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**NEA: Driving solutions for our nation's public school students**  
*NEA investing \$60 million to improve student success*

WASHINGTON – NEA announced today a series of initiatives focused on expanding the ability of educators to create solutions in our public schools, including a fund that will invest more than \$60 million over the next 10 years to improve student success and strengthen the education profession. The Great Public Schools Fund (GPS Fund) is one of several recently launched NEA initiatives to prepare the next generation of teacher leaders and create concrete solutions for our nation's public school students.

“With more than 3 million members working in schools and communities across the nation, NEA is a leading voice for student success and great public schools,” said NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. “It is time for us to accelerate the transformation of public education. Nobody knows better than educators what their students need to succeed in the classroom. Through the new GPS Fund we are providing the resources to put these plans in action and help ensure opportunity, equity, and success for every public school student in America.”

Today the Center for American Progress hosted a candid discussion with Dennis Van Roekel, Massachusetts Teachers Association President Paul Toner, Iowa Education Association President Tammy Wawro, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Senior Associate Elena Silva and Richard Lee Colvin, Senior Associate, Cross & Joftus. The education leaders talked about the changing role of teachers unions in light of a wide range of issues, including educator quality, school improvement, and educator leadership.

In his remarks, Van Roekel described the transformation the country's largest union is going through as far-ranging and far-reaching, but with three common threads:

- *Investments*, using the GPS Fund to invest in educators' innovative ideas that will drive their students to succeed and bring the joy of teaching and learning back into the classroom.
- *Leadership* in the profession, preparing the next generation of educator leaders to define and improve their own practice.
- *Partnerships* to face today's challenges, alongside parents, the community and organizations that share the belief that public education is important to the economic prosperity and the democratic values of our country.

**\$60 Million Great Public Schools Fund**

The NEA GPS Fund was created by the 2013 Representative Assembly in July to allow state and local affiliates to apply for funds to help them improve the quality of public education and to assist in developing and implementing a proactive agenda that empowers educators to lead for the success for every student. Since this past fall, NEA has already awarded more than \$1 million to 13 projects across the country. The grants range widely in amount and

area of work. One major focus of the first round of grants was to assist in the effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in states such as California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon and Washington.

“The new Common Core State Standards are a transformation for the students in our nation’s public school system and we owe it to them to provide teachers with the time, tools and resources to get it right,” said Van Roekel. “Our members embrace the promise of the Common Core State Standards – that all students will gain the critical thinking and creative skills they need to succeed, regardless of where they live. In order to fulfill the standards’ worthy goals, we need an equal commitment to common sense implementation. We owe it to our students to provide them and their teachers with the time, tools and resources to get it right. Where school districts are failing to step up with the needed investments for implementation, NEA and its state affiliates are working to step in to help our members meet those needs.”

In addition to work around the Common Core, the grants will support innovative projects and ideas proposed by educators to boost student learning and strengthen the quality of teaching. These include peer assistance and review programs, mentoring and other professional development programs, school improvement initiatives to turn around struggling schools and more training programs for members related to ELL students, cultural competence, bullying, more school safety/anti-bullying programs, and technology initiatives to improve classroom instruction and student learning.

GPS Grant examples include:

- Stadium View School in the Hennepin County detention center in Minnesota was awarded \$25,000 to support its project “Restorative practice, social connectedness and resiliency.” Stadium View serves students in the 11-21 age-range (the average age is 16) and the majority of the students are two to three years behind in terms of education. Science teacher Tarri Levine works with the students to use creative expression to tap into their passion for learning, build up their self-worth, keep them engaged with their academics and increase the amount of quality time they spend learning. The grant money will be used for self-publishing examples of poetry and music produced by students and the Hennepin County libraries have agreed to house the poetry books.
- The Maryland State Education Association’s goal is to ensure that educators continue to be leaders in supporting student and teacher success with new Common Core-based curriculum. The \$100,00 GPS Grant will serve to create a diverse cadre of 46 leaders from around the state to deliver regional Common Core State Standards professional development programs and activities in a variety of engaging formats to their colleagues, parents, community representatives, and education stakeholders. Local school districts in Maryland have embarked on a full-scale implementation of the CCSS in English/language arts, literacy, and mathematics in the 2013-14 school year. Building the skills of teachers to successfully implement the CCSS is critical to enhancing student learning and improving student success with the new standards.
- The Massachusetts Teachers Association is partnering with Teach Plus on MTA’s Common Core Collaborative. They are developing a group of 150 teachers who are creating lessons aligned with the CCSS. The goal of this \$150,000 grant is to improve student learning through better instruction aligned with the new standards. The collaborative was launched in September when more than 500 educators took part in a full day of professional development in aligning curricula with the CCSS. In the next phase, three groups of 50 teachers are being trained in the CCSS and are developing lessons aligned with the standards in five three-hour sessions. These lessons will be shared online with other teachers throughout the state.

