



# NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## RACIAL EQUITY LANGUAGE REVIEW

### Progress Report



June 2019  
Internal Language Review  
Stakeholder Group

## Table of Contents

I.	<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	3
II.	<b>The Need for Racial Equity Language Review</b> .....	5
III.	<b>The Stakeholder Group, Its Charge and Its Work</b> .....	7
IV.	<b>Timeline and Key Activities</b> .....	8
V.	<b>Goals</b> .....	9
VI.	<b>Assessment Process</b> .....	10
VII.	<b>Reviewing Relevant History</b> .....	11
VIII.	<b>Research Data</b> .....	12
IX.	<b>Language Options</b> .....	13
X.	<b>Impact Analysis</b> .....	14
XI.	<b>Next Steps</b> .....	16
	Attachment A: Language Review Stakeholder Group Members	17
	Attachment B: A Language Equity Review Tool (“ALERT Tool”)	19
	Attachment C: Stakeholder Group Questionnaire Data	23
	Attachment D: Resources	25

## **I. Executive Summary**

This report describes the progress of an internal language review, currently underway, to assess the terms we use to name, and communicate about, the racial and ethnic identities of Association members.

NEA's membership has a strong and growing commitment to advance racial justice in education, challenge institutional racism, and interrupt patterns of white supremacy. To honor this commitment, the Association wants to be sure that the language and terms we use related to race and ethnicity are respectful, inclusive, equitable, and unifying.

NEA is actively conducting an internal language review to determine if current terms the Association uses are the most appropriate and effective, or whether new terms are needed.

This process, set in motion at the beginning of 2018 by NEA's Center for Governance and the Executive Committee, with thought partnership and guidance from Race Forward, is now being led by an Internal Language Review Stakeholder Group.

The Stakeholder Group is composed of three dozen highly respected and very diverse union leaders from around the country. And a sub-group, or Working Group, has been engaged in some deeper analysis, using a systematic process for learning about the history of NEA's terminology, examining the changing contemporary context, reviewing existing language, exploring possible alternative language, and assessing racial impacts of different terms.

From the outset, the Stakeholder Group decided to focus on reviewing terms related to racial identities. The term "ethnic minority" has historically and internally served the organization well. But there have been growing critiques of the terms "ethnic" and "minority," with varying degrees of preference often based on age, race, and geography. At the same time, alternative terms such as a "people of color" also have many detractors, as well as proponents, for a variety of reasons.

The process for reviewing different terms has not been easy, nor was it designed to be. We knew going in that there were widely divergent viewpoints, that deeper understanding and trust would need to be built, and that there was not a clear roadmap or timeframe for an outcome. The terms were not just about identity, but also about representation, resources, and power. Navigating these complexities meant that we would truly have to make the road by walking it, trusting in a participatory process, and letting go of an immediate destination.

At the same time, much progress has already been made and we are clearly moving forward. The Language Review Stakeholder Group now has:

- A clear and collectively developed set of goals.
- A new Language Equity Review Tool and experience piloting it.
- A deeper understanding of relevant NEA history.
- A list of existing and proposed language options.

- A new set of data about the language options, derived from the Stakeholder Group Questionnaire.
- Racial impact assessments of a variety of race-related terms.

Perfect terms have yet to emerge and may not even exist. In fact, all of the terms the Stakeholder Group has considered and assessed thus far have significant pros and cons. This has pointed to the need for taking more time and seeking wider member input.

Most recently, NEA's Center for Communications has spearheaded a two-pronged research effort involving a Member Survey and In-Depth Member Interviews. Thousands of surveyed members will have the opportunity to respond to the language options generated by the Stakeholder Group. This data, once fully completed and compiled, will provide a wealth of new information to inform their analysis going forward.

The Stakeholder Group is committed to taking the time it needs to continue engaging in a thoughtful and participatory process. At this point, all options remain open—continuing to use existing terms, using new terms, using some combination of existing and new terms for different purposes, or other possibilities. The Group is committed to creating both a process and an outcome that is racially equitable, inclusive, and unifying.

In the year ahead, the work involves completing the final steps of the assessment tool. The Working Group will use the new data to inform decision-making, narrow the options, and conduct further racial impact analyses. This will lead to a recommended option for moving forward, along with development of implementation plans.

The hope and expectation of this continuing language review process is to create and model new ways NEA may speak and act with greater clarity, unity, and power to advance racial justice in education.

## II. The Need for Racial Equity Language Review

In 2015, when the NEA membership approved at its Representative Assembly the New Business Item on Institutional Racism (2015 RA NBI-B), it compelled the Association to more explicitly address race in both its internal-facing and external-facing work. NEA's Center for Social Justice has since launched the Racial Justice in Education initiative to proactively and strategically advance racial equity, inclusion, and unity in schools and communities, as well as in the Association. In 2018, the membership affirmed and strengthened its resolve to root out racism by committing to interrupting prevalent patterns of white supremacy culture.

