

AEA Educators Work with Legislators at the 88th General Assembly

Contents:

Legislative Wrap-Up

From an education perspective, the two major issues in the 88th Arkansas General Assembly were education funding and teacher evaluation procedures. Page 1

President's Column

Your AEA Lobby Team and other staff worked nearly 24/7 on issues that affect the lives of students and all public school employees during this session. Page 2

AEA Election Winners Announced

Congratulations to the winners of the AEA Primary Election and the AEA Final Election. Page 2

The NEW Summer Leaders Conference

The True Colors™ program helped local leaders learn more about leadership styles and communication. Page 3

Four Arkansas Schools Honored as Blue Ribbon Nominees

This national honor recognizes academic excellence in schools that have either performed in the top 10 percent in the state, or made exceptional progress in academic achievement. Page 4

In Memory of Past President C. Ray Baker

C. Ray Baker Jr., a past president and longtime friend of the Arkansas Education Association, passed away on March 4, 2011. Page 4

AEA RA Delegate Election Alert

Nomination forms for NEA Director representing Arkansas and alternate, ESP AEA board and alternates are on page 6. Nomination forms for Retired AEA RA delegates are on page 7. Deadline is September 2, 2011.

AEA Holds First NBCT Conference

Over 50 National Board Certified teachers and other education professionals attended AEA's first NBCT Conference, held March 12, 2011. Page 5

AEA Member Awarded NEA Foundation Grant

AEA member Dr. JoEllen McAdams is the recipient of a \$5,000 Learning and Leadership Grant from the NEA Foundation. Page 5

Changes Planned for Professional Development Conference

This year's conference will be held November 3-4, 2011 at the DoubleTree Hotel and Robinson Convention Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. Page 8

Nancy Kline Announces Retirement

AEA's Membership Processing Specialist, announced her retirement effective July 11. Page 8

Act 1209 Establishes the Teacher Excellence and Support System



A small group of legislators led by Rep. Johnnie Roebuck (D-Arkadelphia) worked with AEA, the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), the Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA), the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Arkansans for Better Schools, to try and craft a teacher evaluation bill that would provide for a statewide uniform system for evaluating teachers and administrators. The final version of the bill, Act 1209, was signed into law by Gov. Mike Beebe on April 5, 2011. Those present during the signing of Act 1209 were:

Front row (left to right): Cheryl Reinhart, Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR); Rep. Johnnie Roebuck (D-Arkadelphia); Gov. Mike Beebe; Sen. Mary Ann Salmon (D-North Little Rock); Sen. Joyce Elliott (D-Little Rock); Rep. Ann Clemmer (R-Bryant).
Middle row (left to right): Danny Knight, AAEA; Rep. Donna Hutchinson (R-Bella Vista); Luke Gordy, Arkansans for Educational Accountability; Rep. Jerry Brown (D-Wynne); Dan Farley, ASBA; Richard Hutchinson, AEA; Dr. Tom Kimbrell, ADE.

Back row (left to right): Dr. Richard Abernathy, AAEA; Mike Mertens, AAEA; Mickey McFatrige, ASBA; Ron Harden, ASBA; Donna Morey, AEA president; Dr. Brent Benda, BLR.

Legislative Wrap-Up: 88th Arkansas General Assembly

The 88th General Assembly convened on January 10 and adjourned on April 27. From an education perspective, the two major issues in this session were education funding and teacher evaluation procedures.

Teacher Evaluation

Recently there has been much attention called to teacher evaluation. A report released in 2009 by the New Teacher Project identified how poor teacher performance is rarely identified or addressed in teacher evaluation systems. While some have claimed that teacher associations/unions are the cause of this, the truth is that NEA and its affiliates, includ-

ing the AEA, have long called for reform of teacher evaluation systems. Too often, administrators have been inadequately trained or not trained at all; too often evaluations are superficial, based almost exclusively on brief classroom observations; too often, evaluations have made no effort to actually help teachers improve their practice.

AEA has worked closely with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and other education stakeholders to address these problems by adopting a model for teacher evaluation in Arkansas that is based on the standards for effective teaching as

written in *A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson.

The legislative session began with a push by the group Arkansans for Education Reform, who advocated that 55% (later changed to "at least 50%") of the weight of a teacher's evaluation be based on standardized test scores and that the new evaluation system be implemented fully in the 2011-12 school year.

AEA stated firmly that we would not agree to any teacher evaluation bill that fixed any percentage of weight on a teacher's evaluation based on test scores. Too many reports from nation



From the President: Organized Defense and Offense Are Needed to Win the Legislative Game

By Donna Morey, AEA President

The Arkansas Legislative Session started slowly but ended in a flurry. Your AEA Lobby Team and other staff worked nearly 24/7 on issues that affect the lives of students and all public school employees during this session. Rich Nagel, Richard Hutchinson, Karen Carter, Peggy Nabors and I were supported by the Communications Department and the AEA support staff. I must thank those individuals for their commitment to the organization and our members. AEA officers Brenda Robinson and Barbara Davidson spent their spring break lobbying with us. Fort Smith retired members (Donnie Johnson, Cossatot River School District) and other staff also took their time to help lobby. Thanks to all who

made phone calls and e-mail contacts with your local state representatives and senators. It takes all of our voices together to make sure the message is heard. The legislative hearings held around the state prior to the legislative session provided opportunities for AEA members and potential members to hear and express concerns on legislative issues. The postcards and Legislative Update e-mails were additional methods used to inform and hopefully encourage members to lobby and talk with their representatives and senators. Thank you again for accepting the call to action.

