

2025 NEA National Leadership Summit Content Block 3 – Session Descriptions: Sunday, March 9, 8:15-10:15 a.m. ET



ADVOCACY

Advances the cause of public education through social justice and how it benefits our students and members' professional needs and rights.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
ADV300	Title: Fostering Inclusive & Safe Workspaces: Empowering LGBTQ+ Educators at All Levels
	Description: This session will explore strategies and best practices for creating inclusive, safe, and supportive work environments. Participants will gain insights into the unique challenges that LGBTQ+ educators face and learn how to foster a culture of belonging, respect, and equity. Through case studies, discussions, and practical tools, attendees will leave equipped to advocate for and implement policies that protect and value LGBTQ+ educators. Learning Lead(s): Frank Burger, Stacy Schmidt
ADV301	Title: The Kids Are Not Alright: Empowering Educators With the Policy Tools To Combat Child Labor Description: Instances of illegal child labor have increased 88 percent since 2019, accelerated by rollbacks in state labor protections. In this session, educators will get an overview of current child labor laws and share their own experiences with the effects of child labor in the classroom. We will explore the connections between privatization, parental rights, migration, and absenteeism to inform NEA's child labor strategy. Educators will

	leave with ideas on how to leverage their unique voices to be advocates.
	Learning Lead(s): Neha Bhatia, Nina Mast
ADV302	Title: Thrive in Places Most Don't Survive: Collective Efforts that Empower Educators of Color
	Description: Networking isolated educators of color is a longstanding practice of successfully healing educators of color. Creating our own medicine where none exists, presenters will share successes in advocating for sustainable affinity spaces. Participants will discuss their own affordances in establishing networks within their communities and identifying strategies for moving beyond recruitment and retention goals towards reclaiming our rightful presence in determining our collective future.
	Learning Lead(s): Monique Cottman, Amira Nash, Analaura Osorio Acord
ADV303	Title: Transformational Leadership: Bridging the Opportunity Gap in Underserved Communities
	Description: This session explores how transformational leaders serve as catalysts for systemic change by addressing social inequities in public education, advocating for equitable resource allocation, and fostering reciprocal partnerships between schools and communities. Through a focus on leadership as a vehicle for advocacy, this session emphasizes the vital role educational leaders play in not only improving academic outcomes but also protecting and strengthening the promise of public education.
	Learning Lead(s): Jermaine Shakespeare
ADV304	Title: Unseen Voices: The Media's Role in Shaping Disability Narratives
	Description: This session examines the evolution of disability representation, how historical narratives and media portrayals have shaped societal views over time. Leaders will explore key moments where the media has both challenged and reinforced stereotypes, influenced public policy, and helped drive the disability rights movement. Leaders will leave with a deeper understanding of the

	evolving landscape of disability representation and the role that media can play in advancing inclusion and awareness. Learning Lead(s): Sharon Schultz, Clinton Smith
ADV305	Title: Using Your Agency To Bend the Arc of Public Education Toward Justice Description: Using a racial justice lens, participants will use self-
	reflection and racial/social impact assessment to identify strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats to building racial equity capacity in their local. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants will have a framework, including an action plan and next steps for implementing a racial/social justice impact plan in their local and/or community.
	Lead(s): Marcella McMillon-Holmes
ADV307	Title: Words Have Power: Challenging Ableist Language
	Description: Language has long been used to marginalize people with disabilities. Common use of ableist language deems the dehumanization of people as culturally acceptable and enables others to do the same. Using ableist language does not make someone a bad person. It makes them human. But if we have the ability to change our vocabulary for the better, why wouldn't we? In this session, participants will learn how to consciously identify and stop using phrases that reinforce ableism.
	Learning Lead(s): Lindsey Smith



COMMUNICATION

Builds an integrated communications strategy that drives the goals of our professions.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
COM300	Title: Media 101: Applying the Fundamentals of Working with the News Media to Everyday Comms Needs
	Description: Effective communication can inspire others to act, be a catalyst for changing public opinion, help win in a contract bargaining process, plant the seeds for new ways of thinking, or persuade audiences to your side. Utilizing the media can help amplify your voice by broadcasting your message. Pros will share tips on using your credibility as an educator to win over hearts and minds. Participants will learn the fundamental skills of working with the media and how those skills can be used in everyday scenarios. Learning Lead(s): Staci Maiers
COM301	Title: Crafting Your Narrative: Unlocking the Power of Personal Storytelling
	Description: In this engaging presentation, participants will explore the art of personal storytelling as a powerful tool for connection and inspiration. Participants will learn how to identify and articulate their unique narratives—transforming personal experiences into impactful stories that resonate with students, colleagues, and the broader school community. By the end of the session, members will feel empowered to share their stories in ways that foster empathy and build support and relationships.
	Learning Lead(s): Jeremias Salinas
COM302	Title: Effective Communications: Be Seen, Be Heard
	Description: Effective communications are about understanding other people and having others understand you. It requires us to be clear and complete in what we are trying to express, and exchange information with clarity, empathy, and understanding. It's not about