Working to advance racial justice must often begin with normalizing of conversations about race—taking what is often hidden and avoided and making it an explicit part of our everyday work. Indeed, we must *illuminate* racism in order to *eliminate* racism. As we engage in necessary and often uncomfortable conversations, having appropriate language to talk constructively and inclusively about racial identities and racial impacts is a critical part of moving the work forward.

Words have tremendous power and impact—especially those associated with individual and group identities. And meanings can shift over time with changing social conditions. Words can create harmful or helpful labels, messages, and stories. They can define realities and identities that can profoundly impact people's lives. The stakes are real, and the stakeholders are many. The language we use shapes organizational culture and narratives, so it must be approached thoughtfully and strategically.

We need language that works well within and across our many racial groupings, with appeal to our newest members and our most seasoned ones, and to those in our own internal ranks and well as our external partners and social justice movement allies. There's a need for unifying and umbrella terms to connect different communities. At the same time, each community has distinct characteristics, compositions, cultures and histories which need to be understood, respected, and not lost in general or universal terminology.

NEA recognizes the importance of each individual and community being able to self-identify with their own terms. We are also committed to honoring our historic and current commitments to maintain and strengthen ethnic/racial representation goals, such as those provided by Bylaw 3-1(g), which states:

*It is the policy of the Association to achieve ethnic-minority delegate representation at least equal to the proportion of identified ethnic-minority populations within the state. Prior to December 1 of each fiscal year, each state affiliate shall submit to the NEA Executive Committee for its approval a legally permissible plan which is designed to achieve a total state and local delegation to the Representative Assembly held that fiscal year which reflects these ethnic-minority proportions. If a state affiliate fails to submit such a plan, the NEA Executive Committee fails to approve a plan which is submitted, or a state affiliate fails to comply with an approved plan, the Representative Assembly may deny to the delegates from the state affiliate any right to participate in the NEA Representative Assembly at the Annual Meeting other than to (i) participate in elections for Association officers and (ii) vote on increases in Association*

*membership dues. Local affiliates shall comply with the approved plan of the state affiliate, and if a local affiliate fails to do so, the right of its delegates to participate in the NEA Representative Assembly at the Annual Meeting may be limited as indicated above. The failure of a state or local affiliate to comply with the provisions of this Bylaw shall in addition be grounds for censure, suspension, or expulsion pursuant to Bylaw 6-5.*

The task of reviewing and recommending appropriate language is not simply an exercise in wordsmithing. In fact, language related to race and ethnicity is, fundamentally, about who we are in our Association, in our schools and communities, and in our broader society.

The purpose and need for this language review process is to ensure that NEA uses inclusive, strategic, and effective language and communications, both internally and externally, to reflect its full membership, mission, and aspirations.

### III. The Stakeholder Group, Its Charge and Its Work

NEA created an Internal Language Review Stakeholder Group to engage in a new process of assessing terminology and language, especially related to racial justice, social justice, inclusion, and equity. The Stakeholder Group was initially charged with the following tasks:

- To align our words and actions with our organizational values, priorities, and aspirations.
- To consciously, actively, and continually counteract implicit bias.
- To reduce, minimize, and prevent harm, exclusion, and inequities.
- To ensure that stakeholders, especially those most marginalized, are actively and authentically engaged in needed change efforts.
- To affirmatively review, and if needed, change language and culture to advance racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion.

The Stakeholder Group was thoughtfully created and composed to ensure inclusion by race, gender, age, region, positions, experience, sexual orientation, and other important characteristics. It includes leaders from various affiliate and ethnic-minority caucuses. Notably, there was also intentionality to select stakeholders who had diverse and divergent viewpoints about the Association's language. Because the initial language review task focused on addressing language related to race and ethnicity, preference was given to having an overwhelming majority representative of those most impacted by racism from different racial and ethnic groups.

Some White anti-racist leaders were also included for a variety of reasons. First, in an Association with a majority White membership committed to building a truly effective anti-racist and multiracial organization, we need White people actively engaged in this work. Second, White people can learn alongside people of color so that they may expand their skills and competencies working on equity and inclusion. Third, the use of the language assessment tool being tested, over time, will not be limited to racial terms. It is designed to have wide and future application and could be used to assess different kinds of terms, identities and power dynamics, such as those related to gender identity and sexual orientation. Engaging a wide variety of stakeholders could better serve the Association's aspiration to grow and change.

We also chose to engage some external partners at the initial convening of the Stakeholder Group, to learn from their experience and expertise around language matters. While these external partners will not be deeply engaged throughout the process, they will continue to be available, as needed, for further consultation.

To help foster more productiveness, a Working Group of the broader Stakeholder Group has also been selected for deeper work and engagement. The broader Internal Language Review Stakeholder Group serves as thought partners in designing and testing a process for reviewing language to ensure that it is inclusive, equitable, and strategically aligned with NEA's mission and goals. The Working Group is a subgroup focused on piloting the use of a new assessment tool for reviewing the term "ethnic minorities" and related terms, generating and assesses language options, and identifying future activities for engaging stakeholders.

A list of the full Stakeholder Group membership is included in **Attachment A**.