### **Next generation of Educator Leaders**

NEA is taking the lead within the education profession through a series of initiatives that put educators in positions of leadership within their practice. The Association and BetterLesson recently launched a new web site, [cc.betterlesson.com/mtp](http://cc.betterlesson.com/mtp). The site, where teachers share what works in the classroom, features more than 3,000

classroom-ready lessons that are easily accessible and can be integrated into any curriculum. Earlier this month, NEA, the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards announced the national Teacher Leadership Initiative (TLI), a joint endeavor to develop a new generation of leaders within the teaching profession. NEA has also partnered with [Teach Plus](#) to launch a selective fellowship that will empower solutions-oriented teachers, most of whom are in the first 10 years of their careers, to advise union leadership on teacher engagement and retention. As the education leader, NEA is aiming to empower teachers to lead and shape education policy, and prepare the next generation of teacher leaders.

These leadership initiatives build on work that the states and affiliates had already been doing locally with great success and will now be available nationally.

“As a union of professional educators, we must be the leading advocates for the profession, for taking charge of quality, and for all of our students. We must put forward our best ideas for improving our schools and what we do in our classrooms,” said Paul Toner, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. “That is why the MTA has promoted and supported a new educator evaluation system, initiatives in expanded learning time, new innovation schools and, most recently, in partnership with NEA and Teach Plus, significant training and professional development for teachers statewide in the development and implementation of the Common Core State Standards.”

“Working in collaboration with legislative, community, and school leaders, Iowa educators have taken the lead in establishing pathways that utilize the wisdom and expertise of teacher leaders to provide training, professional development, and appropriate growth for colleagues in the profession,” said Tammy Wawro, President of the Iowa State Education Association. “Through Iowa’s Teacher Leadership and Compensation system, our Teacher Leadership Initiative and our ongoing legislative task forces, Iowa educators are involved in every aspect of building our great schools. We know that excellence begins in the classroom, and every student is entitled to the best we can offer.”

“This is an important moment in NEA’s history and I’m very proud to be a part of it. We’re committed to student success,” Van Roekel said. “Our Teacher Leadership Initiative, BetterLesson partnership, GPS Grants and other initiatives will enable us to join forces with our partners to raise up the good ideas of NEA members, our smart policies, and our successful programs and spread all of this to every corner of the country to benefit students and the future of public education in America.”

For more information on the Great Public Schools Fund, please [click here](#).

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*The National Education Association ([www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)) is the nation’s largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers.*



Great Public Schools  
for Every Student



NEA is issuing a renewed call to action- **Raise Your Hand**- a national initiative to mobilize educators, parents, and community leaders who share our commitment to ensuring the success of **all** our students. By tapping into their passion and power, we will unite our members and join forces with parents and community leaders and elected officials across the country to fulfill the promise of public education and prepare every student to succeed. Our students need us and we will act in the urgency of **now** to take action and mobilize others to raise their hands for our students and quality public education.

Raise Your Hand calls for everyone to move people beyond just talking to delivering measurable results for our students. More than a campaign and much larger than NEA, this movement will bring people together, lift up good ideas, smart policies and successful programs. We're working together to spread good ideas to schools in communities across the nation.