In any competition, winning comes from a combination of a great defense and well-planned offense. I am so grateful that our team successfully defended the attack on teacher evaluations being based on student standardized test scores. We were able to keep the public school education stakeholders together to

defeat that charge. We used evidenced-based research and Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson to change the game plan.

Offensively we pushed forward for increases in minimum educational salaries, a fair grievance bill, and increases in state funds for public school employee health insurance. We attempted to bring back a bill for the Fair Dismissal of Educational Support Professionals, and were successful in getting a bill to clarify sick leave with a provision for recovery of leave if professional development hours made up on non-contracted time. We spoke in committees for civil rights, fair workers compensation, unemployment insurance, tax policies and many other issues that have a huge impact on students, their families and public school employees of Arkansas.

There is no off-season or spring practice time at the AEA. We are advocating for members and public school students all the time. It is important that all members are engaged in organizing strong local affiliates. You are the AEA! Go, Fight, Win!

AEA Election Winners Announced

Congratulations to the winners of the AEA Primary Election, held on February 7-March 1, 2011, and the AEA Final Election, held on March 28-April 19, 2011. The winners of each election are listed below.

AEA Primary Election

NEA Delegate - Region 3
Sue Stuart (Texarkana)

NEA Delegate - Region 7

Dorothy M. Hennings (Helena/West Helena)

NEA Delegate - Region 9

Frank L. Shaw (Forrest City)

NEA Cluster Delegate for District 10

Evelyn Wilson-Thomas (Strong-Huttig)

NEA Cluster Delegate for District 13

Juanita Houston Pruitt (Wynne)

Retired NEA Delegate

Hazel M. Coleman (Helena Retired)

Retired NEA Delegate

Sue M. Smith (Batesville Retired)

Retired-AEA President/NEA Delegate

Sue M. Smith (Batesville Retired)

Retired-AEA Vice President

Paulette Parker (Paragould Retired)

Alternate Retired-AEA Board Member, Position 2

Betty Jo Schrader (Hot Springs Retired)

AEA Final Election

AEA President/NEA Delegate

Donna Morey (Little Rock)

Alternate-AEA Board Member -District I, LREA, Position 3

Boyce Pearson (Little Rock)

AEA Board Member - District VII

Kathy Howell (Clarksville)

The mission of the Arkansas Education Association is to empower its members to promote great public schools, and to strengthen the teaching profession and improve the wellbeing of its members. President Donna Morey and Executive Director Rich Nagel. Communications: Lori Dimond, Shannon Perna and Brenda Walton. Four issues are published yearly. Copyright 2011 AEA. All materials in this periodical may be reproduced by its members for distribution to AEA affiliates.

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AEA Legislative Alerts are sent out via e-mail during the session. If you have not already received an alert, please call the AEA office to make sure we have updated e-mail information.



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An updated version of the board is maintained on our Web site.

2011-12 New board members will be effective July 15, 2011



Local Leaders Enjoy a "Colorful" Summer Leaders Conference



NEA facilitator Cory Wofford meets with local leaders about building stronger local associations.

Orange and green and blue and gold – the bright and bold colors of summer were also the colors of AEA's Summer Leaders Conference, held June 17 and 18, 2011 in Little Rock

Based on the True Colors™ International personality identification system (<http://www.true-colors.com/index.html>), the conference was structured around breakout sessions which were designed to help participants determine their leadership style and become more effective leaders within their local associations and school systems.

AEA President Donna Morey agreed wholeheartedly with the message delivered during the conference. "Building strong locals is the only way for our organization to thrive at both the state and national levels," she said. "This was a good start to that goal. A local, state or national organization can't be run or managed by one person – it takes a team."

True Colors™ is a model for understanding people based on four central personality styles, or colors. The sessions were lead by three NEA staff members who have been certified as True Colors™ facilitators: Cory Wofford, organizational specialist, NEA Southeast Region; Carolyn McClain Johnson, affiliate relations specialist, NEA Member Benefits; and Carol Nelson, organizational specialist/ union organizer, NEA Pacific Region/ ESP Quality.

When the conference began on Friday afternoon, five-member teams from each participating local explored in detail the True Colors™ system using a set of four cards that helped them determine their general personality types. This quick yet effective process not only gave them insight into themselves, but also into how others may see them.

The Goal before the Role

That evening, attendees were treated to a truly inspirational presentation from Kevin F. Gilbert, president of the Mississippi Association of Educators, that neatly tied in with the theme of personality identification, and also emphasized the importance of unity within a local.

"Team Arkansas, I want to talk to you about being an effective leadership team," Gilbert began. "Our schools are dying to have people out there on the forefront, who have the tools we need to provide best services for students."

He pointed out that right now, each and every person present was a member of an "elite team," the National Education Association, with a membership of 3.2 million who are all fighting for the same cause. It is this unity behind a common goal that makes the NEA team – and every team from the national to the local level – strong and effective.

"The goal must be the most important thing," he said. "You put the goal before the role."

In order to achieve that goal, he said that the structure of any group is vitally important, and that each member must have acceptance for their roles. This, he said, is where real leadership comes in – a leader's true role is to recognize the value of each member and the contributions they can make towards achieving a common goal.