#### IV. Timeline and Key Activities

Timeframe	Activities
Q1 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center for Governance and Executive Committee initiate language review process, responding to member concerns about language.</li> <li>• NEA engages Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation as a thought partner and process facilitator for this work.</li> <li>• Language review planning meeting with Executive Committee.</li> <li>• Design language review process.</li> </ul>
Q2 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and recruit Language Review Stakeholder Group.</li> <li>• Develop draft assessment tool called A Language Equity Review Tool (“ALERT Tool”).</li> </ul>
Q3 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-day national convening of full Stakeholder Group, September 2018.</li> <li>• Revise ALERT Tool based on Stakeholder Group feedback.</li> </ul>
Q4 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Working Group of Stakeholder Group.</li> <li>• Conduct Stakeholder Group questionnaire.</li> </ul>
Q1 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile data from Stakeholder Group questionnaire.</li> <li>• Two-day national convening of Working Group to pilot the ALERT Tool and generate and assess language options.</li> </ul>
Q2 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct webinar, led by Working Group, to share progress and findings with Stakeholder Group.</li> <li>• Begin work on designing member survey on language options.</li> <li>• Prepare Language Review Progress Report.</li> </ul>



## **V. Goals**

### **Language Review Goals Developed by Stakeholder Group**

1. To advance NEA's mission, core values and goals, while pursuing a racially just world. (NEA mission: "to advocate for educational professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.")
2. To support our membership mandate to advance racial justice in education, challenge institutional and structural racism, and interrupt white supremacy, and to honor our history and to strengthen strategies and policies to promote the representation and equitable power of ethnic minorities, such as Bylaw 3-1(g).
3. To be inclusive, equitable, and respectful to build strength and power, without doing any harm.
4. To recognize and support communities most directly and adversely affected by white supremacy and to unite within and across our communities to build a cohesive social movement.
5. To respect the right of individual ethnic and racial communities to identify themselves and to achieve self-determination, even when umbrella terms are used for the purpose of including and uniting different communities.
6. To reflect on the narrative, culture, aspirations, and values of our members and students. And then, to effectively educate and communicate with diverse internal and external audiences, with relevance and responsiveness to changing times and conditions.

## VI. Assessment Process

In order to utilize a systematic and participatory process for reviewing, assessing and generating language options with a racial equity lens, Race Forward created a customized tool called A Language Equity Review Tool (“ALERT Tool”).

The tool is based upon Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs) which are designed to explicitly address racial equity and racial impacts in decision-making processes in order to maximize opportunities to advance equity and inclusion, while mitigating negative racial impacts. REIAs are modeled after Environmental Impact Statements where you try to thoughtfully consider and predict impacts on the front end of decision-making, in order to prevent problems on the back end. Using racial equity tools is an effective way to help counteract implicit bias, by consciously and routinely considering race when making all kinds of decisions.

The ALERT Tool involves the following ten steps. Each step involves answering and analyzing different questions.

Step 1: Identify Language to be Reviewed and Developed

Step 2: Identify and Engage Stakeholders

Step 3: Clarify Purpose

Step 4: Collect Data and Conduct Analysis

Step 5. Brainstorm Options/Solutions

Step 6: Assess Racial Impacts

Step 7: Decide Best Option

Step 8: Craft New Language

Step 9: Develop Implementation Plan

Step 10: Develop Evaluation Plan

When using racial equity tools such as the ALERT tool, *what* you are considering—the questions, content, or substance you are analyzing-- is only one part of the equation. *Who* is doing the deliberating—the stakeholders involved, especially those most affected by the decision being considered—is also essential. And *how* you engage—the process and pace of the language review—also matters because you want the means and ends you are pursuing to be in alignment with the values of equity and inclusion.

The full ALERT Tool is included in **Attachment B**.

## VII. Reviewing Relevant History

In order to provide historical context for the language review, the Working Group engaged in two sessions devoted to history.

The first session involved the posting of a history timeline which included 60 images and events. Brief summaries of each event were read aloud. The timeline focused on the construction of race in the United States, and important race-related events in NEA's own history. Working Group members contributed to the timeline by identifying actions they were connected to that either helped disrupt, or contribute to, racism. Then participants considered the impact and implications of this history, and how to use it to move the work of NEA forward.

The second history session featured a presentation by Dr. Al-Tony Gilmore, the former manager and senior program officer of the Leadership, Training and Development Programs at NEA; the Historian and Archivist Emeritus of NEA; and author of *All the People: NEA's Legacy of Inclusion and its Minority Presidents* (2008), and *A Biographical Directory of the Presidents and Directors of NEA and the ATA* (2011). Dr. Gilmore presented an etymology of the terms "people of color" and "ethnic minorities," background on the National Education Association–American Teachers Association merger, the beginning of NEA's ethnic-minority caucuses, the adoption of Bylaw 3-1(g) addressing ethnic-minority representation in governance, and other important milestones. He suggested we use a three-pronged framework for analysis by examining strategy, precision, and disaggregation.

