

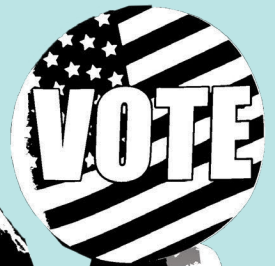
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2023

# neaToday

NEA TODAY for  
**ASPIRING  
EDUCATORS**  
An edition of *NEA Today*



# Protecting Democracy

**ASPIRING EDUCATORS  
MOBILIZE FOR A FREE  
AND JUST SOCIETY**

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Aspiring Educator  
from Arizona

*inside*

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Hello, from the new Aspiring Ed Chair!

When I began thinking about running to be the next chair, I thought deeply on what it means to be a leader and how I would best represent you all at the national level. I found myself reminiscing about the day I became a union member.

When I first joined the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), I understood the importance of a union and the history of leadership and societal changes that unions have had in our workplaces, but I could never have predicted the personal and professional growth I would experience because of my union membership.

As the first educator in my family, I was often questioned about my future profession. So when I started my educational journey at Millersville University, I knew I needed to find a group of people who shared my dreams and understood what it was like to be an educator. I sought out education clubs on campus, and I joined them all. Although I attended every club's meetings, one organization stood out to me—Student PSEA. When I walked into the first chapter meeting, we discussed the importance of unionism, what it means to stand in solidarity with others, and the events we would engage in during the year. From the start, I welcomed the idea of being part of something larger than myself and my future classroom. I knew that by joining Student PSEA and subsequently NEA, I wasn't just joining an association, I was joining a movement.

As a member of the largest labor union in the United States—and the one with the most talented educators—I have gained the knowledge and skill set to be a vocal advocate for students inside and outside the classroom.

Our work together

Today, as a recent graduate with a degree in early childhood and special education, I know our work as Aspiring Educators reaches far beyond the curriculum we will one day teach. As advocates for public education, we must continue to fight for a racially and socially just education system. I am grounded in my values and purpose as an educator to continue to seek progress.

These same ideals will propel our work together during my first year as your chair.

Currently, our nation is experiencing one of the largest teacher shortages in history. And that's not all. We are being impacted by politicians who are privatizing public education and undermining our mission to provide a quality education to all students, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability status. We also see lawmakers banning books and lessons that teach the truth of our nation's history. Our purpose as educators is to ensure all students are provided with an education that allows them to reflect on past mistakes—and that gives them the tools to lead. Our students must see themselves represented in our ever-evolving communities. As Aspiring Educators, it is our responsibility to stand in unity with active and retired educators to ensure the profession we all love is protected and respected.

During the next two years, I am committed to making sure Aspiring Educators across the country can find their role in the national movement for educator respect and the protection of a truthful education system. In doing so, together we will develop as leaders.

We all have a place in the movement for societal change. It is up to each of us to use our voice for progress.

Together, we will lean on one another and push each other to be better advocates for public education.

NEATODAY

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**OUR MISSION**

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.

**NEA ASPIRING EDUCATORS  
CORE VALUES**

The foundations of NEA Aspiring Educators—Educator Quality, Community Engagement, Political Action, and Social Justice—direct all program activities and publications.

Educator Quality encompasses pre-professional development and job preparation. Our members' involvement in the NEA Aspiring Educators program increases their ability to become quality teachers.

Community Engagement describes how members of NEA Aspiring Educators engage the people and environment around them; we impact our communities—locally and globally—and value the meaningfulness of such involvement.

Political Action includes both the realization that political and legislative issues impact the education world and the initiative to get involved.

Social Justice empowers our members to advocate for the distribution of resources fairly and to treat all students equitably so that they feel safe and secure physically and psychologically.

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## BECKY'S JOURNAL OF

# Joy, Justice, and Excellence

**Dear NEA Aspiring Ed members,  
I am honored to serve as your  
president.**

**United, we will reclaim public  
education as a common good and  
transform it into a racially and socially  
just system that actually prepares  
every student—not one, not some,  
but every single student—to suc-  
ceed in a diverse and interdependent  
world. Onward!**

**Becky Pringle**  
NEA President



“

“Thank you for taking on this challenging and—I promise you—rewarding profession. Today's leaders know that your fight is noble and necessary. You are my inspiration. ... I know you will never accept the unacceptable.”

—Becky Pringle, 2022 Aspiring Educators Conference, in Chicago

## Face to Face with NEA Aspiring Educators

Last year, after a gunman killed 21 people at Robb Elementary School, in Uvalde, Texas, I joined California Aspiring Educator Jonathan Oyaga for an Instagram Live conversation about gun violence in schools. Jonathan shared how, since the 2022 Sandy Hook school shooting, in Connecticut, he and other young students nationwide have been required to practice live shooter drills and have grown up in an era of mass shootings. Preventing school shootings is “not a helpless effort,” he said, reinforcing the importance of engaging with your union—even as an Aspiring Educator—and voting in every national, state, and local election to hold officials accountable.



## JOIN ME

### Two Things to Do For Yourself and Your Union

1. **Tell Congress to expand background checks on potential gun purchasers.** Parents should not have to worry that their children won't come home from school one day. Join me in calling on Congress to do its job! Protect our students at [nea.org/Common-Sense-Gun-Reform](https://nea.org/Common-Sense-Gun-Reform).
2. **It's never too early to get into good trouble.** NEA helped deliver big wins in the 2022 elections by supporting pro-public education candidates. Stay involved year-round to ensure elected officials provide the resources our students, schools, and educators need. Learn more at [EdVotes.org](https://EdVotes.org).

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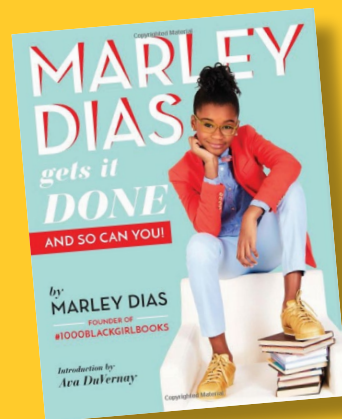
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# A NEW GENERATION OF CHANGEMAKERS

By Cindy Long

Activist, author, and NEA Read Across America Ambassador Marley Dias is the teenage powerhouse behind #1000BlackGirlBooks, a campaign to collect and donate books about Black girls, which she knows are too rare in libraries and bookstores. Recently, she spoke to *NEA Today* about how Read Across America books, which celebrate diversity and teach lessons about inner strength, can help young readers make positive change in the world.



## What book sparked a light inside you to take action and make changes in your world?

When I was 9, I got *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson for Christmas. It was a book that challenged me, that told my story, that made me feel understood and helped me discover who I was. When I saw a lack of diversity and a lack of Black girl characters in the books at school, I thought about the messages of *Brown Girl Dreaming*, which gave me words I could use to stand up for myself and words for my feelings as a Black girl underrepresented in literature. That's when I began the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign.

## Why should educators make it a priority to include inspiring, diverse books in lessons?

We live in communities, and the youngest in our communities can't serve the needs of the community if they're not taught they have the ability. If we don't teach them they can make changes, we'll still have the same world we do now. Power is always shifted to the next generation of artists, dreamers, and changemakers. I'd ask educators and everyone to consider the dangers of not telling our young people to believe in their self-efficacy and that they can and should be active members of a community and citizenry. Their actions to effect positive change will benefit our entire society. What you pour into this generation will serve us all.

## How does banning books harm young readers' ability to become agents for positive change?

When we ban books, we are limiting exposure to ideas. This limitation to ideas stunts our ability to understand and connect with each other and to imagine. The books that are being banned clearly demonstrate an attempt to erase or reduce the stories of vulnerable and marginalized populations. This is an attempt to bridle diverse ideas. The consequences are far-reaching and can damage a kid's ability to draw accurate conclusions about the world, which quashes innovation and equity.

**TAKE ACTION**

Looking for a banned book to read?

Text BANNED to 48744 to receive a book recommendation from NEA—and be sure to tear out your free bookmark from the inside flap of the magazine cover!

SERVICE AND

awards

Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship

## A LEGACY CONTINUES

THE JACK KINNAMAN SCHOLARSHIP HELPS A NEW GENERATION OF EDUCATORS

By Lilly Behbehani

For two decades, NEA-Retired members have generously contributed to the Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship Fund for NEA Aspiring Educators (AE). Kinnaman was a teacher for nearly three decades and a long-standing NEA member and leader, who served as vice president of NEA-Retired. After Kinnaman died in 2002, NEA-Retired established a scholarship fund in his honor. Today, the scholarship supports five Aspiring Educators each year. The 2022 winners are:



**Dajsha Williams, early childhood education major**  
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AT NEWARK, OHIO

As chair of the Ohio Education Association AE (OEA-AE) chapter and a member of NEA's advisory committee, Williams has learned the importance of trusting the union and supporting other Aspiring Educators. "Behind my achievements is a strong desire to learn and impact the world of education," Williams says. As chair of the OEA-AE chapter, she enjoys using her voice to propel the mission and vision of the union.