Together, we can lead a movement to transform public education in America by ensuring:

- **Successful Students.** Believe the quality of one's education shouldn't be determined by income or zip code? Then Raise Your Hand for student success. All students should enter schools where the curriculum is aligned with high standards that help unleash their genius and passion. Students must have equal meaningful educational opportunity that prepares them to think critically, solve problems, and attain global competence. College and career-ready standards—[Common Core State Standards](#)—have the potential not only to drive deeper learning for students, but better instruction from educators, and more tools and support based upon each student's unique needs. We will push to have educators' voices help review the next generation of assessments of student learning, so we go beyond "bubble tests" that are not aligned to the curriculum and that currently punish more than they promote student learning and educator excellence.
- **Accomplished Education Professionals.** Believe every student should have the best possible educators in their schools? Then Raise Your Hand to create accomplished education professionals in every school. Too many educators struggle in environments that do not provide them with the training and resources necessary to succeed as professionals. Educators know that student success is the most important outcome of their performance but they must receive professional development to enhance their practice and they must be empowered at every level in the development of curriculum and assessments. Educators can improve their knowledge and skills by connecting to training opportunities, lesson plans, and more through our [Great Public Schools Network](#), the [NEA Academy](#), our [NEA-BetterLesson Common Core](#) site, and more.
- **Empowered Education Leaders.** Believe quality education policy and programs require the input of talented education professionals? Then Raise Your Hand to engage and support new and veteran educators in setting the standard and leading the professions. Current educators also need to be prepared and equipped to attract and engage a new generation of educators who are equally committed to creating student enthusiasm for learning. The NEA, together with partners, is overhauling its leadership development framework and competencies in order to equip the next generation of educator leaders who will continue to drive NEA's student-centered agenda. Our Teacher Leadership projects and our effort to

Elevate Education Support Professionals' Careers will not only emphasize high standards for entry into the profession, but an ongoing commitment to excellence throughout all educators' careers.

- **Dynamic Collaboration.** Want to transform a school? Then Raise Your Hand and bring together the educators, parents, members of the school community and local leaders and empower them to define student success— and create a plan to accomplish it. Parent and community involvement are essential elements of student success. Together we can create change that will make a difference in the lives of our students and the future of our nation. Our [Great Public Schools Fund](#) will provide \$60 million over the next ten years alone to NEA members at the state and local level, in partnership with others, to design programs and plans that help students succeed, enhance educator quality and practice, and involve parents and the community in their public schools.

Raise Your Hand requires unprecedented and dynamic collaboration. We are deeply committed to bringing the full resources of our more than 3 million NEA members to this huge body of work, but we can't do it alone. Make a commitment today to share the responsibility for ensuring Great Public Schools for Every Student. **Join us and Raise Your Hand for Public Education and Student Success!**



## Great Public Schools Grants

In July 2013, NEA members voted to develop a fund that would provide grants to affiliates with promising projects and ideas to help improve student success. This fund became known as The NEA Great Public Schools (GPS) Fund. To qualify for a grant, applicants must be able to demonstrate how their programs and projects would enhance the learning and support of their students, support professional development and leadership and contribute to the overall success of the students in their schools. As the grants will support innovative projects and ideas to boost student learning, many of the approved projects address issues/subjects of paramount concern to educators everywhere, including but not limited to: Peer Assistance and Review programs, Mentoring Programs, Successful Implementation of Common Core Standards, School Safety/Anti-Bullying training, initiatives to increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers, as well as Professional Development and Technology. In determining which applications would be funded, NEA developed a list of criteria based on the key elements of NEA's [Raise Your Hand campaign](#). Since the Fund's inception, NEA has awarded more than \$1 million to more than 13 projects. Additional grants will be awarded and some original grants will be renewed.