"Arkansas, you have all the tools necessary to make a significant difference in the schools of Arkansas," Gilbert said. "You have members all across this state, people with various cultural backgrounds and talents, with

one thing in common – they have a passion for education. It's time to build teams throughout this state and make an impact on education in Arkansas. We can't let our differences distract us; we must embrace them in order to become an effective team to promote public education."

Communication Is the Key

The NEA facilitators Wofford, Johnson and Nelson resumed the breakout sessions Saturday morning and expanded upon True Colors™ philosophy. Again, clear communications and the ability to discern and respond appropriately to the different personalities was a key focus of the discussions.

Wofford said, "If you have one negative situation that causes a person to leave, it's been shown to take from seven to eight positive events to get that person back into the fold. It's all about relationships." He emphasized the importance of a leader's credibility and his or her ability to follow through.

Both Nelson and McClain agreed. "It's very important to know how someone interprets you," McClain said. "As leaders, you need to always be aware of the attributes of the four different colors."

Association representatives are often the first line of defense for public school employees who need help. Knowing how to effectively communicate, and how to assess and understand the many different personalities that we encounter every day, can go a long way in resolving an issue before it escalates into major conflict.

Enthusiasm for the program was high, and many attendees believed that the principles behind it could help them improve communications within their locals. "The four colors help us learn how to relate to others," said Frank Clary, vice president of the Fordyce EA. "I'd like to take it back to my local and test our members, because I think it would help us work together."

Turning Good into Great

How does a good organization become great? The answer, according to NEA Executive Committee member Christy Levings, is – again – teamwork.

During her Saturday keynote address, Levings spoke of the importance of building high-performing teams as the key to success, not only within a local, but for any major endeavor.

"Anyone can have a great team," she assured the audience. "It's not magic." She listed five major points that must be in place to have a great team: 1) The ability to listen to each other; 2) The willingness to learn together and make a commitment to be different; 3) The ability to know how to ask good 4) A clear vision and mission – which, she pointed out, we already have as members of NEA; and 5) Good communication.

In addition, she said that the definition of a great team calls for a record of superior performance. "We have to provide evidence that what we do makes a distinct impact over time," she said. Two ways to gain this evidence is to make sure your team cultivates quality: quality results from your actions, and quality relationships within the community.

"We have great power in our association reps, but how many in your team are trying to reach out?" she asked. "We need to focus on possibilities, not problems – on members, not just a few leaders. We need to focus on how to get people involved and how to build relationships."

Zone Planning: Turning Words into Reality

An important part of every Summer Leaders Confer-

ence is Zone Planning, where attendees meet with their UniServ directors for an afternoon to draft local organizing and leadership development plans, which they will take back to their locals for completion.

Zone plans can incorporate a wide variety of goals and tasks, depending on the needs of each zone. For example, Robin Kuykendall, Zone 2 UniServ director, said that Zone 2 local leaders plan to increase internal communication capacities, build worksite presence, and engage in new approaches to professional development for local members and potential members.

Connie Comeaux, Zone 5 UniServ director, said that the Texarkana Education Association plans to hold a two-part new employee orientation event that will provide information about the new teacher evaluation bill and National Board Certification. It will be a social event as well, that includes dinner and door prizes.

This year, even as each zone implements its plan, Conference teams will continue to fine-tune them during the October 8 and January 21 leadership training sessions, as they learn about association structures, organizing and core competencies, and further incorporate these programs and services into their existing plans.

If you would like to learn more about your Zone Plan or become involved in its implementation, contact your UniServ director.



Keynote speaker Christy Levings addressed the local leaders at the luncheon held on Saturday. Her enthusiastic presentation encouraged leaders to reach out to potential members.

Legislative Wrap-Up: 88th Arkansas General Assembly (con't)

The 88th General Assembly convened on January 10 and adjourned on April 27. From an education perspective, the two major issues in this session were education funding and teacher evaluation procedures.

Teacher Evaluation

Recently there has been much attention called to teacher evalua-

tion. A report released in 2009 by the New Teacher Project identified how poor teacher performance is rarely identified or addressed in teacher evaluation systems. While some have claimed that teacher associations/unions are the cause of this, the truth is that NEA and its affiliates, including the AEA, have long called for reform of teacher evaluation systems. Too often, administrators have been inadequately trained or not trained at all; too often evaluations are superficial,

based almost exclusively on brief classroom observations; too often, evaluations have made no effort to actually help teachers improve their practice.

AEA has worked closely with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and other education stakeholders to address these problems by adopting a model for teacher evaluation in Arkansas that is based on the standards for effective teaching as written in *A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson.

The legislative session began with a push by the group Arkansans for Education Reform, who advocated that 55% (later changed to "at least 50%") of the weight of a teacher's evaluation be based on standardized test scores and that the new evaluation system be implemented fully in the 2011-12 school year.

AEA stated firmly that we would not agree to any teacher evaluation bill that fixed any percentage of weight on a teacher's evaluation based on test scores. Too many reports from nationally recognized researchers oppose methods of teacher evaluation that emphasize student test scores and indicate that there are several unresolved issues to this approach that would prevent "fair, reliable and valid" teacher evaluation. Instead, these reports strongly advocate an approach that incorporates multiple measures. One such report was released in October 2009 by the National Academies, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA). Another report was released in August 2010 by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

A report issued in March by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards sets forth a series of principles and recommendations to guide the use of assessments of student learning as a measure of teacher effectiveness. According to the report, such measures should (1) be aligned with the curriculum and student learning goals, (2) be constructed to evaluate student learning, (3) be sensitive to the diversity of students, (4) capture learning validly and reliably, and (5) provide evidence about student performance and teacher practice that reflects the full breadth of subject-matter skills and knowledge. This report was discussed at the AEA National Board Conference on March 12 (see article on page 5 of this issue of the Educator).