**Roman Trejo, social studies major**  
SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO, ILL.

"Although the [pandemic] changed the way we interacted, it did not disrupt the need to continue fighting for union values," Trejo says. He uses his NEA platform to support Latinx voices with the goal of increasing advocacy among young Latinx individuals. Trejo is also active in his community, where he has helped eligible immigrants complete residency applications.



**Jaclyn Deal, math major**  
WINGATE UNIVERSITY, WINGATE, N.C.

Under Deal's leadership as president of her university's AE chapter, membership numbers have nearly quadrupled thanks to her efforts to enhance engagement through campus-wide outreach events. Described as gracious and confident by her professors, Deal also tutors students at a local Title I high school. "Since joining the local chapter of Student North Carolina Association of Educators my freshman year, I have gained invaluable leadership skills that are directly applicable to my career in teaching," Deal says.



**Hannah St. Clair, educational foundations major**  
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, EUGENE

St. Clair is serving her first year on the NEA Board of Directors and on the AE Committee for the Oregon Education Association. She is also president of her university's AE chapter. St. Clair says, "[The Kinnaman scholarship] will alleviate some of the stress of paying out-of-state tuition and graduate school tuition, especially as I begin student teaching."



**Sofia Vandersluis, double major in elementary education and educational policies**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON

As president of Aspiring Educators of Wisconsin and the campus chapter leader, Vandersluis' goal has been to improve member-to-member relationships by shifting to a "neighborhood" approach, meaning members with similar career interests are paired. She created a YouTube channel for members to upload lessons, so they can practice virtual teaching. The Kinnaman scholarship, she says, will "help reassure my family that, even during crisis, I will receive my degree and graduate."

HOW TO APPLY

Complete the NEA-Retired Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship application online at [nea.org/Kinnaman](https://nea.org/Kinnaman). Make sure you meet all the requirements and submit a complete packet. Applications must be submitted by April 17, 2023.



## ELECTIONS 101: HOW DO THEY WORK?

By Brenda Álvarez

As a member of NEA Aspiring Educators (AE), you're part of the nation's largest labor union—the 3 million member National Education Association. This membership provides you with professional resources and support through state and national leadership conferences, workshops, and more. But did you know you could also enrich your teaching practice and advocacy skills by holding national office? These leadership roles represent the vision and voice of the AE program. Here are answers to some common questions about the election process:

### What are the national AE leadership positions?

**NEA Aspiring Educators Chair (1 position):** This is a two-year position, elected in even years. Responsibilities include chairing the AE Advisory Committee; serving as a key contact for national projects, such as organizing campaigns, conferences, and trainings; and serving as a contact and advocate for all AE campus chapters and state affiliates. The next AE Chair will be elected in 2024.

**Board of Directors (3 positions):** Directors attend NEA Board meetings, where decisions are made about the general policies and interests of the association. AE board members also promote the program across the country.

**Resolutions Committee (3 positions):** NEA Resolutions are the formal expressions of opinion, intent, belief, or position of the association. Members elected to this committee attend meetings and, after each meeting, report any resolutions related to the program to the AE chair.

### How do you run for office?

- 1. Submit** a Candidate Certificate of Eligibility form by May 1. This form is emailed to state affiliate staff and AE leadership by March 1 of an election year.
- 2. Participate** in the nomination process, which includes being nominated and accepting the nomination. All nominations must be made by AE members. Candidates may not nominate themselves.
- 3. Engage** in the election process during the AE Conference, where nominated candidates will have an opportunity to give a speech, participate in a question-and-answer session, campaign, and vote.



### Who can vote?

AE members who are delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (RA)—the association's policymaking body—are eligible to vote.

### Which offices are up for election in 2023?

- **NEA Board of Directors:** Two open seats for one-year terms.
- **NEA Board of Directors:** One open seat for a two-year term.
- **NEA Resolutions Committee:** Three open seats for one-year terms.

### How are the results tallied?

To win an election, a candidate must receive more than 50 percent of the votes cast.

### When are results announced?

Election results are announced during the AE Conference, which precedes the RA. The ballots, voting register, and Elections Committee final report are preserved for one year following the election.

**LEARN  
MORE**

Read the full "NEA Aspiring Educators Program Elections Procedures" at [nea.org/AE-Election-Procedures](https://nea.org/AE-Election-Procedures).

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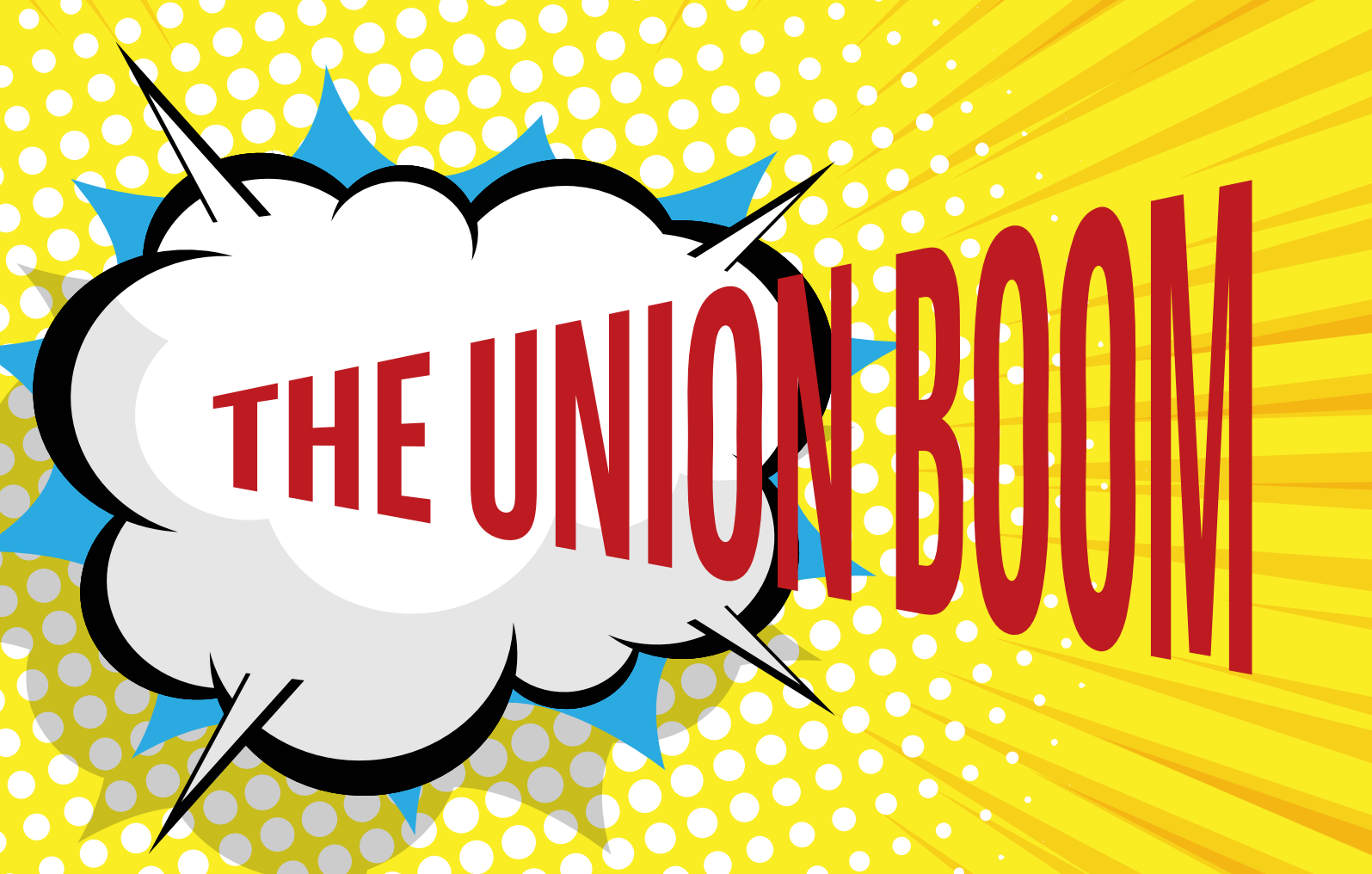


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ST JOHN'S  
College





*"You don't have someone fighting for you as a teacher if you're not part of the union."*  
 —Abbigail Ericson

Ericson understands union benefits because her parents are teachers and NEA members. Her friends joke that she's "union born and bred."