Some highlights and takeaways from these history discussions include:

- There have been moments in NEA history when we have badly missed opportunities to disrupt structural racism. For example: During the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954, NEA was largely silent and did not file an *amicus* brief nor issue a public statement explicitly supporting the landmark Supreme Court decision. Because of NEA's disunity about race at the time, it took seven years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision for NEA to muster the support to pass a resolution explicitly supporting it at the 1961 Representative Assembly.
- We are up against a lot. Conscious, intentional practices and policies by many institutions—including many unions—constructed race and racism for nearly 400 years in the US. Racism is deeply entrenched.
- Principled, courageous leadership and unity were required for NEA and other organizations to periodically disrupt structural racism and the white supremacy culture that has been baked into it.
- When principled, courageous leadership and unity were largely missing, NEA missed some critical opportunities to advance racial justice.
- When NEA showed courageous leadership (e.g., adoption of NBI B on Institutional Racism; I-50. White Supremacy Culture) it positioned NEA to lead on racial justice.

## VIII. Research Data

A variety of instruments and strategies have been used and are being developed to collect data on existing and possible language options. These include the following:

1. **National Convenings:** The full Stakeholder Group and a smaller Working Group have held two national convenings, both two-days long, where a variety of ideas and perspectives were shared and collected.
2. **Stakeholder Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was developed and distributed to all Stakeholder Group members to gather ideas and responses regarding different terms related to race and ethnicity. The questionnaire was instrumental in generating the list of language options that were subsequently considered and analyzed.
3. **Member Survey:** A scientifically-designed survey of **approximately 3,000** members to yield a substantial amount of useful data on preferred terms.
4. **In-Depth Member Interviews:** Several dozen members from different racial groups will be selected via recommendation and randomization, to acquire deeper perspectives on a variety of race-related terms.

Goals of this research and data collection included:

- To acquire the widest range of information and ideas possible.
- To use a research process that is racially inclusive, has credibility, and fosters trust.
- To help foster needed unity among a diverse and divergent base.

## **IX. Language Options**

The Stakeholder Group generated a list of the following 15 options for consideration.

- Ethnic Minority
- People of Color
- People of Color and Native Americans (or Indigenous and People of Color)
- ALAANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native American)
- Racialized Communities
- Racially/Ethnically Diverse People of Color
- Ethnic Communities
- Racially/Ethnically Diverse People of Color
- Multiracial Communities
- Black and Brown People
- Oppressed Nationalities
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- Racial and Cultural Minorities
- Historically Marginalized Communities of Color
- Targets of Racism

*Note: The above options are not listed in any particular order of preference or popularity.*

## X. Impact Analysis

The Working Group conducted two rounds of review of language options: first in multiracial small groups, then in affinity groups by race. The groups chose whichever options they wanted to review. The groups identified pros and cons for each term.

Language Option Reviewed	Pros	Cons
<b>Ethnic Minorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term has been unifying in NEA</li> <li>• Honors history, struggle and elders in NEA, honors merger</li> <li>• Exists in NEA documents, budgets and structures -- Keeping the term helps maintain guarantees in existing policies and budget</li> <li>• We're still a numerical minority (especially among teachers)</li> <li>• Minority is a widely used term and understood by public</li> <li>• Ethnic captures richness of API who are not monolithic Still indicative of power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaning isn't self-evident outside the union</li> <li>• Doesn't focus on race</li> <li>• This used to be a way to talk about race without saying race</li> <li>• Demeaning, minimizes our importance and dignity</li> <li>• Identifying as Black is different than identifying as ethnic</li> <li>• Makes people feel "less than"</li> <li>• Some people don't like the term (e.g. especially young people)</li> <li>• Outdated</li> </ul>
<b>People of Color</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unifying for most racial groups – brings a sense of majority unity</li> <li>• Widely used by activists/academics</li> <li>• Identifies &amp; unites targets of racism</li> <li>• Preferred by mixed race, young, activists – more appealing, relevant</li> <li>• Distinct from other marginalized groups (LGBT+, impoverished, etc.)</li> <li>• Affirmational, not minimizing</li> <li>• Better positions us with other racial justice partners</li> <li>• "Color" now more mainstream</li> <li>• Historically, race based on color</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative connotation of colors (esp. red &amp; yellow)</li> <li>• Exclusive—some racial groups don't all see themselves as POC (e.g., Native Americans)</li> <li>• Some people of African Descent don't like term POC</li> <li>• White people could claim color and disrupt this term</li> </ul>