	winning or forcing your opinions; rather, it's about creating an understanding of perspective and finding commonality. We'll focus on framing messages for different media and audiences to influence, motivate, and persuade through an engaging, memorable, and compelling message.
	Learning Lead(s): Jariza Rodriguez
COM303	Title: From Critique to Growth: The Secret Sauce for High- Performing Leadership
	Description: This session will equip participants with the tools and insights needed to analyze and understand the power dynamics and leadership structures within their local associations, fostering more effective collaboration and decision-making. We will define three types of power: designated, distributive, and integrative. Participants will chart standout words from their mission, vision, and goals. We will classify power. The facilitator will present various leadership structures.
	Learning Lead(s): Cynthia Thompson



GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Sets the mission and establishes strategies necessary for a relevant and thriving organization; empowers, motivates, and fosters a pipeline of talent for the future.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
GOV 300	Title: Professional Relationship Building: Bridging the Association and Administration at All Levels
	Description: Having a working professional relationship makes change happen within schools and districts. This session will explore how to build relationships between the association and administration at all levels while giving examples of best practices.
	Learning Lead(s): Lisa Johnson, Chelsea Miles
GOV301	Title: Building a Culture of Growth: Strengthening Leadership from Within
	Description: This interactive session provides the strategies and tools that leaders need to cultivate personal and professional growth within themselves and their associations. Members use tools that will help them develop a mindset that fosters continuous learning and growth and directly impacts the strength and resilience of their local associations. Leaders who are devoted to their growth inspire their teams to do the same, creating a culture where both individuals and the collective progress and thrive. Learning Lead(s): Terry Ross
GOV302	Title: Ready Your Local to Use Labor-Management Collaboration to
	Build Educator Voice & Union Strength Description: Strong labor-management collaboration (LMC) is a strategy that can ensure educator voice in decision-making and help build union strength. This interactive session invites learners to consider LMC as a way to engage members around their expertise and reflect on the readiness of members and their local to engage with administrators as equal partners. Learners will be introduced

	to practical tools and resources designed to prepare them for creating LMC partnerships.
	Learning Lead(s): Maribeth Bradfield, Sarah Ammar
GOV303	Title: Running for an Association Position: Campaigning 101 - The Basics
	Description: Our association is a living entity that replenishes itself with new leaders regularly at the local, state, and national levels. This training is designed to assist those who want to run for an association position, desire to learn the fundamentals of campaigning, and wish to be cognizant of what effective leadership embodies. Honing personal and effective leadership skills will help participants meet with success. This training satisfies components of the NEA Leadership Competency Framework.
	Learning Lead(s): Veronica Henderson
GOV304	Title: Strengthening Leadership Through Cross-Cultural Relationships in Education and Activism
	Description: This session will focus on building leadership skills through fostering cross-cultural relationships. It is grounded in over a century of educational labor activism championed by the NEA and the American Teachers Association. Since the historic merger of these organizations in 1966, NEA members have taken on the critical charge of educating communities about the unique challenges of addressing race in education
	Learning Lead(s): Robert Adams, Stephanie Johnson
GOV305	Title: The Gentle Leader: Leading with Strength, Not Force
	Description: Effective leadership stems from self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the ability to inspire others through a gentle, authentic approach. This session focuses on harnessing natural strengths to build trust and foster meaningful relationships. The Enneagram (model) promotes leading through understanding rather than domination and allowing leaders to engage others with empathy and insight. Gentle leaders can cultivate trust, foster collaboration, and manage change in complex environments.
	Lead(s): Emilee Liddiard, Becca Hall

GOV306	Title: Who's Leading Who? Analyzing Power Dynamics and
	Leadership Structures in Our Local Associations
	Description: This session will equip participants with the tools and insights needed to analyze and understand the power dynamics and leadership structures within their local associations, fostering more effective collaboration and decision-making. We will define three types of power: designated, distributive, and integrative. Participants will chart standout words from their mission, vision, and goals. We will classify power. The facilitator will present various leadership structures.
	Learning Lead(s): Danette Stokes
GOV307	Title: Organizational History and Development: Policymaking for
	Collective Identity, Unity, and Power
	Description: This session will explore the history of the association dating back to its founding in the mid-19th century, including the development of governance and policymaking structures as well as pivotal moments that contributed to the identity of the organization and the making of the modern NEA. Participants will examine moments of organizational success and failure and how these moments have influenced the association's direction. Participants will also consider how the organization will successfully navigate and thrive in the 21st century.
	Learning Lead(s): Corey Gochenaur, Cassie McCabe