"I know there are people like me all across the state, somewhere," she says. "We just have to [provide] the right resources to get them excited about education and driven toward the union, so we can make some real change."

Now a senior, Ericson has been involved in her AE program throughout college and is focused on growing the campus chapter, after membership declined during the pandemic.

"We're building back up now, and I could not be more excited for where we're at and where we're going," she says. "[We're] hoping to make enough noise to get attention at the White House and on a local level."

Iowa AE currently has about 90 members, down from 125 when Ericson first joined. She said membership dropped as low as 35 members during the pandemic.

**In November 2022, Abbigail Ericson hosted a workshop on social and emotional learning during an Aspiring Educators board meeting in Des Moines, Iowa.**

**UNION APPROVAL IS SURGING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE. WHAT'S THE ATTRACTION?**

By Hannah Gross

On a hot Saturday morning just two weeks into the school year, Eastern Michigan University (EMU) sophomore Aryana Jharia pulled on her red shirt, grabbed her sign reading, "Admin is looking like a damn clown," and walked across campus to meet about 45 protesting professors. Together, the protestors, clad in "#RedForEd" T-shirts, marched in a loop chanting, "Settle the damn contract." (#RedForEd is a grassroots movement to secure more school funding and resources that benefit students and educators.)

The striking professors were union members who believed the university's negotiators were dragging their feet after the faculty's contract expired. The biggest issue? Faculty pay. On Sept. 12, the day after Jharia joined the protest, the two sides reached a tentative agreement, and EMU educators returned to their classrooms.

Jharia, who is co-president of the Aspiring Educators (AE) chapter on her campus, said this was her first direct exposure to the power of unions.

"It makes a huge difference to have that experience because it's like, wow, this is a real issue—professors and teachers don't get paid enough," she says.

Gen Z is America's most pro-union generation, according to a report from the Center for American Progress. Support for unions among Gen Z is higher today than it was among Baby Boomers and Gen Xers at their age.

Nationwide, approval for labor unions is at 71 percent—the highest it's been since 1965, according to a recent Gallup poll. Respondents said their most important reasons for joining were better pay and benefits, employee representation, and job security.

**UNIONS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**

When the professors went on strike at EMU, they had support from many of the university's education students, Jharia says. Still, many students on campus had no idea what was going on.

Jharia adds that the strike provided students with a great opportunity to learn about unions and to start a conversation about the trend toward unionization on college campuses in the U.S.—especially among undergraduate and graduate student workers.

These students are forming unions so that they can organize for better pay, better access to affordable health care, and improved working conditions. Student

membership in unions quadrupled between 2013 and 2019, and the pandemic has fueled even more unionization.

For her part, Jharia was inspired to start an AE college chapter back in high school, where she met members of the Michigan Education Association at a summer program. Despite being nervous about launching a club as a first-year student, her efforts have been successful. At EMU's club fair, about 80 students signed up to join AE.

**BRINGING MORE PEOPLE INTO THE MOVEMENT**

At the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), Abbigail Ericson has had a tougher time finding support. As Iowa AE chair, she says most education students belong to specific education-related clubs and may not understand the benefits of NEA membership just yet.



**Aspiring Educator Aryana Jharia joined striking professors at Eastern Michigan University to fight for better pay.**



# The Union Boom

“I would just love to get people aware of what they could be experiencing, the network they could have, the union family they could be part of,” Ericson says. “You don’t have someone fighting for you as a teacher if you’re not part of the union.”

Like Ericson, University of Indianapolis senior and Aspiring Educator Dylan Torres is working to grow membership.

Torres first got involved with his campus chapter this year, after most of his college experience was shaped by the pandemic. He said the program is his first exposure to unions, although he thinks of the group as more of a club.

Torres is the membership coordinator for his school’s chapter, which means he keeps track of people who attend events and focuses on campus outreach to students and clubs.

While there are seven core board members, over 250 students attended a chapter event at the start of the school year.

University of Indianapolis senior Dylan Torres is recruiting classmates to join the school’s AE chapter.



“We definitely have had a lot of interest and people come out to our events.”

—Dylan Torres

“We definitely have had a lot of interest, and people come out to our events, but we’re still working on retaining that body of educators in our community,” Torres says.

Back in Michigan, Jharia is using social media to drum up interest in her campus chapter. She created a chapter Instagram account and started reaching out to incoming education students to generate excitement about joining the group.

## UNIONS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

For many young people, unions are closely tied to social justice issues, which have high importance among Gen Z.

“Our age group has seen so much injustice ... in the world,” Ericson says. “As a generation, we’re realizing that we need to take care of ourselves personally, and if we don’t make any noise, we’re not going to make any change.”

She says that growing up in a lower-middle-class household taught her to fight for herself and others from a young age. She began protesting for better teaching and learning conditions with her parents at the age of 3.

Ericson explains that she sees clear connections between the disability rights movement and unions in ensuring that students with disabilities receive a satisfactory education.

Similarly, Jharia says she sees connections between unions and women’s rights. Union support is higher among women (74%) than men (68%), according to the Gallup poll.

Ericson thinks the next generation of teachers is ready to rise to the challenges before them.

“We’ve lived through a teacher shortage before. We lived through a recession. We know what we have to do,” she says. ✨

SHARE THIS

Let your peers know how NEA supports Aspiring Educators. Learn more at [nea.org/AE-Support](https://nea.org/AE-Support).

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DYLAN TORRES

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

# A PLACE FOR YOU IN THE UNION

**Brian Reilly**  
Aspiring Educator  
SOUTH ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

My involvement in the union started my senior year of high school when I noticed my teachers wearing red every Wednesday. After a few weeks of wondering, I decided to ask why. I found out they were part of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and the #RedForEd movement—a national push to increase school funding and improve resources for students. My teachers were specifically taking actions to improve health care benefits for educators.

As a future educator, I knew I had to step up and help them out. From that Wednesday forward, I wore red, too, almost every Wednesday for the rest of the year.

As a college freshman, I looked for clubs to join and stumbled on the Seton Hall chapter of NJEA Preservice—our version of Aspiring Ed. I barely knew what preservice meant at the time, but I knew NJEA was the same union my high school teachers were part of, so I knew I had to join. And I did.

From day one, I saw how NJEA and our preservice program are so much more than a typical organization. As members, we work together to grow our profession and advocate for change. And the union provides its members a platform to do so.

That’s one of the great things about the NJEA Preservice program: No matter your interest, there’s a place for you within the union—from taking on leadership roles within the organization and advocating for better state licensure requirements to supporting pro-public education candidates.

And to think that, for me, it all started with a red shirt and a desire to support my teachers.



TAKE ACTION

For more member stories, go to [nea.org/Member-Spotlight](https://nea.org/Member-Spotlight), or submit the name of an educator you’d like to see featured at [nea.org/Submit-Member-Spotlight](https://nea.org/Submit-Member-Spotlight).

PHOTO: MOSES MITCHELL



# All Work / No Pay

**TODAY'S ASPIRING EDUCATORS ARE WORKING TO WIN PAID STUDENT TEACHING INTERNSHIPS**

By Brenda Álvarez

*“Teaching is the thing I was called to do, ... the only thing I’ve ever had dreams of doing, and it feels like it’s beating me down. It’s hard.”*

—Jailyn Bridgeforth, Morgan State University, Maryland

Student teaching is one of the most important experiences in your education major. It’s the last stretch of road where you put into practice everything you’ve learned in the past few years, before graduating and taking charge of your first classroom.

For many, it also brings financial stress, given that many student teaching positions are unpaid.

That’s why many NEA Aspiring Educators (AE) are advocating for pay for student teachers.

## A LESS THAN PERFECT SYSTEM

Jailyn Bridgeforth is a senior at Morgan State University, in Baltimore, Md., majoring in elementary education. Originally from Georgia, she comes from a family of teachers (including her grandmother, mom, and brother) and is excited about her future profession.

Bridgeforth says she is most excited about “being a support system for students who might not have healthy role models at home.”

What she’s less excited about is not getting paid as a student teacher. “It’s bonkers,” she says.

Bonkers is exactly the right word to describe a system that requires students to do the work of

full-time educators without pay. Some professors advise candidates not to get paid jobs during their internships because the internships are so demanding of time and energy. It’s hard to succeed, if they also must work. Bridgeforth, however, needs to earn money.