State	Affiliate	Description
Alaska	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	<p>Kenai Peninsula Education Association will use their \$20,893.00 NEA Great Public Schools Fund Grant to help Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) develop a cadre of teacher instructional observers who will help provide individual teachers critical feedback in the classroom. Interacting with highly skilled observers (both teachers and administrators) improves teacher quality as it allows for much more growth than a standard evaluative observation.</p> <p>The program will develop 12 teacher instructional observers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, alongside a cadre of administrative observers to develop a valid and reliable teacher evaluation process.</p>
California	California Teachers Association	<p>California Teachers Association (CTA) was awarded a \$250,000 NEA Great Public Schools grant to ensure the successful implementation of the Common Core Standards (CCSS) in the California. With the support of NEA, CTA will partner with the California Department of Education and the West Ed to pool and coordinate material and human resources in a multi-year implementation support program.</p> <p>The grant will support day-long invitational meetings of teachers and administrators (approximately 1,000 educators) to an orientation to the CCSS. Those teachers will then bring back what they've learned to their local districts. The meetings will be conducted jointly by the California Department of Education (CDE), WestEd, and CTA staff.</p> <p>The grant will also provide funding to develop a program to train and coordinate regional teams of mentor teachers who will be available to deliver practical coaching as their colleagues learn the skills necessary to implement the content in the CCSS. These teams will cultivate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to support their local colleagues through face-to-face and online collaboration.</p>

Colorado	Colorado Education Association	<p>Colorado Education Association (CEA) will develop a partnership with CEA, Durango Education Association, Durango School District, and the Public Education Business Coalition (PEBC) to design cooperative a process that invests in professional learning embedded in the classroom.</p> <p>The NEA Great Public Schools Fund Grant will allow CEA to emphasize the successful implementation of Common Core, student learning assessments, educator accountability and other issues related to teacher’s practice.</p> <p>The CEA believes that the value of Association membership is inextricably linked to its success in promoting issues related to teaching and learning and advancing the profession. The CEA believes that educator leadership is essential in facilitating improvements in instruction and promoting practices that will encourage the success of all students.</p> <p>The CEA will also partner with EnetColorado to provide online resources to help with the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS).</p>
Illinois	Illinois Education Association	<p>The Illinois Education Association has been awarded \$222,000 to lead a cohesive train-the-trainer program in an effort to train educators state-wide to implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Illinois.</p> <p>The grant will fund the training of up to 20 members in five locations across the state with the expectation that the trainers will support others at the school level. Online supports will also be provided, which will include online module training for use at the school level with technical assistance being provided by the cadre, program coordinator, and the CEI department within IEA/NEA. The continued development of resources will be accessible through the IEA website.</p> <p>The plan includes providing training and support to educators statewide through a CCS program coordinator (IEA member) who is an expert in common core standards. The grant will also support the Living Library, a valuable online resource that will house Common Core materials that are updated regularly.</p>
Maryland	Maryland State Education Association	<p>Local school districts in Maryland will embark on a full-scale implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (ELA), literacy, and mathematics in school year 2013-2014.</p> <p>A key to success in implementing the CCSS, and ensure student success, is to provide teachers with support, training, and resources to assist in instruction. MSEA’s goal is to create a diverse cadre of leaders from around the state to deliver CCSS professional development programs and activities directly to educators to improve their professional practice. The professional development will be delivered regionally for a variety of audiences, from MSEA members to parents, community representatives, and other education stakeholders.</p>

Massachusetts	Massachusetts Teachers Association	<p>The Massachusetts Teachers Association will engage educators in helping shape the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and define the policies around the effective measurement of student learning to ensure student success. This grant will support locals who actively bring educators into the decision-making process of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning the effective implementation of CCSS and adoption of effective measurement of student learning.</p> <p>The Massachusetts Teachers Association will also partner with TeachPlus and other external organizations, in order to promote readiness for the implementation for these new standards.</p>
Minnesota	Stadium View School	<p>Stadium View School in the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center (Minnesota) was awarded \$25,000 to support the project “Restorative practice, social connectedness and resiliency.” Stadium View serves students in the 11-21 age-range (the average age is 16) and the majority of the students are two to three years behind in terms of school; their average length of time in the center and school is 14 days. Science teacher Tarri Levine works with the students to find something they are passionate about and uses it to build up their self-worth, honing in on wanting them to continue with academics and increase the amount of quality time they spend learning. The grant money will also be used for self-publishing examples of poetry and music produced by students. The Hennepin County libraries have agreed to house the poetry books. Levine is working with students to self-publish a poetry book and music CD.</p>
Ohio	Ohio Education Association	<p>OEA will use the NEA Great Public Schools Fund Grant to strengthen educators’ voices in school improvement while advocating for the effective implementation of Ohio’s New Learning Standards (ONLS). The funding will be also be used to help educators develop resources for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as well as advocate for the teaching and learning conditions necessary for student and educator success.</p> <p>The driving issues for the OEA will be ONLS and the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. They will support educators in becoming leaders and messengers advocating for quality teaching and learning conditions in their schools. The immediate goal is for educators to succeed at school district integration with the new standards, assessments and evaluation.</p> <p>OEA’s goal is to lead a student-centered agenda, improve the quality of public education and elevate the teaching profession.</p>