Language Option Reviewed	Pros	Cons
<b>Native Americans &amp; POC (or Indigenous &amp; POC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets rid of term minorities</li> <li>• Covers all non-white people, harder for white to self- identify</li> <li>• Sense of majority unity &amp; power</li> <li>• Identifies those targeted by racism due to color/appearance</li> <li>• Recognizes common effects &amp; experience of systemic racism</li> <li>• Preferred by mixed race, younger, aspiring educators, partner orgs.</li> <li>• Honors Native People by naming specifically and naming first)</li> <li>• Up-to date, familiar, in common use, not new, socially acceptable</li> <li>• Gives APIC political solidarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative connotations of color (e.g. yellow, red); derogatory</li> <li>• Confusion around people of color and colored</li> <li>• Non-inclusive for some racialized groups who don't see themselves as POC, which often means Black &amp; Brown</li> <li>• Asian/Pacific Islanders excluded</li> <li>• Latin Americans also excluded</li> <li>• Asian are left out again</li> <li>• Some Native activists may view themselves separate from the movement</li> </ul>
<b>ALANA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes Arab</li> <li>• It can be used strategically when disaggregating data</li> <li>• It removes minority</li> <li>• It is precise (seeks to specifically name all larger groups.</li> <li>• Mostly inclusive—people can see themselves named in the different groups</li> <li>• It's short (we love acronyms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misses the smaller groups (e.g. Pacific Islanders)</li> <li>• Not understood or widely used</li> <li>• Can get too cumbersome</li> </ul>
<b>Racialized Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes the word minority</li> <li>• Speaks to the construct of race (by naming race)</li> <li>• Can be a strategic way to talk about institutional/structural racism</li> <li>• Could make a stronger statement about oppressiveness social construct of race</li> <li>• Explicitly speaks of race</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not inclusive</li> <li>• Appears like an imposed identity</li> <li>• Not widely used</li> <li>• People cringe when they hear the word race</li> <li>• Could be identified by white majority</li> <li>• Not clear if Native Americans/tribes included</li> <li>• Could be awkward trying to address an individual</li> <li>• Focus on imposition of race, reinforces victimhood</li> <li>• Can be an oppressive term to self-identify with.</li> </ul>

**XI. Next Steps**

The roadmap for this work continues to be developed and updated as we move forward in the process. The scope of activities and a clear ending date have yet to be determined, but the following dates and activities provide a rough outline of the next steps.

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Q3 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update RA on language review process and progress.</li> <li>• Begin member survey and member interviews on language options and compile data.</li> </ul>
<b>Q4 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage more members in providing input on the language options.</li> <li>• Report member survey and member interview findings to Stakeholder Group.</li> </ul>
<b>2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Group narrows language options and assesses impacts.</li> <li>• Develop recommendations, compile findings into final report to submit to Representative Assembly.</li> <li>• Develop plan to implement recommendations.</li> <li>• Implement recommendations.</li> </ul>



## Attachment A: Language Stakeholder Group

### Executive Committee

Name	Role
Becky Pringle	NEA Vice President, Officer Lead
George Sheridan	NEA Executive Committee Lead
Kevin Gilbert	NEA Executive Committee Lead

### Staff Leads

Name	Role
Sabrina Tines	Senior Director, NEA Center for Governance
Rocio Inclan	Senior Director, NEA Center for Social Justice
Harry Lawson	Director, NEA Human and Civil Rights
Merwyn Scott	Director, NEA Community Advocacy and Partner Engagement
Paul Birkmeier	Governance Policy Specialist, NEA Center for Governance
Ramona Oliver	Senior Director, NEA Center for Communications
Anitra Speight	Associate Director, NEA Center for Communications
Erica Seifert, PhD	NEA In-House Pollster, NEA Center for Communications
Angel Settle	Confidential, NEA Center for Governance
Elizabeth Baires	Senior Program Assistant, NEA Center for Social Justice

### External Partners

Name	Role
Derrick Johnson	NAACP (National Association for Advancement of Colored People)
Zakiya Sankara-Jabar	Dignity in our Schools
Ahniwake Rose	NIEA (National Indian Education Association)
Quyên Dinh	SEARAC (Southeast Asia Resource Center)
Tom Saenz	MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund)
Brent Johnson	Leadership Conference

### Race Forward Partners

Name	Role
Terry Keleher	Director of Strategic Innovation
Bill Pritchett	Affiliate Trainer
Rosana Cruz	Senior Fellow

(Continued on next page)

## Stakeholder Group Members

	<b>Name</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Role</b>
1.	Alfonso Salais	MI	Board
2.	Christine Sampson Clark	NJ	Board
3.	Ellen Olsen	MN	Board
4.	Shannon McCann	WA	Board
5.	Sequanna Taylor	WI	Board
6.	James Frazier	NJ	Board
7.	Ronda Mays	NC	Board
8.	Kizzy Nicholas	PA	Board
9.	Darien Spann	MS	Board
10.	Al Llorens	IL	State Officer
11.	Noel Candelaria	TX	State Officer
12.	Charles Smith	MO	State Officer
13.	Kim Mead	WA	State Officer
14.	Nick Archuleta	ND	State Officer
15.	Duff Martin	WI	State Officer
16.	Theresa Montana	CA	State Officer
17.	Marisol Garcia	AZ	State Officer
18.	Irene Maggie Amezcua	CA	NEA Member
19.	Robin McNair	MD	NEA Member
20.	Maya Walker	CA	NEA Member
21.	Angela derRamos	CA	NEA Member
22.	Gladys Marquez	IL	EMAC
23.	Charmaine Banther	CA	EMAC
24.	Cecily Myart-Cruz	CA	EMAC
25.	Tracy Hartman Bradley	NE	EMAC
26.	Frank Burger	MI	SOGI
27.	Emilly Osterling	OH	SOGI
28.	Jaim Foster	VA	SOGI
29.	Christine Kolczak	MT	SOGI
30.	Stephanie Johnson	SC	WIC
31.	Jo McKim	KY	WIC
32.	Joni Watson	OH	WIC
33.	Christine Medina	CO	WIC
34.	Rachel Immerman	KT	Aspiring Educator
35.	CarVaughn Page	TN	Aspiring Educator
36.	Teresa Dudley	MI	Resolutions
37.	Miles Carey	VA	Resolutions