“I do everything on my own,” she says, from keeping her own apartment to paying for tuition. Juggling her internship, campus classes, and her job is difficult.

“Teaching is the thing I was called to do, ... the only thing I’ve ever had dreams of doing, and it feels like it’s beating me down. It’s hard,” she says.



Jailyn Bridgeforth

## PAID INTERNSHIPS WANTED

One day last year, Bridgeforth found herself on the phone with a Maryland State Education Association organizer. Bridgeforth was rightfully irritated about not getting paid. The organizer asked one question: “Do you want to change it?”

The question was enough to move Bridgeforth to action, and she is leading efforts to change this equation in Maryland.

Additional initiatives are percolating in other states, centering on three problems: Unpaid internships; lack of transportation resources; and too



Every Tuesday, Baltimore Aspiring Educator Jailyn Bridgeforth starts the day at 5 a.m. to prepare for student teaching. Then it’s classes, clubs, and a paid job that brings her home at midnight. A paid internship would ease her stressful day.

little control over where student teaching candidates are placed.

In Bridgeforth’s experience—and she heard the same from other AE members during a virtual listening tour in August 2022—candidates are often told of their field placement just a week before they start.

“You don’t know anything about the school. It doesn’t matter how far it is. It doesn’t matter if it’s the kind of school culture you want to learn about,” she says. “They just tell you to show up.”

She’s even heard from Aspiring Educators who are spending hundreds of dollars on Uber rides to get to their unpaid placements.

## THE STAKES ARE HIGH

Jonathan “Jonny” Otero is a junior at Northern Arizona University, in Flagstaff. He’s majoring in elementary and special education, and while his student teaching experience doesn’t start until next year, he’s already concerned.

“I’m worried that nothing’s going to change and *mi gente* [my people] won’t go into education,” he says. “I’m worried that this system will continue to oppress BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] and LGBTQ+ educators.”

His concerns are well founded. Last year, an NEA survey found that a staggering 55 percent of educators were thinking of leaving the profession earlier than planned. The percentage was higher among Black (62%) and Latino (59%) educators, who are already underrepresented in the teaching profession.

“When we talk about the ‘teacher shortage,’ we’ve never had one,” Otero says. “What we have is a lack of respect for educators and for our future.”

And so, he’s working to organize political actions in Flagstaff and insert BIPOC voices into the conversation.

## PAYMENT IS LONG OVERDUE

Decades ago, it was common for college students to take on unpaid internships. Over time, however, compensation has been added to many professional programs.

“Teaching just hasn’t done that,” says Jonathan Frey, a student at Southern Utah University, in Cedar City.

Future doctors have a long history of being paid for their internships. Meanwhile, the education profession has underpaid its educators for years, making it financially out of reach for many candidates to pursue



teaching without taking on an extra job during college.

Frey, who is a business education and accounting major, graduates in spring 2024 and plans to become a career technical education teacher. He's two semesters shy of starting student teaching and is preparing now to soften the blow of lost income.

"It's going to take a hit on me and my wife," he says. "We've preemptively set ourselves up where we're renting out extra rooms in our townhome. I'm working two jobs right now, since I won't be able to work either of them when I student teach. It's a little scary."

Frey knows he's in a better situation than some of his peers, which is why his big push right now is to increase awareness around this issue, to grow AE membership, and then to encourage his fellow Aspiring Educators to contact their public officials.

**A BETTER WAY IS POSSIBLE**

Back in Maryland, Bridgeforth is working to get a state law passed that would guarantee funding for colleges to go toward paying student teachers. Bridgeforth explains that in her state, teacher candidates are required to student teach for 120 days before earning a teaching certification. By 2024, that number increases to 180 days.



**Jonathan Frey**

"We're looking at government officials to recognize those days should be paid," she says.

For future teachers and across the profession, better pay is key to recruiting and retaining educators.

"Candidates experience greater success when they receive sufficient financial support to allow them to focus on their student

teaching," says Blake West, a senior policy analyst with NEA's Center for Professional Excellence and Student Learning.

It's not unheard of either.

Some universities offer stipends through teacher residency programs. In Texas, for example, a group of education majors at Texas State University, in San Marcos, were awarded \$20,000 each. Other residency models are connected to a particular school district trying to solve specific needs, such as the Boston Teacher Residency program, which focuses on STEM teachers.

NEA has long championed residency programs that offer intensive, yearlong student teaching experiences with a mentor teacher. These programs offer tuition assistance, to help attract new teachers, and provide ongoing support and a sense of community to retain educators through their first years on the job.

Bridgeforth is set to graduate in a couple of months, and while she may not benefit from her efforts now, she hopes her work today will help other future teachers.

"I've met so many Aspiring Educators who truly have a fire for teaching," she says. "Knowing what's coming for them is what pushes me to do more, so that they don't have to work the midnight shift to survive or run themselves ragged to make a buck." 🙌

**"When we talk about the 'teacher shortage,' we've never had one. What we have is a lack of respect for educators and for our future."**

—Jonathan Otero (right), Northern Arizona University



**TAKE ACTION**

Support more residency programs at [nea.org/Residency-Access-Act](https://nea.org/Residency-Access-Act), or contact NEA Senior Policy Analyst Blake West, [bwest@nea.org](mailto:bwest@nea.org), about paid residencies and apprenticeships nationwide.



**SIGN UP FOR THE EDPRACTICE NEWSLETTER!**

Get the NEA's latest advice, tips, and resources to help you become a better educator - now, or in the future! Once a month, we'll send you training and leadership opportunities, podcasts and more directly to your inbox. Sign up today at [nea.org/edpractice](https://nea.org/edpractice) or scan the QR code below!



**EdPractice**





During this uncivil period in U.S. history, NEA Aspiring Educators are partnering with their unions to deliver change.

# Protecting Democracy

By Lilly Behbehani

**A**s attacks mount on LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, and voting rights, NEA Aspiring Educators are working to protect the foundations of democracy and deliver impactful changes in their communities and future classrooms.

They are mobilizing—through their unions—to fight against book bans and education laws that censor marginalized groups. They are organizing to support student loan forgiveness and women's reproductive health care. And Aspiring Educators are thinking ahead about how they will one day help students become active participants in democracy.

"Education is the backbone of our democracy," says Dajsha Williams, a senior at The Ohio State University (OSU) at Newark, in Ohio, and chair of Ohio Education Association Aspiring Educators at OSU. "I feel we are fighting not only for democracy, but fighting for our rights that ensure we, as a country, are able to move forward."

Williams has always been passionate about education. She got involved in advocating for the future of education as the president of her high school's Educators Rising club. Today, she lobbies with her OSU union on issues such as loan forgiveness.

## CHANGING THE WORLD—NOW

Elena Sloboda, a student at Arizona State University, in Tempe, was at the 2022 Arizona Aspiring Educators Conference when she heard that *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court decision protecting abortion rights, had been overturned. Frustrated with the direction of national and Arizona politics,

the Aspiring Educators in attendance decided to take to the streets.

"Even though [the protest] wasn't an official Aspiring Educators event, ... we were all supporting each other and working to protect democracy and our right to autonomy," Sloboda says. "Because it's not only special to us, but to our students' futures."



Dajsha Williams (left), a senior at The Ohio State University at Newark, in Ohio, had the honor of introducing U.S. President Joe Biden when he addressed educators at NEA headquarters in September 2022.

**"All these rights that we had or have gained in my lifetime are now being threatened and might get taken away."**

—Elena Sloboda (right), Arizona State University



The Arizona students were not alone. Aspiring Educators across the country joined protests over the Supreme Court's decision, which has since cleared the way for at least 13 states to prohibit abortions. In the wake of the ruling, many Americans were filled with fear and despair. But Aspiring Educators still showed up.

"All these rights that we had, or have gained, in my lifetime are now being threatened and might get taken away," Sloboda says.

That's why it's important, she adds, to teach students "to stand up for one another and to protect each other and our rights. [Otherwise], our rights will continue to be stripped away."





**Thomas Fairchild—**a former freelance writer, coffee roaster, and gelato-maker—helps teach a seventh-grade math class as part of his internship, in Everett, Washington.

**“We have to make sure our children have the same rights we had to health care, to free and fair elections, to a clean and bright future.”**

—Thomas Fairchild, Western Governors University, Washington



### PROTECTING FUTURE GENERATIONS

For Thomas Fairchild, a Western Governors University student who is president of the Student Washington Education Association (SWEA), protecting democracy is of the utmost importance for future generations.

In 2020, Fairchild helped the Washington Education Association pass a resolution to ensure that the state’s educators receive training on teaching about the dangers of misinformation and disinformation.