Oregon	Oregon Education Association	<p>With the NEA Great Public Schools Fund grant, OEA will take lead on the effective implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) while engaging with parents and community leaders to positively influence the classroom experience for students and educators.</p> <p>OEA will engage and empower educators to advocate on professional practice and education policy issues, lead local quality education initiatives; and build a continuum of support for the education profession and strategies for educational transformation.</p> <p>The grant will support the OEA to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with partners to create a comprehensive, sustainable long-term plan for CCSS implementation, including professional development.</li> <li>2. Develop a tool or utilize an existing tool to assess educator and school district implementation needs and inform professional learning opportunities.</li> <li>3. Develop and/or adopt professional development modules and materials that can be used by individual educators, local associations and school districts.</li> <li>4. Engage in regional parent and community townhalls to help the public understand how important it is to implement CCSS successfully.</li> </ol>
Utah	Alpine Education Association	<p>As standards in Utah evolve to meet the dynamic needs of students preparing to compete in the global economy, the Alpine Education Association (AEA) is helping students and teachers stay ahead of the curve. AEA, in partnership with the Utah Education Association (UEA), will use the \$5,000 NEA Great Public Schools Fund Grant to support teacher quality in schools by providing each AEA member with a toolkit with guidelines to successfully meet expectations in each new teacher standard recently established by the Utah State Office of Education.</p>
Washington	Federal Way Education Association	<p>The Federal Way Education Association committed resources to create a cadre of exceptional educators to help craft quality improvement plans for educators who are not meeting teaching and learning standards. Specifically recruited and trained, these educators have been viewed as ‘exceptional’ by their peers and evaluators. They successfully assisted principals in crafting fair and reasonable improvement plans that would help struggling colleagues meet the standards of the new evaluation system. The results were dramatically positive and feedback on the work of the cadre to help advance the Association’s goal of a quality educator in every classroom has been highly favorable. Federal Way Education Association received a grant to continue this important body of work and expand it to include teachers in the development of teacher evaluations and lead the effort to promote teacher growth/improvement.</p>

Washington	Puget Sound UniServ Council	<p>The Puget Sound UniServ Council will use the NEA Great Public Schools Fund Grant to reach out to new educators to identify their professional needs so that they can develop tailored programming. They will then implement a SPARKS program to provide the specific information and training that will build the quality of the new educator’s practice. The grant will allow the Puget Sound UniServ Council to provide professional development to educators directly, both on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and in building the skills and knowledge that could lead educators to national board certification.</p> <p>The Puget Sound UniServ Council will also develop a training that will help educators reach out to the community and engage parents in the successful implementation of CCSS.</p>
Washington	Washington Education Association	<p>The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) represent the next wave of reform affecting members and students in every K-12 public school. The state of Washington is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Lead Procurement State and a “Governing State,” as well as a Next Generation Science Standards “lead state partner.” Washington Education Association (WEA) is developing and implementing a new, integrated statewide professional development network that will engage and professionally develop members, train leaders and staff, build stronger locals and collaborate with local communities. With this grant, WEA’s professional development network will significantly enhance CCSS implementation and thus positively affect members and students.</p>