A small group of legislators led by Rep. Johnnie Roebuck (D-Arkadelphia) worked with AEA, the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), the Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA), the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Arkansans for Education Reform, to try and craft a teacher evaluation bill that would provide for a statewide uniform system for evaluating teachers and administrators.

During the legislative session, there were numerous meetings focused on developing a bill that would provide for a fair, valid and reliable system of teacher evaluation and a support system that would help teachers. The final version of the bill (ACT 1209) was agreed to by all parties. AEA agreed to support the bill for the following reasons:

The provision requiring that 50% of the weight of a teacher's evaluation based upon student test scores was removed from the bill. It has been replaced by a provision that one-half of the evidence, or "artifacts", considered by the teacher and evaluator for a summative evaluation shall be student test scores that include exams externally developed and scored. This is a much more reasonable requirement, since student test scores are listed in only two of the 22 components of the teacher evaluation framework developed by Charlotte Danielson. No specific weight is assigned to any artifacts.

While the bill contains language linking it to the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act, there is no new reason for the termination or non-renewal of a teacher's contract.

The bill is consistent with the work of the Arkansas Teacher Evaluation Task Force's adoption of Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*.

This bill establishes a statewide uniform system of teacher evaluation that emphasizes quality assurance and teacher growth.

The bill recognizes that student learning is the foundation of teacher effectiveness and that many factors impact student learning, not all of which are under the control of the teacher or the school, and that evidence of student learning should not be limited to a single assessment.

The framework identifies those features of a teacher's responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research that promote improved student learning.

The teacher evaluation framework contains four domains, or categories: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

The teacher evaluation system includes a rubric that uses nationally accepted descriptors that consist of four performance levels: distinguished, proficient, basic, and unsatisfactory.

The categories, descriptors and performance levels work together to provide teachers and evaluators with a clear picture of exemplary teaching practices.

The teacher evaluation system models the classroom performance assessments of Praxis III.

The teacher evaluation system will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, which will allow time to adopt and develop the framework, evaluation rubric, and rules; conduct evaluation training for all involved; and pilot the system for one year before it is implemented.

The bill also provides that administrators will be evaluated on student performance and growth to the same extent as teachers.

According to AEA President Donna Morey, the final version of the teacher evaluation bill represents a significant difference from what is happening in many other states. States all around the nation – Tennessee, Florida, Louisiana, and New York among others – have adopted or are considering adopting plans that would tie a teacher's evaluation to an arbitrary weight based on student standardized test scores. "Because of the efforts of AEA and others, Arkansas has chosen not to go down this dangerous road," Morey said.

"The Teacher Excellence and Support System, created by ACT 1209, is an effective, consistent evaluation process and will change the culture of instructional evaluation," Rep. Roebuck said. "Our teachers will be afforded the opportunity to receive assistance and resources to provide for continuous improvement. I am so pleased to have been a part of this critical legislation which was crafted by a great group of professionals representing teachers, administrators, school boards, the Department of Education, General Assembly and business oriented groups. Many hours of research and discussion resulted in collaborative legislation owned by all."

Morey complimented Rep. Roebuck on her diligence in shep-

Read more on page 5

In Memory of Past President C. Ray Baker

C. Ray Baker Jr., a past president and longtime friend of the Arkansas Education Association, passed away on March 4, 2011. In addition to serving as AEA president in 1970, Baker was a former president of the Fort Smith Teachers Association. In 1984, he was named Arkansas Teacher of the Year and was one of three finalists for National Teacher of the Year. In that same year, the Daughters of the American Revolution named him the National American History Teacher of the Year.

Baker received his master's degree in education from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and began his teaching career at Ramsey Junior High in Fort Smith in 1961. Two years later, he transferred to Southside High School, also in Fort Smith, as a member of the school's original faculty. He served as the chairman of that school's Social Studies Department and senior class sponsor for 44 years. He was the last remaining member of the original Southside staff when he retired in May 2007.

In 1981, Baker entered city politics and was elected to the Fort Smith Board of Directors as director-at-large, a position he held until 1990. He was elected to his first term as Mayor in 1991, and was re-elected four more times, serving in that capacity for 20 years.

Ray is survived by his wife, Nancy; son, Brett and his wife Mary and their children, Alexis and Zachary of Andover, Kan.; daughter, Tiffany Null and her husband Greg and their children, Hannah, Rachel and Jacob of Fort Smith; two sisters, Toy of Fort Smith and Theda Jackson and husband Ron of Greenwood.; sister-in-law, Jane Neely of Mustang, Okla.; brother-in-law, Jack Harper of Prescott, Ariz.; and many nieces and nephews.

Four Arkansas Schools Honored as Blue Ribbon Nominees

Four Arkansas schools join the newest class of potential recipients for the U.S. Department of Education's 2011 Blue Ribbon Schools award. The 2011 Blue Ribbon nominees are: Arnold Drive Elementary School (Jacksonville); Calico Rock Elementary School; Kingston Elementary School; Salem Elementary School.