“We have to make sure our children have the same rights we had to health care, to free and fair elections, to a clean and bright future,” Fairchild says.

He recalls the day of the September 11 terrorist attacks. At the time, he was an eighth-grade student, and his social studies teacher put what had happened into historical perspective, helping the class to absorb and grapple with the tragedy.

Educators have the important job of making students into critical thinkers and fostering their curiosity.

“We will be the experts in the room,” Williams says. “I will be teaching my students about kindness. Even when something doesn’t affect them personally, it may be affecting a lot of other people. There are things going on around everyone, and my students will be standing up for that.”

Sloboda believes that when students are informed about their rights and duties as a citizen and about the impact they can make on the world, they will be informed and active citizens and voters.

### IT STARTS IN THE CLASSROOM

After witnessing the recent attacks on democracy in our country, Abriana White, a senior at Michigan’s Wayne State University, in Detroit, and vice president of Aspiring Educators of Michigan, believes teachers have an important role in helping students learn about such events.

“Unfair would be the best way to describe the state of democracy today,” White says.

Michigan has one of the highest number of book bans in the nation in its K–12 public schools, notes White. She acknowledges that the bans are disturbing, but they motivate her to demand change.

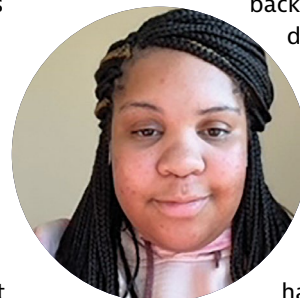
At press time, White was planning to attend a seminar on women in education, where she hoped to talk with national leaders about how to overturn the bans.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree, White says she intends to go back to school, but this time in educational psychology. Someday she hopes to write curricula that educate students about this uncivil period and ensure students are taught honestly and accurately about current events.

“It’s going to start in the classroom,” she says. “I want [students] to know how we can go about being fair to one another, so this doesn’t happen again.”



**Abriana White**



**Tamar Clark**

Tamar Clark, an Aspiring Educator at Purdue University Northwest, in Indiana, says, “I want to show my future students that no matter how hard the system may be, or how it may be against you, you will be able to do anything. We have to help students be curious about what they can do to be better people and ... better their community.”

### HOW THE UNION CAN HELP

Williams says that, through her union, she has witnessed and spoken to passionate Aspiring Educators who want to voice their opinions on how the education field can evolve to include current, unprecedented events.

“I’ve talked to hundreds of Aspiring Educators with their own perspectives, backgrounds, thoughts about democracy, and ways we can improve democracy,” she says. “We need to be in the room where decisions happen.”

In Arizona, as co-founder of a new Aspiring Educators chapter, Sloboda has been working with her classmates to lobby state lawmakers and inform future educators about their rights.

Informed members, she says, will make for informed teachers, who will improve education and resources, and ultimately know how to teach difficult topics to students.

**“I want to show my future students that no matter how hard the system may be or how it may be against you, you will be able to do anything.”**

—Tamar Clark, Purdue University Northwest, Indiana

“I think a lot of students feel like their voice doesn’t matter.

But there are always people listening,” Williams says. “I want my students to know that if you think that something is not correct in our democracy, it is your duty as an American citizen to make it right.” ✨

### TAKE ACTION

Text **ASPIRE to 48744** to sign up for news, career advice, and ways to support public education, students, and educators.



# Why We Choose To Teach



Marina Lagattuta

Teaching, she says, was “something I didn’t know I wanted to do until I was directly working with kids.” The experience (and it’s a familiar one!) that put Lagattuta on a teaching path occurred when she was selected to work at a summer school program near her college campus. She was paired with a group of high school students who were making up academic credits to meet their graduation requirements.

“I worked with at-risk youth and with kids who had horrible family situations,” she says. “Seeing the look on their faces when the material clicked or they accomplished something is what made me realize I could see myself doing this ... for the rest of my life.”

## ‘I’M HERE TO STAY’

Like Ward, many educators know from a young age that they want to teach. This was not the case for Marina Lagattuta, who started out as a biology major at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg and then switched to political science.

Foster & inspire changemakers.

Make a positive impact.

## By Brenda Álvarez

One of the biggest hopes for public education is you, Aspiring Educators, who are crucial to helping students of all races and backgrounds learn, grow, and fulfill their potential. And despite the manufactured outrage over culture war issues—such as books about LGBTQ+ people and People of Color—future educators are coming into the profession with a hefty dose of joy, excitement, and inspiration.

Last year, during the national Aspiring Educators Conference (AEC), in Chicago, aspiring teachers came together to celebrate the resilience of educators and reflect on why they first answered the call to teach. They wrote their inspirations on large puzzle pieces and

displayed them on a wall for all to see.

For Anesha Ward, a third-year student at Capital University, in Bexley, Ohio, the reason is clear: It’s to help better the world for everyone.

“Bad things continue to happen in [education, society, and our democracy], but children are our future. They will be the

people who can change that,” Ward says. “I want to be a part of building that foundation, giving students the tools to be the best version of themselves, and help right the wrongs of the world.”

Ward’s first taste of teaching came at the age of 12, when she worked at the nursery in her church. Her role was to be a friendly face for the younger kids, particularly those with disabilities.

“I was to be their friend, and I fell in love with that,” Ward recalls.

Like most teachers, she also experienced the happiness of those aha moments. “It brings me so much joy to see a student get the right answer or do something on their own

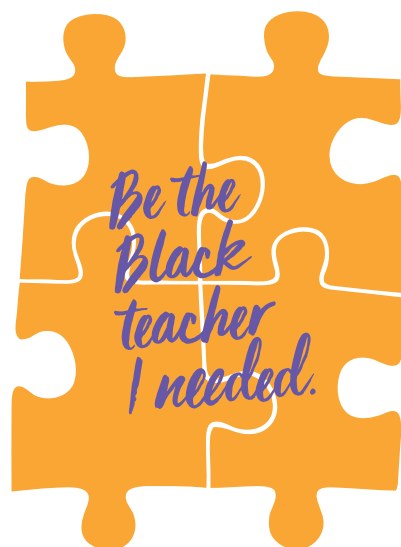
and then get excited about it,” says Ward, who is majoring in primary education and studying to be an intervention specialist, which will

Anesha Ward

prepare her to work in special education.

This, along with other early teaching experiences, helped to solidify her journey into the profession.

One message she wants her future K-12 colleagues to hear: “We’re coming in droves, we’re not backing down from any challenge, and we’re here to support you,” she says, adding that members of the NEA Aspiring Educators (AE) program are taking full advantage of conferences and trainings to learn about the supports and resources of the NEA family.



As for Lagattuta’s AEC puzzle piece, her “Why I Want to Teach” message read: “For the younger me.” She explains that as a teen, school was both an escape and an unsafe space for her.

“I fell victim to kids who were awful, mean, and rude, but I had great teachers who stuck up for me,” she shares. “Kids need people in their corner, [especially] when they might not have anybody else.”

She adds: “I’m not scared of the problems in and around education. I’m here to stay and am prepared to do what’s right and to do what’s necessary for the next generation.”



AE member Nicholas Fischer shares his “why” with *NEA Today*



Nicholas Fischer is a secondary education and English major, at the University of Nevada, Reno.

“My [high school] government teacher inspired me to become a teacher. She was outgoing and took the time to really know and understand her students. She and I became close while I was in the Future Business Leaders of America chapter she was advising. We’d travel as a club to leadership conferences state-wide and nationwide. She was very supportive about my decision to go to college and even accompanied me on my first advising meeting. ... I want my classroom to be a warm, welcoming environment, and to be that role model my students can relate to.”

LEARN MORE

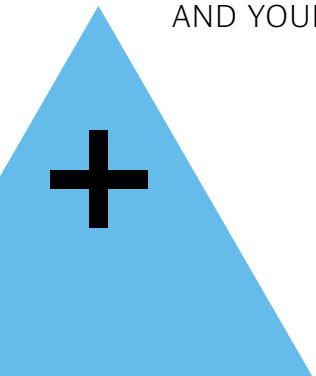
Find out how the NEA Aspiring Educators program supports and empowers future teachers at [nea.org/AspiringEducators](http://nea.org/AspiringEducators).





# Ways to Boost Your Career

WHETHER YOU'RE NEW TO YOUR EDUCATION MAJOR OR ARE ALREADY STUDENT TEACHING, THESE NEA QUICK READS WILL HELP YOU GET PRIMED FOR YOUR CAREER—AND YOUR UNION!