Great Public Schools  
for Every Student



## **NEA's Leadership Agenda**

NEA's Leadership Agenda is about the identification, development, and deployment of educator leaders who are focused on student learning, responsible for quality professional practice, and committed to the core values of the NEA. Too often, Leadership in the NEA context has meant preparing members to take on formal roles within the Association at the local, state, and national level. Outside the NEA context, Leadership has too often been defined as a narrow set of roles for teachers and other educators in school governance. Neither of these definitions tell the whole story of what it means to lead a student-centered Association and lead the education professions. The NEA has already expanded this definition of leadership and developed a range of programs and initiatives to develop educators within three frames of Next Generation Leadership:

- Instructional Leadership: Leading to improve student learning and professional practice;
- Policy Leadership: Leading to impact education and social policy that supports quality teaching and learning;
- Union Leadership: Leading to build the next generation of a strong, unified, and student-centered education association.

To address development within these frames of education leadership, the NEA is building pipelines on two related but separate paths:

- Association leaders who are prepared to "lead the profession" and organize members around a student-centered, professional improvement agenda.
- Education leaders who may never have a formal role in the Association but who are leading efforts to improve professional practice and who are deeply committed to the core values of the Association and union engagement.

*This NEXT GENERATION LEADER works collaboratively – both within and outside the Association – to co-create solutions designed to shape the future of education, improve student learning, achieve educational equity, enhance professional practice and the quality of professionals, and advance successful solutions that drive national, state and district level policies.*

NEA new Leadership Competencies are designed to guide the NEA, its affiliates, and its members in developing learning opportunities to ensure that emerging next generation leaders have the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to lead education professions and the union. The NEA Leadership Agenda incorporates a range of strategies including: Common Core-centered instructional support; local leadership development; networking educators to learn from one another; innovative partnerships with a range of organizations; and funding innovative, Association-led efforts to improve educator practice and student learning.

## NEA Leadership Initiatives

**2014 NEA Leadership Summits:** To expose leaders and prospective leaders to the NEA Leadership Competencies and create a new leadership development paradigm within the Association that will embed these Competencies into all leadership development pipelines. To re-set expectations for leadership journey/pathway and the importance of rejuvenating leadership.

**NEA's Teacher Leadership Initiative (TLI):** To establish a comprehensive teacher leadership year-long pilot project and fully implement six cohorts of TLI candidates in six affiliates: Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Colorado, Iowa, and Arizona. The TLI is a comprehensive year-long curriculum, a leadership capstone project, and a leadership assessment.

**ESP's Leaders for Tomorrow:** To identify, train, develop, and deploy the next generation of ESP leaders across the nation to prepare them for Goal 2 leadership.

**Elevating ESP Careers:** To identify, develop and implement strategies that enable ESPs to elevate their careers and lead the professions, building support for all educators working together to meet the needs of all students.

**NEA's Pre-RA Leadership Symposium:** Deliver a first-of-its-kind Pre-RA event that will attract at least 1,000 RA delegates and 1,000 Goal 2 Leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue and plan of action to advance NEA's Goal 2 Agenda.

**NEA/BetterLesson Master Teacher Project:** Provide an exciting learning opportunity for teachers transitioning to the Common Core State Standards and to provide recognition and professional opportunities to exceptional teachers across the country. Over 3,000 Common Core-aligned lessons have been developed by about 100 Master Teacher NEA members.

**NEA's Common Core Workgroup:** Empower and equip our members to advocate for implementing the common core state standards with fidelity; strengthen their professional practice to ensure they can deliver deeper instruction in the context of the new standards and the required shifts; ensure that educators are provided the resources and time to collaborate regarding their practice, and assessment of student work.

**NEA/TeachPlus Future of the Profession Fellowships:** Provide 58 teachers and NEA members an exciting year-long program to gain a foundation in education policy, research, and best practices from around the nation and to provide recognition and professional opportunities to early career teachers (years 3 -10).

**The NEA GPS Network:** To provide an online network and resource tool that engages NEA members, partners and community in collaborating to improve public education and promote student success.