The national honor recognizes academic excellence in schools that have either performed in the top 10 percent in the state, or made exceptional progress in academic achievement. Winners will be announced in fall 2011 and honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. with a plaque and flag signifying their accomplishment.

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools that are either high performing or have improved student achievement to high levels, especially among disadvantaged students. For more information on the Blue Ribbon Schools program, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>.

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AEA Holds First NBCT Conference



Over 50 National Board Certified teachers and other education professionals attended AEA's first NBCT Conference, held March 12, 2011, at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Conference participants were welcomed by AEA President Donna Morey and Dr. Angela Sewall, Dean of the College of Education at UALR.

"This conference is a great opportunity for National Board Certified teachers to network and hear about education reform around the country," said AEA President Donna Morey. "When teachers are exposed to best practices of teaching and learning, it will help to fulfill our mission of providing great public schools for all students."

Topics included:

- How teachers measure up in student learning and achievement
- Celebrating what's right with the world
- Predicting teaching needs in the year 2030
- Renewing your NBCT certificate
- The importance of becoming politically involved
- Understanding our teacher pipeline

How Do Teachers Measure Up?

Few education issues are raising more questions and greater interest than that of how the nation should fairly and accurately evaluate teachers and assess their influence on student performance. To help better understand how teachers are assessed in this new era of school improvement, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards convened a task force of leaders in education evaluation, research, and policy to debate and share their collective knowledge about teacher evaluation. To read more about the conference go to aeaonline.org.



Read Across America

Landmark Elementary School celebrated Read Across America Week in March. During the Storybook Character Parade, students, teachers and staff dressed up as their favorite storybook characters. AEA Vice President Brenda Robinson, who teaches at Landmark, dressed up as the Cat in the Hat. President Donna Morey attended sporting a tall red and white stove pipe hat. Schools across the world celebrated the reading initiative, Read Across America.

AEA Member Awarded NEA Foundation Grant



AEA member Dr. JoEllen McAdams is the recipient of a \$5,000 Learning and Leadership Grant from the NEA Foundation. McAdams is an associate professor in the Department of Counseling, Adult and Rehabilitation Education (CARE) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

The grant will help McAdams and colleagues to expand on their research of the program Pets in Learning Success (PALS), which uses live dogs to help elementary students learn to read. Recent results indicate that with the PALS programs, literacy scores increased up to 35 percent compared to children who participated in reading activities without dogs. Dr. McAdams and her research team will determine how valid this program is when used in a rural, low socioeconomic community, and study the efficacy of canine presence as a significant variable in reading skills.

The NEA Foundation awards two primary categories of grants to public education professionals: *Student Achievement Grants* for initiatives to improve the academic achievement, and *Learning & Leadership Grants* for high-quality professional development activities. The Foundation awards its grants to educators three times a year.

Funded grants were selected based on the quality of the proposed ideas and their potential for enhancing student achievement. The latest grants were awarded to educators in 33 different states.

Nationwide, the NEA Foundation has awarded 50 grants totaling \$211,000 to support educators' efforts to improve teaching and learning. Since 1999, the NEA Foundation has funded 14 grants for Arkansas educators. The NEA Foundation has awarded more than \$7 million in grants like these over the past decade to educators in every state in the country. Each year, the Foundation awards approximately 150 Student Achievement and Learning & Leadership Grants.

Legislative Wrap-Up: 88th Arkansas General Assembly (con't)

herding the bill through the General Assembly. "Her background as a teacher in the public schools and at the college level, as well as being a former local AEA president, made her an excellent choice to lead this effort."

Adequate School Funding

Much of the action around school funding focused on efforts by Republican legislators to substantially reduce state revenue by passing a number of large tax cuts

beyond the cut in the sales tax on food proposed by Governor Beebe. Some of the bills filed that would have reduced revenue include the following:

- **HB1002:** To Create the Arkansas Capital Gains Reduction Act of 2011. (Rep. Ed Garner, R - Maumelle). This bill, which passed the House, would have cost the state \$44 million in its first year and \$68 million in the following year.

- **HB1012:** To Exempt Sales and Use Tax on the Manufacturer's or Dealer's Rebate of a Motor Vehicle. (Rep. Garry Smith, D - Camden).
- **HB1031:** To Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Utilities Used by Manufacturers in the Manufacturing Process; to Repeal the Lower Tax Rate for Utilities Used in Manufacturing; and to Declare an Emergency. (Rep. Denny Altes, R - Fort Smith).

- **HB1037:** To Provide an Income Tax Credit for a Business or Individual that Purchases Renewable Resource Equipment (Rep. Altes).
- **HB 1387:** Lowers the upper income tax bracket (over \$25,000 income) to 6.8% beginning in tax year 2011(Rep. Charlie Collins, R - Fayetteville).
- **HB 1771:** Allows 100% of donations to eligible K-12 scholarship-funding nonprofits to be deducted as an income tax credit. Would provide

scholarships to private schools for K-12 students with household incomes less than 200% of the poverty level (Rep. Altes).

AEA supported Governor Beebe's proposal for the half-percent reduction in the sales tax on food, and also supported restoring the income tax benefit for single parents that was inadvertently omitted several years ago. AEA opposed all other tax cut bills because they would have reduced state revenue available

Legislative Wrap-Up: 88th Arkansas General Assembly (con't)

of the adequacy funding bill (Act 1039) provides for the full two-percent increase in the per-pupil foundation funding and the categorical funding (poverty funding, English Language Learner funding and Alternative Learning Environment funding). Per-pupil funding will increase from the current \$6,023 to \$6,144 in 2011-12 and, pending action by the legislature in next year's fiscal session, is scheduled to increase to \$6,267 in 2012-13. An additional \$500,000 in transportation funding was also provided for some school districts with higher transportation cost.