## 1 Create an Inclusive Classroom

As an educator, you will likely work with students who are racially, culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse. By using culturally responsive practices, you can create an inclusive, student-centered environment that is accessible and relevant to all students. These pointers can help you begin the learning process:

### Incorporate culturally diverse contributions, experiences, and perspectives into the classroom.

- Be willing to share power in the classroom and allow students' voices to be part of decision-making.
- Recognize that students' lives go beyond the four walls of the classroom by encouraging strong relationships between students' families, the school, and the greater community.

### Meet grade-level standards, while providing a balanced study of cultural contributions and perspectives in social justice work.

- Design lessons to take into consideration students' backgrounds, social experiences, prior knowledge, and learning style. Doing

this entails familiarity with your students and their backgrounds.

- Assist students in accessing a challenging curriculum by modeling skills to provide a concrete example. By scaffolding content and language, teachers can bridge the gaps between what students know and can do and what they are expected to know and do.

- Before you can create an equitable classroom climate, you must take time to understand your own cultural identity and cultural behavior—and the impact they have on your attitude and actions at school. This is not easy as it entails being a reflective practitioner and recognizing your own biases and inequitable action.

- Be sensitive to differences in others. This provides an opportunity to step back before passing judgment. The most important lesson

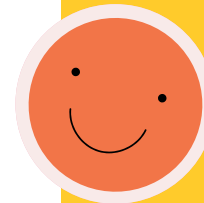
LEARN MORE

Sign up for NEA's Cultural Competence Training Program at [nea.org/Cultural-Competence-Training](http://nea.org/Cultural-Competence-Training).

## 2

### Develop a Positive School Culture

Establishing a classroom environment where your students feel seen and supported, is integral to student success and well-being. Here are five ways to do it:



#### Practice new forms of expression

Arts integration involves using art to teach and assess content standards equitably. For example, students can learn about geometric shapes while creating pieces of abstract art. Learning through expression also helps connect students to one another and encourages them to bring their most original selves to the classroom.

#### Emphasize caring for the community

Show students how caring for others in the classroom community can make all the difference. Make sure they see you encouraging students who are down or discouraged. Ensure students know how to pronounce each other's names, and emphasize being there for one another.

you can model for your students is to be understanding, open, honest, caring, and forgiving of yourself and others.

Download NYSUT's (New York State United Teachers) full report on "Being a Culturally Responsive Teacher: Celebrating Diversity in Our Schools" at [bit.ly/CulturallyResponsiveReport](http://bit.ly/CulturallyResponsiveReport).



Susan Lafond

—Susan Lafond is an assistant in education services for NYSUT, a former world language and English as a New Language teacher, and National Board Certified Teacher.

#### Build meaningful relationships

Listening to your students when they share pieces of their lives requires little effort, but it can mean the world to them. Getting to know students as individuals and hearing about their hobbies, sports, or lists of favorites will make them feel seen and help them thrive. Sometimes, just a smile or short conversation from a teacher can turn a child's day around.

#### Preach positivity

Writing little notes of encouragement on students' work, even if there is room for improvement, can make students feel more comfortable coming to you with problems or for help understanding the material. Have patience with students as they grapple with new material, and encourage their ideas and opinions with an open mind.

#### Have an open door to all

Consider getting trained so that students can talk to you about their mental health in an informal setting. Put a "safe space" sign on your door—it's a small gesture that can make a big difference. Foster an environment that makes you approachable, perhaps by sponsoring your school's Genders and Sexualities Alliance or other popular clubs.





# 3

## Ask These Questions Before Taking a Job

The current teacher shortage means you may have multiple districts vying to hire you. How can you find a workplace where you'll be happy and healthy—and supported in your professional journey? These questions can help:

First, grab your phone and ask Google to show local and state data on:

- Educator and student absences.
- Student discipline trends.
- Book bans and curricula that are being challenged.

Then find the organizer within your state Aspiring Educators program and get connected to a local union leader. Ask that leader for informal feedback. Your questions might include:

- What are the strengths and needs you see in your bargaining agreement?
- What supports does the local association provide to new educators?
- Are there leadership development opportunities in the association?

Lastly, when you meet with the hiring administrator or school principal, be prepared to dive into questions of school culture, professional development, and more. Ask questions such as:

- What supports do you offer new educators (mentoring, coaching, etc.)? For how many years are these supports offered?
- What is the major professional learning goal for the school and/or district?
- Who helps to set professional learning goals?
- How strong is parental/family support for the school?
- When I have a student who may have additional needs, how do teachers collaborate? Are there community supports you regularly use?
- Does the school use restorative practices to help students?
- We all know how important social and emotional learning and well-being are for students. How does the school help address these needs in classrooms and beyond?
- It is also important for faculty to model social and emotional well-being. How does the school and/or district encourage the well-being of new staff?

# 4

## Start Your Student Teaching Right

SO YOU'VE RECEIVED YOUR STUDENT TEACHING PLACEMENT, AND YOUR FIRST DAY IS APPROACHING. BEFORE YOU STEP INTO THE CLASSROOM, LEARN HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF STUDENT TEACHING.



### Establish a confident and approachable appearance.

1. Be on time, and show up ready to go at the start of each day and activity. This will help you create a positive relationship with your cooperating teacher and students.
2. Dress for success. A good rule of thumb is to dress better than your students.
3. Know that building confidence takes time. Start by fostering community in your classroom. When you become more comfortable, head into the hallway during passing time and get to know more people.
4. Remember that things aren't expected to go perfectly. Student teaching is a learning experience. Reflect on positive and critical comments to continue improving.

### Know how to ask for help.

1. Ask for feedback throughout your placement. At the start, have a conversation with your cooperating teacher to talk about how you want to receive feedback. Having an open window for communication will make it easier to ask for help.
2. Don't be afraid to say no. Student teaching can be overwhelming. You need to take care of yourself so that you're able to take care of students. If your cooperating teacher is asking you to take on more than you can handle, it's okay to talk with them and establish boundaries.
3. Stay in touch. Your mentor teachers from previous student teaching experiences can be great resources for you in future placements and throughout your career.

### Prepare to navigate the school environment.

1. Talk to your cooperating teacher before you start. This will help you manage your expectations and learn more about the school environment.
2. Always practice professionalism. Remember that conversations about students or their work are not appropriate outside of a professional context.
3. Understand that routines may already be set in the classroom. Learn to understand these rules and their intent before trying to make any changes.
4. Remember that students come from backgrounds that may be different from yours. Get to know the community you're teaching in. It's a good idea to drive around to better understand where people live, work, shop, and eat.
5. Get involved outside of the classroom. Try to become a part of the school community. This can mean attending sports games, volunteering at school events, or asking another teacher if they need help running a club.

Get the most out of your Aspiring Educators program with these NEA resources that support you throughout your career.

### LEARN MORE

NEA's **SCHOOL ME PODCAST** episode "How to Become a Teacher" explores the steps required to pursue a teaching career. Listen at [nea.org/BecomeATeacher](https://nea.org/BecomeATeacher).

NEA **EdPractice** brings the best resources, tips, and inspiration direct to your inbox. Sign up at [nea.org/EdPractice](https://nea.org/EdPractice).

NEA CAN HELP YOU BE **PROFESSION-READY** on your first day in the classroom. Check out [nea.org/ProfessionReady](https://nea.org/ProfessionReady).



# 5

## Get an Early Glimpse Into Teaching

If you're a first- or second-year education major who is still wondering if you'd make a great teacher, don't wait until your last year of college to find out. Begin your experience in school now.

### **Volunteer in a school**

Volunteering connects you directly with students and offers a glimpse of real-world classroom experiences. You can lend a hand in the office, a classroom, the cafeteria, or an after-school program. There are also specific times when an extra adult is needed, such as during field trips or special events like parent night.

### **Visit a school**

Visit schools and spend time in classrooms before starting your student teaching. Find opportunities to observe, tutor, and learn what teaching is like.

### **Shadow a teacher**

Connect with a cooperating teacher—the key person in the student teaching program—and ask for help in identifying a teacher to shadow. A “day in the life” can introduce you to classroom expectations before you begin student teaching.



# 6

## Build a Successful Campus Chapter

If you're an NEA Aspiring Educator leader who has recently started a campus chapter or is working hard to get one off the ground, check out the “NEA Aspiring Educators Chapter Toolkit,” at [nea.org/AspiringEducatorsChapterToolkit](http://nea.org/AspiringEducatorsChapterToolkit). Among its many resources, you'll find tips and information on how to grow a strong campus organization. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

### **Recognize and value the diversity of chapter members.**

When leading an organization aimed at motivating and preparing the future professionals of NEA, it's crucial to intentionally recruit members from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, cultures, and voices. Leaders should also seek to value each member's individual skills and talents and use them to build and strengthen the chapter. An emphasis on the diversity of members in your chapter will help you to relate to a wide range of audiences on campus, deepen your understanding of perspectives different from your own, and ultimately enrich the education profession.

