

Proposed Revision of the NEA Vision, Mission and Values

A Special Report of the NEA Board of Directors for
Presentation to the 2019 Representative Assembly

The *NEA Vision, Mission and Values* have been a part of the Association since their adoption by delegates to the 2006 Representative Assembly. In response to New Business Item 59 adopted by the 2018 Representative Assembly, the NEA president has taken steps to consider revisions to the vision, mission, and values document with the following requirements set forth by NBI 59.

1. The NEA president will solicit from the membership at a variety of venues changes to the document.
2. Prior to the 2019 RA, the president or her appointees will report in writing to the NEA Board on proposed changes to the document and provide recommendations for the Board to consider.
3. The NEA Board will recommend changes to the document to be voted on by the RA delegates.



Background and Implementation

President Eskelsen García, in consultation with the senior directors for NEA Centers for Governance and Enterprise Strategy, and in partnership with members of the Executive Committee, designed a process to solicit input from members at a variety of venues through the fall, winter, and spring of the 2018–2019 fiscal year. This process began with the September Board of Directors meeting and continued at all 2018–2019 national meetings and conferences, including the NCSEA and NCUEA meetings; the Retired, Higher Education, and ESP conferences; and the Leadership Summit, where Aspiring Educators and NEA Caucus groups were encouraged to participate. In addition, an online survey allowed for feedback from Aspiring Educators and members of NEA Caucuses. Executive Committee members Robert Rodriguez and Shelly Moore Krajacic designed and conducted the engagements. Each engagement opened with a description of the history and rigor used to develop the vision, mission, and values in 2006 so that NEA could articulate to its members and the public: WHO WE ARE (core values), WHY WE EXIST (mission) and WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE (vision). This overview was followed by a description of current vision, mission, and values engagement and review process and the role that the respondents would play in the process, along with background on the rationale for the NBI submission and its intentions.

Each of the audiences at these meetings and conferences and online were asked the following questions:

- 1) What speaks to you about our mission, vision, and core values?
- 2) What words, phrases, etc. that are currently in the mission, vision, and core values are the most important to you and your members?

- 3) If we are successful in achieving our mission, what would the world look like? What are some words (emotions, adjectives, etc.) that would represent this vision or how you feel about it?

Once the results were in, an analysis scheme was developed to categorize each comment made according to its main point or theme. Nearly 2,000 responses were received and analyzed. Every individual response submitted was examined to determine if the wording and phrasing reflected the categories in the scheme. The categories were enhanced constantly to allow for inclusion of new themes offered as the diverse viewpoints of each audience were included. After this analysis was completed, responses reflective of each category were counted to determine the frequency with which they were mentioned. Categories were then listed based on frequency of mentions, so the most frequently mentioned comments could be ascertained. Categories mentioned by a plurality of people (more than one but not enough to be considered frequently mentioned) also were listed. Finally, specific comments about the vision, mission, or core values from a single individual also were listed. Audience identification was retained, allowing for an analytical approach that identified similarities but that also allowed for the identification of any systemic differences between audiences.

Analysis of this summarized information immediately revealed that NEA stakeholders generally agreed that the mission and core values still resonated with one change in the core values, which was to remove, “We believe” from the beginning of each sentence. The most significant proposed change was the articulated need to update the vision to better reflect the environment and the organization’s aspirations. This conclusion shifted focus of the committee to the vision. Since a vision statement generally includes who will be affected, what will happen, and a desired outcome or impact, the comments were then examined to reveal how NEA’s target audiences would answer these questions. In describing who would be affected, NEA constituents repeatedly mentioned: students, educators/education professionals, the nation, public education and schools, parents, and community.

The vision themes from these engagements fell under four major categories:

- Empowerment and Voice.
- Student-Centered.
- Collective Action.
- Public Education and our Democracy.

The Executive Committee members assigned to this process, along with the NEA President, used these themes and the most commonly heard phrases, such as “cornerstone of our democracy,” “respected and valued voice,” and “just society,” to draft potential vision statements that best reflected the words and aspirations of the groups engaged in the process. From their meeting emerged a proposed vision statement to recommend to the entire Executive Committee for consideration. The Executive Committee then submitted a proposed vision statement to the NEA Board of Directors which voted to recommend the enclosed proposed revisions to the NEA Representative Assembly.

Recommendation

The NEA Board of Directors recommends to the 2019 Representative Assembly the following proposed revision to the *NEA Vision, Mission, and Values*.

Underlined text indicates proposed new copy.

~~Strike thru text~~ indicate proposed deleted copy.

The National Education Association

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

Our Vision

~~Our vision is a great public school for every student.~~

Public education is the cornerstone of our democracy where education professionals have a respected and valued voice and all students are empowered to be leaders of a just society.

Our Mission

Our mission is to advocate for education 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.

Our Core Values

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

Equal Opportunity. ~~We believe~~ Public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A Just Society. ~~We believe~~ Public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

Democracy. ~~We believe~~ Public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

Professionalism. ~~We believe that~~ The expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

Partnership. ~~We believe~~ Partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

Collective Action. ~~We believe~~ Individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.