## **Attachment B: A Language Equity Review Tool (“ALERT Tool”)**

**Introduction:** A Language Equity Review Tool (ALERT) is used for making assessments, recommendations, and decisions on the most appropriate terminology or language to use, especially for matters related to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. It provides a guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic.

The task of reviewing and recommending appropriate language is not simply an exercise in wordsmithing. Words carry significant meaning and power. They can create harmful or helpful labels, messages, and stories. They can define realities and identities, which can profoundly impact people’s lives. The stakes are real, and the stakeholders are many. Choosing what language to use or rolling out new changes connects to creating organizational culture, shifting dominant narratives, and strategically managing for equitable change.

### **Why do we need this tool?**

- To align our words and actions with our values, priorities, and aspirations.
- To consciously, actively, and continually counteract implicit bias.
- To reduce, minimize and prevent harm, exclusion and inequities.
- To ensure that stakeholders, especially those most marginalized, are actively and authentically engaged in needed change efforts.
- To affirmatively change language and culture to advance racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion.

**Who uses this tool?** This tool is best used by a diverse team of people from different parts of the organization, which can also include external stakeholders and partners. For each specific use of the tool, the team shall identify and engage the most relevant stakeholders, especially those most directly affected by the existing or proposed language and those most marginalized. When using equity tools, *who* is doing the assessment is as important as *what* you are assessing. An inclusive process will yield more inclusive results.

**How do you use the tool?** The tool involves a series of steps that can be followed sequentially. Each step provides questions for consideration by relevant stakeholders. Be sure to allow ample time to thoughtfully and inclusively address each step. It is not meant to be used and completed in one sitting. It often requires time to gather information and consult with various stakeholders over a series of meetings or engagements.

## Principles for Equitable Language Review

- ***Language is an expression of our core values:*** The words we use and messages we communicate reflect and project what we value most. Our words and messages can highlight our core values such as equity, inclusion, solidarity/unity, and dignity.
- ***Acknowledge that words have power—and those who choose the words have power:*** Expect this process to be contentious. Be mindful of how you use your own power in this process. And stay focused on the goal of arriving at language that helps affirm people’s identities, validate their realities, and balance and share power among many diverse and differently-situated stakeholders.
- ***Honor self-definition over imposed labels:*** People, and groups of people, need to be able to define themselves with their own terms (e.g., preferred gender pronouns and racial identities). Self-chosen identities need to be honored as much as possible, especially for marginalized people, whose identities and realities are too often defined by established powers and dominant culture.
- ***Embrace change over permanence:*** Culture and language are ever-changing. Rather than seek language and terminology that will last forever, strive to find terms that work best now, even if things are in flux and further changes may be needed on the horizon.
- ***Embrace pragmatism over perfection:*** Language is not perfect—there will be pros and cons to using certain terms. We can still do our best to figure out what works best. The sweet spot is to find terms that are principled and pragmatic, even though they may not be perfect.
- ***Embrace differences and divisions:*** Don’t expect to reach unanimity on selected language. Even people who are similarly situated and share the same identity may not agree. We can acknowledge and accommodate differences as best we can, but do not expect to fully eliminate them. At times, we will need to agree to disagree, or even tolerate something we are not fully behind.
- ***Use language to affirmatively drive equitable culture change:*** Culture change can drive language change. Or, changes in language can drive culture change (like the introduction of a new term, frame, or hashtag). A reactive or “late adopter” approach only changes once it is clearly established that certain terms have become outdated or offensive. A proactive approach or “early-adopter” approach leads with, and models, new terms and language that advance equity and inclusion in this moment.
- ***Embrace flexibility and nimbleness:*** An equitable and inclusive language review process should be a strategic, nimble, and ongoing organizational function. It requires sufficient attention, time and resources, so we can strategically change with the times. Effective language, messages, and narratives will support growth, power, and change.

## Steps for Assessing Language Equity

Step	Questions to Consider	Findings/Notes
<b>Step 1: Identify Language to be Reviewed and Reasons</b>	What language, terms, or messages need to be reviewed? What are the reasons for this review? Is there a current problem or request for change? What is the relevant history and changing contemporary context of the language under review?	
<b>Step 2: Identify and Engage Stakeholders</b>	Who is most directly affected by the language under review? Who needs to be involved or consulted, especially those who are under-represented or marginalized (e.g. different racial communities, Native Americans, LGBTQ people, students of color, new members/educators, etc.) How can each be authentically represented and meaningfully engaged in this process?	
<b>Step 3: Clarify Purpose &amp; Goals</b>	What are the specific goals of this language review? (What changes or results are you seeking? What bias, inequities, or exclusion do you seek to address? How will this review/revision advance racial and social justice?)	
<b>Step 4: Collect Data and Conduct Analysis</b>	For current or proposed language, what are the positive or negative impacts? Who benefits and who is most burdened? How are different racial/ethnic groups affected differently? If there are problems or negative impacts, what are the root causes, contributing factors or dominant narratives involved? In addition to race, what other intersectional factors need attention? How have local or state affiliates addressed this?	