The following are some of the many education-related bills supported by AEA that were passed by the General Assembly:

- **ACT 65:** Allows school districts to set the first day of student attendance on or after the Monday of the week in which August 18 falls, although no earlier than August 14 and no later than August 16. This bill's sponsor, Rep. Homer Lenderman (D - Brookland) is a retired teacher and AEA member.
- **ACT 46:** Continues the requirement that school districts schedule spring break during the thirty-eighth week of the school year, with the first week in July counted as the first week. This bill was also sponsored by a retired teacher and AEA member, Rep. Randy Stewart (D - Kirby).
- **ACT 166:** Establishes the Positive Youth Development Grant Program, a framework for afterschool and summer programs that promote positive youth development. The Positive Youth Development Grant Program authorizes state agencies and community leaders to set standards and guidelines for quality afterschool and summer programs. Although no funding was provided for these programs during the next fiscal year, it is hoped that funding can be provided in the next session of the legislature (Sen. Johnny Key, R - Mountain Home).
- **ACT 1215:** Clarifies that in the teacher sick leave law, the language "month or major portion thereof" means "twelve or more working days in a calendar month, including all professional development days required by the school district that count toward the annual sixty hours of required professional development for a teacher." Also pro-

vides that a school district has to credit a teacher one day of sick leave for any day of sick leave used on a mandatory professional development day, if that missed professional development is made up on a noncontract day (Rep. Stewart).

- **ACT 1220:** Limits school districts' ability to carry over poverty categorical funds; requires districts to spend most of the funds in the year received and clarifies what programs the funds can spent on (Rep. Bobby J. Pierce, D - Sheridan).
- **ACT 1002:** Enhances the effectiveness of school district Parental Involvement Plans (Sen. Shirley Flowers, D - Pine Bluff).
- **ACT 1150:** Expands the objectives of Teachers' Professional Development Plans to include providing educators with the knowledge and skills to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (Sen. Joyce Elliott, D - Little Rock).
- **ACT 770:** Requires teachers to participate in two hours of youth suicide prevention every five years (Rep. Greg Leding, D - Fayetteville).
- **ACT 907:** Expands the prohibition against bullying to include victims of bullying based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, socioeconomic status, academic status, disability, gender, gender identity, physical appearance, health condition or sexual orientation (Sen. David Johnson, D - Little Rock).

Two important bills supported by AEA did not make it out of the Senate Education Committee.

- **SB 829** would have raised the state-mandated minimum salary schedule for teachers. The last change in the minimum salary schedule occurred in the 2008-2009 school year, when the Bachelor's Degree starting salary was raised to \$29,244. The bill would have added a cost-of-living adjustment to all scheduled salaries for the time the salaries had remained unchanged (Sen. Joyce Elliott).
- **SB884** would have amended the Arkansas Code concerning the grievance procedure for public school teachers. Many school districts have adopted a policy recommended by the Arkansas School Boards Association that defines a grievance to exclude any complaint against a supervisor for directives, instructions, reprimands or "write-ups". SB 884 would have corrected this problem by defining "grievance"

to include "reprimands, write-ups, disciplinary actions, directives, performance reviews or evaluations" (Sen. Jimmy Jeffress, D - Crossett).

The General Assembly passed 19 bills that affect the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (ATRS). All 19 bills were supported by the ATRS Board and the AEA. All legislation opposed by the ATRS Board and AEA died in the Public Retirement Committee. According to ATRS Executive Director George Hopkins, this legislative session was focused on cost cutting, clarification, and strengthening areas of ATRS law that had been problematic in the past. The bills in the ATRS package reflect a streamlining of ATRS operations and substantial cost savings on ATRS operations.

The state's charter school law was changed to eliminate the current cap limiting the number of open-enrollment charter schools and replace it with a moving cap; if the number of charter schools approaches within two charters of meeting the current cap (24), the cap automatically increases by five slots. Legislation also passed requiring charter schools to annually report statistics on dropouts, expelled students, and other student information.

AEA was successful in opposing a number of education bills that we believe would have adversely impacted public schools. These include:

- **HB 1894** would have forced schools in school improvement for at least three years to close, reform as a charter school, or fire staff if 51% of parents of children at the school signed a petition requiring the school to do so (Rep. Debra Hobbs, R - Rogers).
- **HB 1458** would have established a private school voucher program for parents of children with disabilities (Rep. Hobbs).
- **HB 2011** would have provided state funding for students enrolled in home school or private elementary and secondary schools (Rep. Jon Hubbard, R - Jonesboro).

More said, "We are pleased that education did relatively well in this session of the General Assembly. AEA thanks Governor Beebe and the majority of legislators for their leadership and support of public education."

More complete information about the 2011 legislative session can be found on the General Assembly's Web site (www.arkleg.state.ar.us) and AEA's Web site (www.aeaonline.org).

AEA Election Alert!

AEA is now accepting nominations for the following positions. The election for these positions will be held at the AEA Representative Assembly on Saturday, November 5, 2011 at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas.

Nomination forms must be received at the AEA Office of the President no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 2, 2011. (To meet publication deadlines, a current photo and candidate statement of 125 words maximum must be submitted with the nomination form. Without this information only the candidate's name will be listed in the *Arkansas Educator*.) Forms are on the following.