### **Plan activities that feel most relevant and useful to members.**

Chapter activities help create a local union family for Aspiring Educators to lean on—building resilience along the way. These events can vary among topics, and some may be as simple as a study group. Team building in different environments helps create the chemistry needed to show unity in support of public education, racial and social justice, labor unions, and more. Don't feel compelled to make your chapter look like something you've seen elsewhere on campus or across the country. Your chapter should reflect the members and students you seek to serve.

### **Pay it forward and prepare your successors.**

When stepping off your chapter leadership position, it is important to make yourself available to new leaders to address questions or concerns. These newly elected or appointed officers must feel supported in their positions of leadership, which may be overwhelming. Your continuing mentorship and fellowship with these leaders, even after graduating or transferring, reinforces the social connection needed between NEA members as we advocate for the collective advancement of public education.

**LEARN MORE**

Scan this code for your copy of the “NEA Aspiring Educators Chapter Toolkit.”





# Benefits of Membership

A LOOK INSIDE NEA

## What is the National Education Association?

We are the nation's leading organization committed to advancing the cause of public education. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NEA proudly claims 3 million members who work at every level of education—from preschool to university graduate programs. NEA affiliates are in every state and in more than 14,000 local communities nationwide.

## How does NEA function?

NEA members from across the U.S. set association policy, most notably through an annual Representative Assembly—called the “RA”—held the last week of June and/or first week of July. NEA members at the state and local levels elect more than 7,000 RA delegates, who then elect NEA's top officers, debate issues, and set NEA policy. NEA's Board of Directors and Executive Committee serve as the top decision-making bodies. Staff at the local, state, and national levels carry out policies implemented by the governing bodies.

## How does NEA help Aspiring Educators?

Members of the NEA Aspiring Educators (AE) program belong to a network of more than 40,000 students who believe in improved teacher education and support for prospective teachers. As the nation's largest pre-professional association for future educators, NEA connects practicing teachers and fellow NEA Aspiring Educators through state and national leadership conferences, workshops, and public forums. Members can also enrich their teaching and advocacy skills by holding local, state, or national office, or serving as a delegate to NEA's annual RA. AE members also serve on the NEA Board of Directors and NEA Resolutions Committee, and they serve on committees that address a variety of issues, including human rights, legislation, and membership.

Communities Redefining Education Advocacy Through Empowerment (CREATE) grants provide members with funding to support chapter and/or statewide community service projects that promote AE members. Projects may enhance public education; increase advocacy and outreach to communities; and support young educator involvement in the association as well as the development of innovative approaches and engagement. Grants (up to \$2,000) are awarded for projects that align with one or more of AE's core values: educator quality, community engagement, political action, and social justice. Submission deadlines are February 1 and October 15. For help with applications, email NEA Senior Policy Analyst Blake West at [bwest@nea.org](mailto:bwest@nea.org).

Help with tuition costs is available through the Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship (See Page 7). AE also provides information and assistance with student teacher certification and professional development.

**REBATE**  
\$20 dues rebate for every year of membership to NEA Aspiring Educators (up to four years) during the first teaching year. Details at [nea.org/AERebate](http://nea.org/AERebate).

## NEA ASPIRING EDUCATORS receive:

### SERVICES AND BENEFITS

- Subscription to *NEA Today for Aspiring Educators*, the magazine for members of NEA's Aspiring Educators program.
- Resources, job information, and links to other NEA student chapters at [nea.org/AspiringEducator](http://nea.org/AspiringEducator).
- \$1 million of in-classroom liability coverage through the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program.
- Opportunities at the national, state, and chapter levels to participate in outreach projects such as school renovation, literacy, and food bank support.
- Discounts for members and their parents on car purchases, magazine subscriptions, shopping, and more through the NEA Member Benefits programs. Details at [neamb.com](http://neamb.com).

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- NEA National Leadership Summit: March 10 – 12, 2023. For more information, visit [nea.org/LeadershipDevelopment](http://nea.org/LeadershipDevelopment).
- NEA Aspiring Educators Conference: June 28 – July 1, 2023. For information about attending, please email [AspiringEd@nea.org](mailto:AspiringEd@nea.org).
- Improve your practice as an educator and create better outcomes for your students with NEA's micro-credentials. Go to [cgps.nea.org/Microcredentials](http://cgps.nea.org/Microcredentials) and get started on your personalized, professional-learning journey.

## NEA

### National Education Association

Check out NEA's website for association news; links to NEA publications, state affiliates, and member benefits; information on special events such as NEA's Read Across America; and sites for and about members. Be sure to visit NEA's Aspiring Educators discussion board to chat with your fellow members.

[nea.org](http://nea.org)

Instagram: [@NEAaspiringed](https://www.instagram.com/NEAaspiringed)

### Education News

Get the latest education news and member stories, plus read articles about NEA activism, key issues facing educators, and more.

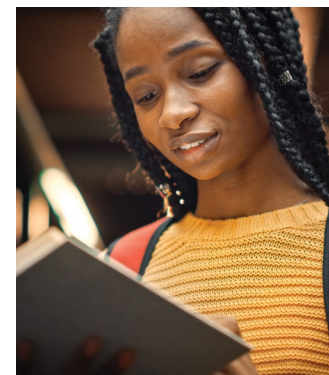
[nea.org/NEAToday](http://nea.org/NEAToday)

## New Teacher Tip

### BetterLesson

Founded by teachers for teachers, BetterLesson provides a simple way for educators to connect and share high-quality lesson plans. The Master Teacher Project contains comprehensive lessons in math, English language arts, and science, in addition to videos. BetterLesson also offers a full suite of professional development tools and services to schools, districts, and organizations.

[bit.ly/BetterLessonMasterTeacher](http://bit.ly/BetterLessonMasterTeacher)



## Community Engagement

### NEA's Read Across America

Celebrate a nation of diverse readers all year long with NEA's Read Across America website, where you'll find high-quality titles that will help your students see themselves and their experiences in the books they read. You'll also discover tips and project ideas for the annual event, free posters and bookmarks to download and print, and more. Be sure to sign up for the monthly email newsletter, too.

[ReadAcrossAmerica.org](http://ReadAcrossAmerica.org)

### Literacy Information and Communication System

Help expand social and economic opportunities for individuals with few or no literacy skills by teaching them how to read and write. This federal organization supports the development of high-quality literacy services and compiles data about literacy rates among various population groups in the United States.

[lincs.ed.gov](http://lincs.ed.gov)

## Political Action

### NEA's Action Center

We're speaking up for fully funded public schools, dismantling unjust systems, and giving our students the opportunities they need to succeed. Visit NEA's Action Center to help.

[nea.org/Action](http://nea.org/Action)

### Close Up Foundation

Through trips to Washington, D.C., and activities with local and state governments, the Close Up Foundation encourages teachers, students, and young adults to learn how government works and participate in the nation's electoral process.

[CloseUp.org](http://CloseUp.org)

## Social Justice

### NEA EdJustice

NEA EdJustice engages and mobilizes activists in the fight for racial, social, and economic justice in public education. Readers will find timely coverage of social justice issues in education and learn how to advocate for their students, schools, and communities.

[NEAEdJustice.org](http://NEAEdJustice.org)

### American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

The ACLU defends the civil rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Some of the ACLU's focus areas include civil rights in schools, the

separation of church and state, and the rights of People of Color.

[aclu.org](http://aclu.org)

### Human Rights Campaign (HRC)

The HRC defends the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender citizens. The HRC effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support to candidates for federal office, and works to educate the public on a wide array of topics—including workplace, family, and discrimination issues affecting the LGBTQ community.

[hrc.org](http://hrc.org)

### Implicit Bias Resources

Get the latest NEA resources to sharpen your racial analysis and deepen your understanding of implicit bias, microaggressions, and stereotypes.

[nea.org/Implicit-Bias-Resources](http://nea.org/Implicit-Bias-Resources)

### National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC)

The NDPC provides information for researchers, educators, and policymakers about students who are at risk of dropping out of school. The NDPC also serves as a clearinghouse on issues related to dropout prevention and offers strategies designed to increase the graduation rate in America's schools.

[DropoutPrevention.org](http://DropoutPrevention.org)



**American Association of University Women (AAUW)**

Since 1881, AAUW has worked to expand women’s rights in academia and other areas. Many projects focus on increasing girls’ interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering, and math. AAUW staunchly defends civil rights, gender equity, and women’s health and reproductive choices.