<b>Step</b>	<b>Questions to Consider</b>	<b>Findings/Notes</b>
<b>Step 5: Brainstorm Options</b>	What language options will best advance equity and inclusion? How will those most disadvantaged benefit? How will this interrupt White supremacy practices? How will proposed changes align with, our mission, vision and values and increase representative democracy? How does it honor our history, while addressing current and future conditions?	
<b>Step 6: Assess Impacts</b>	What are the pros and cons of each option? What are the impacts of each option on different racial or other communities? What data can help us project impacts? Who do we need to consult with about the different proposed options?	
<b>Step 7: Decide Best Option</b>	Which option best advances equity and inclusion at this time?	
<b>Step 8: Craft new Language</b>	What terms need to be maintained, changed, or introduced? What messages do we want to convey? What new or changed narratives and images do we want to project?	
<b>Step 9: Develop Implementation Plan</b>	What course of action or change is needed (e.g. policies, resolutions, plans, style guide, etc.)? How can we foster learning and publicize changes? What mechanisms, staffing, and funding are needed to ensure success? What is the implementation plan and timetable? Who can help us move this forward?	
<b>Step 10: Develop Evaluation Plan</b>	What are the benchmarks and success indicators? How will we document and evaluate results? How will we ensure ample communication, learning, participation, and accountability?	

ALERT Tool (5/20/19)

**Attachment C: Stakeholder Questionnaire Data**

**Stakeholder Group Questionnaire Data:  
Comments on the Term “Ethnic Minority”**

<b>Support</b>	<b>Neutral/Observation</b>	<b>Oppose</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the context of who we are in NEA, we are a minority when it comes to numbers.</li> <li>• Concerned about historical context of this term being lost.</li> <li>• Various organizational guarantees associated with these words in policies and programs such as Bylaw 3-1(g), EMAC, and plan/budget.</li> <li>• If most ethnic minorities are not worried about the term, why is anyone else?</li> <li>• No problem with ethnic minority when used in terms of status in a particular situation.</li> <li>• Reminds us that we still are the minority when it comes to power and decision-making.</li> <li>• Lose “ethnic minority” and lose our reason to fight for justice for the kids we teach and our members.</li> <li>• Lose “ethnic minority” and we lose out to white supremacy.</li> <li>• Should continue to be used.</li> <li>• “Person of color” offends certain groups. i.e., Native Americans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steeped with meaning and connotations beyond the words and definition.</li> <li>• Term and usage can be different depending on location.</li> <li>• Refers to a lack of access.</li> <li>• Not offended by the term.</li> <li>• Term is nonoffensive.</li> <li>• People of other nationalities or descendants of other nationalities not of the dominant/mainstream culture.</li> <li>• Not numerically or predominant culture of a given country.</li> <li>• Tough to find a term which offends no one but can still describe situations appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdated and derogatory.</li> <li>• Offensive and derogatory.</li> <li>• We are not minorities in the global community.</li> <li>• A way to continue to keep us down.</li> <li>• A term given to those to describe inferior people.</li> <li>• Does not define anything.</li> <li>• “Ethnic” suggests references to differing ethnicities (Italian, German, Spanish, etc.) so term “ethnic minority” is deceiving.</li> <li>• No person should be given the connotation that that they are minor or have a minor role in our shared history and community.</li> <li>• Carries derogatory connotations.</li> <li>• Says you are less.</li> <li>• Indicates sense of hierarchy—of one ethnicity over another.</li> <li>• “Minority” is a word that can be a strategy to diminish and divide the power of people of color by the dominant class and race.</li> <li>• Depicts someone who is less than or inferior.</li> <li>• Would rather identify people by their preferred term and gender.</li> <li>• In a democratic society where "majority rules," labeling a group as a minority expresses a great disadvantage.</li> <li>• The classification suggests that my community lacks power.</li> <li>• Implies less than.</li> </ul>