Any active member may file for these positions.

NEA Director Sept. 1, 2012 - Aug. 31, 2015
Alternate - NEA Director Sept. 1, 2012 - Aug. 31, 2015

For ESP members only based on AEA Constitutional amendment

ESP (Pos. 1) Dec. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2012
Alternate - ESP (Pos. 1) Dec. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2012
ESP (Pos. 2) Dec. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2012
Alternate - ESP (Pos. 2) Dec. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2012
ESP (Pos. 3) Dec. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2012
Alternate - ESP (Pos. 3) Dec. 1, 2011 - Nov. 30, 2012

Contact Annette Thomas-Jones or email her at ar-atjones@nea.org for more information.

NOMINATION FORM FOR: NEA Director and Alternate NEA Director

Please place my name on the 2011 AEA election ballot as a candidate for the position of: (check one)

NEA Director Alternate NEA Director

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Home phone _____

School phone _____

Educational position _____

Ethnic group _____

Local _____ District _____

Signature of nominee: _____

FOR THIS FORM TO BE ACCEPTED AS A NOMINATION, IT MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE AEA OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, 1500 W. 4TH ST., LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201-1064, BY **5:00 P.M. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2011.** (To meet publication deadlines, a current photo and candidate statement of 125 words maximum must be submitted with the nomination form. Without this information only the candidate's name will be listed in the *Arkansas Educator*.)

AEA NOMINATION FORM FOR AEA Board – ESP Positions

Please place my name on the 2011 AEA election ballot as a candidate for: (check one)

- AEA Board, ESP Position 1
 Alternate AEA Board, ESP Position 1
 AEA Board, ESP Position 2
 Alternate AEA Board, ESP Position 2
 AEA Board, ESP Position 3
 Alternate AEA Board, ESP Position 3

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home phone _____

Email Address _____

Ethnic Group _____

Signature of nominee _____

FOR THIS FORM TO BE ACCEPTED AS A NOMINATION, IT MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE AEA OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, 1500 WEST 4TH STREET, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201-1064, BY **5:00 P.M. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2011.** (To meet publication deadlines, a current photo and candidate statement of 125 words maximum must be submitted with the nomination form. Without this information only the candidate's name will be listed in the *Arkansas Educator*.)

Attention AEA Retired Members!

AEA is now accepting nominations for the following position. Nomination forms must be received at the AEA Office of the President no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 2, 2011. (To meet publication deadlines, a current photo and candidate statement of 125 words maximum must be submitted with the nomination form. Without this information only the candidate's name will be listed in the *Arkansas Educator*.)

Retired members will have an opportunity to vote for candidates who file for this position beginning at 8:00 a.m. on September 12, 2011 and ending at 5:00 p.m. on October 4, 2011 if an election is necessary.

Retired AEA RA Delegates to the AEA RA on November 4-5, 2011 in Little Rock, Arkansas (12 Positions are available)

AEA-RETIRED NOMINATION FORM
AEA-RA DELEGATE

Please place my name on the 2011 election ballot as a candidate for Delegate to the AEA Representative Assembly on November 4-5, 2011. (12 positions available.)

Name (please print) _____
 Address: _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____
 Email Address _____
 Signature of Nominee _____

For this form to be accepted as a nomination, it must be received at the Office of the AEA President, 1500 W. 4th St., Little Rock, AR 72201-1064 by **5:00 P.M. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2011.**

(To meet publication deadlines, a current photo and candidate statement of 125 words maximum must be submitted with the nomination form. Without this information only the candidate's name will be listed in the *Arkansas Educator*.)

The Arkansas Education Association
We, the members of the Arkansas Education Association, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the state, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

Our Vision

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

Our Mission

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the state to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

Our Core Values

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

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

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

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

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

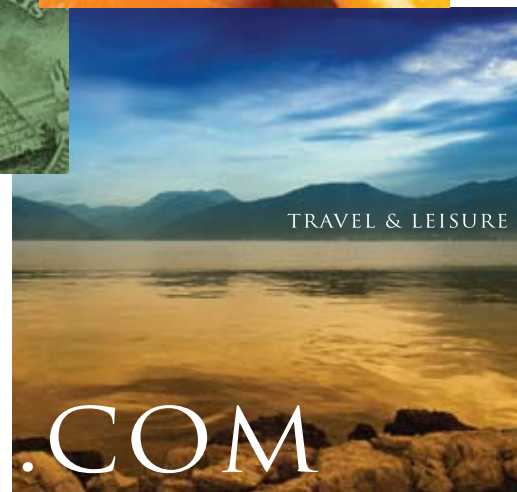
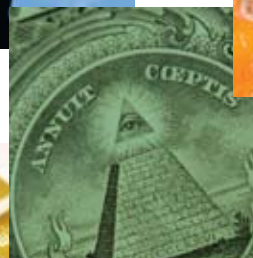
Partnership. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

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

Adopted by the Arkansas Education Association's Representative Assembly in April 2007.