[aauw.org](http://aauw.org)

**NAACP**

For more than 100 years, the NAACP has worked for equity and democracy by opposing discriminatory and unjust policies. The primary focus of the NAACP remains the protection and enhancement of the civil rights of People of Color at the national, regional, and local levels. The NAACP advocates for supportive civil rights legislation.

[naacp.org](http://naacp.org)

**Education News**

**Education Week**

Education Week covers local, state, and national education news from preschool through twelfth grade. Periodic special reports cover topics ranging from technology to textbooks.

[EdWeek.org](http://EdWeek.org)

**Grants**

**The NEA Foundation**

The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators who propose innovative and promising ways to help all students experience academic success and reach their full potential—especially those who have been historically underserved by society’s institutions. Members of NEA Aspiring Educators can partner with experienced educators who submit grant applications. Examples of grant-funded work include study groups, action research, and innovative project-based learning that helps close achievement gaps. Grant amounts range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

[NEAFoundation.org](http://NEAFoundation.org)

**Job Market**

**GreatTeacher.net**

This free service allows applicants to search for teaching openings by geographic location and post resumes online. Each ad includes a job description and contact information.

[GreatTeacher.net](http://GreatTeacher.net)

**K12JobSpot**

This free website allows applicants to post their resumes and cover letters online, search for jobs by location, receive news about available teaching positions, view school websites, and send application materials electronically.

[k12jobspot.com](http://k12jobspot.com)

**2022 – 2023 Committees, Boards, and Resolutions**

**Advisory Committee of Aspiring Educators**

- Sabreena Shaller, Chair**  
*Pennsylvania*
- Natalie Balbuena**  
*Iowa*
- Jane Carreon**  
*Arizona*
- Demetrius Dove**  
*Georgia*
- Haileigh Miller**  
*South Carolina*
- Bianca Nicolescu**  
*New Jersey*
- Jonathan “Jonny” Otero**  
*Arizona*
- Julissa Taitano**  
*Oregon*
- Matthew Yuro**  
*New Jersey*
- Neal Zoglmann**  
*Kansas*

**NEA Board of Directors—Aspiring Educators Representatives**

- Emily Durbin**  
*Kentucky*
- Hannah St. Clair**  
*Oregon*
- Dajsha Williams**  
*Ohio*

**Resolutions Committee**

- Joseph Christensen**  
*California*
- Amy Lo**  
*California*
- Elizabeth White**  
*Oregon*

**Standing Committees Aspiring Educators Representatives**

**COMMITTEE ON ETHNIC-MINORITY AFFAIRS**

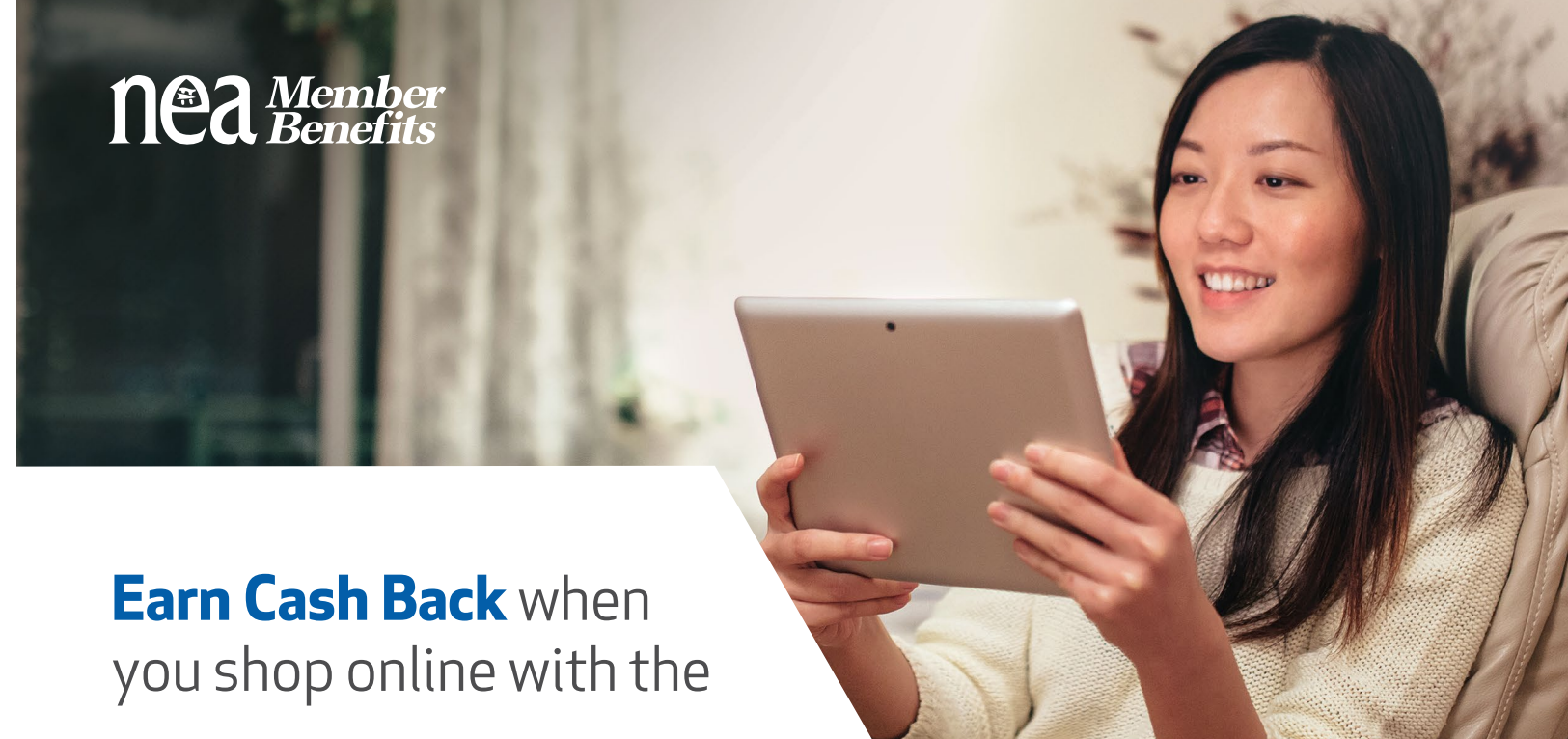
- Jonathan Oyaga**  
*California*

**COMMITTEE ON WOMEN’S ISSUES**

- Alana Rigby**  
*Florida*

**COMMITTEE ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY**

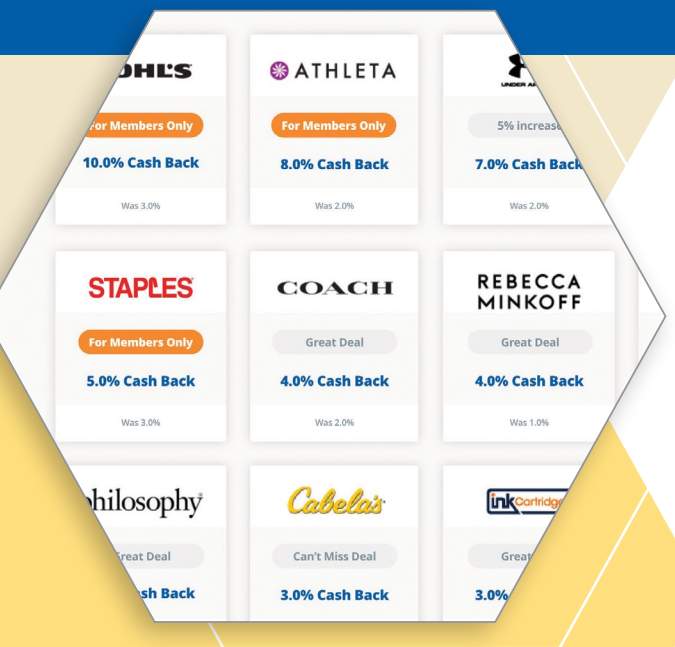
- Danny Adzima**  
*Oregon*



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# You Deserve a Rebate as a First Year Educator!

Former members of NEA Aspiring Educators are eligible to receive a \$20 rebate for each year of membership. That's up to \$80 of free money! It's our way of saying "Thanks" for continuing your NEA membership.

To qualify:

- Start your first year employed by a public school system.
- Join the local association as an NEA member during that same year.
- Submit your rebate application by June 1.

Visit [nea.org/AERebate](http://nea.org/AERebate) and apply for your rebate online (or download a copy of the form to submit via mail).