de-professionalize it. NEA aims to reverse that course – and give teaching new respect, put more control of the profession into the hands of the teachers, and take teaching to new levels of professionalism.
- As we move forward, our union will be known for advancing the ideas that support a profession composed of individuals who meet the highest standards, who are deeply involved in the continual improvement of their own professions, and who focus entirely on the success of the students they teach. Our members deserve no less.
- At its May 7 meeting, the Board took action to recommend the Policy Statement to the 2011 Representative Assembly for final approval.