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**New NEA Member "Early Enrollees" May Access Benefits Programs
 Ask a Friend to join Now**

New NEA members who join the Association prior to the start of the September 1, 2011 membership year can still take advantage of "early enrollee" benefits, including the following NEA Member Benefits programs:

- NEA Credit Card Program®
- NEA Group Term Life Insurance Plan
- NEA Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance Plan
- NEA Members Auto and Home Insurance Program
- NEA Car Rental Program
- NEA Magazine Service

In addition, new enrollees are eligible for a number of free and discount offers such as 20% off SmileMakers merchandise, 50% off Weekly Reader magazines, and participation in our popular NEA Click & Save online discount program. All the early enrollee needs to do is go online to www.neamb.com/newmember and register!

Welcome to the Association and your NEA Member Benefits Program!



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1500 West 4th Street
Little Rock, AR 72201-1064

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JULY 2011

- July 15 School board candidate filing begins at noon
- July 15 Information to local presidents on AEA RA elections
- July 20 School board write-in candidate filing begins at noon
- July 22 School board candidate filing ends at noon
- July 22-23 AEA Board Retreat/Meeting
- July 27 School board write-in candidate filing ends at noon

AUGUST 2011

- Aug. 1 Continuing member cards mailed
- Aug. 1 Ramadan begins
- Aug. 1-30 AEA Membership Training/Recruitment Drive
- Aug. 8 State Board of Education
- Aug. 22 Voter registration deadline for annual school election
- Aug. 29 Ramadan Ends
- Aug. 30 Early enrollment period ends

SEPTEMBER 2011

- Sept. 2 Deadline for HR award submissions
- Sept. 2 Deadline for nominations for AEA RA positions (5 p.m.)
- Sept. 5 Labor Day – AEA offices closed
- Sept. 6 Deadline to submit amendments to AEA Constitution and Bylaws
- Sept. 10 AEA Committee Day
- Sept. 11 Grandparents' Day
- Sept. 12 State Board of Education
- Sept. 12 Voter registration deadline for school runoff election
- Sept. 12-Oct. 4 AEA Retired Election (begins 8 a.m., Sept. 12 and ends 5 p.m., Oct. 4)
- Sept. 13 Early voting begins for annual school election
- Sept. 17 AEA Board Meeting
- Sept. 19 Last day to vote early in school election
- Sept. 19-20 NEA Executive Committee
- Sept. 20 Annual School Board Election
- Sept. 21-24 NEA Super Week
- Sept. 23 Autumn begins
- Sept. 23-24 NEA Board of Directors
- Sept. 24 AEA Student Program Leadership Development Conference
- Sept. 29 Rosh Hashanah
- Sept. 29 Ramadan ends



CHANGES PLANNED FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AEA continues to provide the most meaningful professional development offered in the state of Arkansas for school employees. Please mark your calendars for the upcoming Professional Development Conference, which will be held November 3-4, 2011. Remember: building administrators must be notified of your intent to attend 30 days before the conference. If you wish to submit a workshop proposal, please contact Brenda Walton, Workshop Coordinator, at ar-bwalton@nea.org before July 25, 2011.

Please be aware that we are not offering exhibits in our normal format this

year due to a decrease in traffic and the increase of the cost of the facility rental. We will highlight only a limited number of vendors throughout the workshop locations. Look for more information to come. We will use this year to reassess our exhibits so that we can better serve our members, and the companies and organizations that have supported the association over the years as exhibitors. If you have questions about the exhibit tradeshow, please contact Annette Thomas-Jones, AEA Exhibit Manager, at 501-375-4611, Ext. 101, or by e-mail at ar-atjones@nea.org.

Nancy Kline Announces Retirement After 47 Years



After a long and successful career spanning 47 years and working with two state associations, Nancy Kline, AEA's Membership Processing Specialist, announced her retirement effective July.

Kline began her work as the secretary to the Assistant Executive Director and Director of Governmental Affairs for the Tennessee Education Association in 1964. The Tennessee position was created after the members voted to increase the annual state dues from \$6.00 to \$10.00. She recalled that since she was only 17 when she was hired, the TEA staff gave her a baby bottle for Christmas that year.

After 19 years with the TEA, Kline moved to Arkansas and was hired as AEA's Membership Processing Specialist in 1983. Ever since then, she has

cultivated close working relationships with AEA members. "When I travel the state now, I always have my husband drive by and let me see the school buildings so I can identify with the members I work with by phone and e-mail," she said.

Kline said she has seen many changes over the years since her early days with TEA – primarily unification and the implementation of a computerized records system. She also remembers when then Governor Bill Clinton mandated teacher testing shortly after she began work with AEA. "I traveled the state as a part of the workshops AEA held to prepare the teachers for the test," she said.

She has also seen significant personal achievements, including the realization of her dream when she graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and then completed 33 hours of graduate work. But even with this accomplishment, she chose to stay with her "AEA family."

Kline doesn't intend to sit still during her retirement. "My plans are to devote time to my church,

visit the sick and elderly, complete my paperwork for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution, and travel with my husband to visit our granddaughters in Nashville, Tennessee, she said. "One ministry of particular interest is Celebrate Recovery, and I will be a part of a mission trip with them to Honduras at the end of June."

While she eagerly anticipates her new journey, she says she will miss the work and the people of AEA. "I have been honored to serve the teachers, educational support staff, and student and retired members of two great states since I was 17 years old, and I'm sure this change of schedules and priorities will leave a great void in my life," she said. "Thanks to everyone who helped me along the way from the NEA, Southeast Region, TEA and AEA staffs and to each local association member."

The AEA staff extends our thanks and gratitude for Kline's many years of dedicated service, and for the privilege of knowing such a kind and caring person. Nancy, you will be missed!