## Stakeholder Group Questionnaire Data: Comments on the Term “People of Color”

Support	Neutral/Observation	Oppose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People-first language could suggest an empowered stance.</li> <li>• More comfortable saying “people of color” than “ethnic minorities.”</li> <li>• Prefer this term coupled with native/indigenous people.</li> <li>• Collective and empowering.</li> <li>• Does not focus on people being less (such as "minority" does).</li> <li>• Prefer this term more than "ethnic minority." The color part is significant because racism in this country is often centered around skin color and phenotype.</li> <li>• A term that is used by many authors, researchers, and scholars.</li> <li>• One should see color because society sees us as a color.</li> <li>• Is an inclusive term.</li> <li>• Politically correct; often used to not offend.</li> <li>• A more PC term.</li> <li>• More inclusive of diverse groups of people in our multi-ethnic diaspora.</li> <li>• A term that educators of color around me use and what I use to be all-encompassing.</li> <li>• Like the term when used collectively as an identifier.</li> <li>• Appreciate inclusive nature of term, appropriate for ethnicity I represent, teach, and community I live in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have used; not crazy about.</li> <li>• Most frequently used for African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos.</li> <li>• Would not use this term if I had another to use.</li> <li>• Use the term “ethnic minorities” when talking about those in NEA. Otherwise, use the ethnic term of the people I speak about.</li> <li>• Opportunity here with this term; could incorporate both “ethnic minority” and “people of color” for term such as “ethnically diverse people of color.”</li> <li>• Means anyone NOT White, excluding Native people.</li> <li>• Tend to use the word interchangeably with “minority.”</li> <li>• It isn't a person's full identity, but part. Similar to the use of a person with a disability (not a disabled person).</li> <li>• Term seems to hold fewer negative connotations when compared to the word "minority."</li> <li>• Does “people of color” reaffirm non-whiteness or does it mean “all” including white people?</li> <li>• Are we watering down our fight to end “racial justice?”</li> <li>• Aware that some Native American/Alaska Natives do not consider this term inclusive due to fact they are only group in list that has tribal sovereignty in US – for this reason, tend to say” people of color and Native people.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native Americans have clearly said they do not consider themselves people of color.</li> <li>• Could become passé as defining and self-defining continue.</li> <li>• There are ethnic groups left out due to physical appearance and we want to inclusive in our language rather than exclusive.</li> <li>• Reminds me of discrimination, hardships, and cruelties African Americans faced throughout Civil Rights Movement.</li> <li>• My Asian brothers and sisters that I know do not like the term.</li> <li>• Does not encompass Native people.</li> <li>• Too general.</li> <li>• A term given by privileged white men to show their superiority over those of color.</li> <li>• Gives impression that everyone other than “people of color” are a more elite group.</li> <li>• Concerned about the negative connotations associated with the actual colors.</li> <li>• A phraseology that some people find offensive.</li> <li>• Sounds racist and can offer a bad impression on some people.</li> <li>• Dislike it passionately!</li> <li>• Native people have issues regarding this term in that they have special political and cultural status in the realm of American identify and citizenship.</li> <li>• Ambiguous.</li> <li>• Label implies that there are people without color.</li> </ul>



## **Attachment D: Resources**

### **Readings and Resource on Race- and Ethnic-related Terminology**

*The following sample of articles provides a variety of perspectives to illustrate the complexities, controversies, and continually evolving connotations of race and ethnic related terminology. The viewpoints in the articles, listed alphabetically, reflect those of the authors and are not intended to represent the views of the Internal Language Review Stakeholder Group.*

#### **Another Hot Take on the term “Latinx”**

Concepción de León, New York Times, November 21, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/21/style/latinx-queer-gender-nonconforming.html>

#### **Are Asians People of Color?**

Amy Wang, Duke Chronicle, 9/14/2017

<https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2017/09/are-asians-people-of-color>

#### **Are we “People of Color”?**

American Indians in Children’s Literature, 12/2/12

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/p/we-are-not-people-of-color.html>

#### **Forging A Common Identity Among “People of Color”**

Gerald Lenoir, Haas Institute, April 18, 2018

<https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/21st-century-movement-building-challenge>

#### **Let’s Stop Describing Ourselves as ‘Minorities’**

Hope E. Ferguson, The Root, July 28, 2014

<https://www.theroot.com/let-s-stop-describing-ourselves-as-minorities-1790876529>

#### **We Should Stop Saying “People of Color When” we Mean “Black People”**

Joshua Adams, Medium.com, October 17, 2018

[https://medium.com/@journojoshua/we-should-stop-saying-people-of-color-when-we-mean-black-people-29c2b18e6267?fbclid=IwAR0NLSn9ObIwhXnXuUSMFXJc6sKOgH1emiWIgOHZ\\_gADndMtJvZ7S31R-wp8](https://medium.com/@journojoshua/we-should-stop-saying-people-of-color-when-we-mean-black-people-29c2b18e6267?fbclid=IwAR0NLSn9ObIwhXnXuUSMFXJc6sKOgH1emiWIgOHZ_gADndMtJvZ7S31R-wp8)

#### **Which People? How ‘people of color’ evolved from a gesture of solidarity and respect to a cover for avoiding the complexities of race**

Rachelle Hampton, Slate, Feb. 13, 2019

<https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/02/people-of-color-phrase-history-racism.html>

#### **Why Student Group MEChA’s Proposed Name Change Has Set Off a Fierce, Multi-Generational Debate**

Aaron Sanchez, Remezcla, March 2019

<https://remezcla.com/features/culture/mecha-name-change-debates/>

**Why we Need to Stop Using the Word Minority**

Erin Okuno, Fakequity, June 23, 2016

<https://fakequity.com/2016/06/23/why-we-need-to-stop-using-the-word-minority/>