LEADING OUR PROFESSIONS

Advocates for quality inside our professional and promotes our union's role in advancing education transformation and student learning.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
LOP300	Title: Optimizing Membership and Retention with NEA's Blended Learning Strategies
	Description: Participants will engage with the NEA Blended Learning Program, exploring the range of courses available for both current and prospective members. Through practical activities, they will develop strategies to retain and grow membership in their state and local unions. Additionally, participants will discover how these courses can enhance their professional skills and advance their careers. The session will also include mindfulness activities designed to support participants' personal well-being. Learning Lead(s): Shafeza Moonab, Jillian Huber
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LOP301	Title: Safe School Culture: Using Leadership Practices to Support Gun Violence Prevention and Response
	Description: Gun violence is a critical issue within our schools that requires the engagement of all leaders. This session will provide strategies to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and facilitate recovery from gun violence incidents. Participants will discuss issues related to gun violence in schools, identify potential barriers to school and community engagement, and learn how to utilize the NEA Gun Violence Prevention and Response Guide to engage with members and local school communities.
	Learning Lead(s): Crystal Foxx, Joel Solomon, Ovidia Molina
LOP302	Title: Strengthening the School Counselor and Administrator Partnership for Holistic Student Development

	Description: This presentation aims to explore the critical relationship between school counselors and administrators, focusing on collaboration strategies that promote student wellbeing and academic success. By highlighting best practices, shared goals, and the impact of effective communication, this session will provide actionable insights for educators and leaders committed to fostering a supportive school environment. Learning Lead(s): Darrell Crawford-Parker, Janolyn King
LOP303	Title: Sustaining Our Profession: How to Retain and Grow Experienced Educators Description: When the Cherry Creek Education Association (CCEA) successfully negotiated the creation of a program to provide member-driven, meaningful professional development, it reenergized educators and the schools and programs where they worked. In this session, participants will learn how CCEA used bargaining to create the Professional Growth Pathways (PGP) Program and will share how they improve the working conditions of educators and the learning conditions of students by providing a way for educators to progress in their careers rather than moving to administration or out of the profession. Learning Lead(s): Carlye Holladay, Kasey Ellis
LOP304	Title: Transformational Community Schools and Equitable Opportunities For All Description: Creating community schools is strategy that can create school and community transformation. This session aims to develop activists and leaders with the knowledge and skills relevant to leading strategic conversations with all interest-holder groups (students, all staff, parents/caregivers, and community members) about the importance of community schools. Learning Lead(s): Angelia Ebner, Dave Greenberg, Kelly McMahon, Nikki Woodward, Maria Miranda
LOP305	Title: What's Your Superpower: ESP's Leading for Results Description: This session will provide ESPs with tools to become strong leaders at the local, state, and national levels. Participants

will take a deep dive into their superpower to acknowledge their "why" in the active roles they play as ESPs.
Lead(s): Vickie Gregory, Jacque Burton



ORGANIZING

Mobilizes to influence successful organizing outcomes, strengthen internal and external relationships, and membership capacity; recruit and identify new members and potential leaders in the Association.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
ORG300	Title: Stop the Drops! How to Respond to Drop Campaigns
	Description: In this session, we will provide an overview of efforts to undermine union strength, focusing specifically on drop campaigns—which seek to persuade educators to drop their union membership. We will review the misinformation that is often used in these campaigns and identify the far-right sources such as the Freedom Foundation. Participants will develop affirmative strategies to mitigate the risk of membership losses and learn when and how to engage defensively. Learning Lead(s): Susan Nogan, Katherine O'Connell, Brian Washington
ORG301	Title: Disability Rights Leadership in Action: Crafting a Vision for Union-Led Change
	Description: Join an interactive mind-mapping session with NEA's Disability Rights and Inclusion Coalition (DRI) leaders, focusing on mobilization strategies and the leadership journey. Affiliate leaders will share insights from their disability rights initiatives and guide attendees in identifying and addressing challenges and leveraging NEA resources for change. By the session's end, participants will draft "moonshot" approaches—bold, scalable ideas about how to take action around issues affecting the disability community.
	Learning Lead(s): Brittany Patrick

ORG302	Title: Lights, Camera, Direct Action!: Creative Tactics to Help You Win External Campaigns
	Description: The source of our power is our membership. Attendees will learn how to overcome external challenges so they can empower educators and community members—and win! Educators win when we organize, and there is no more powerful tool than direct action. Learn how chapters of any size or makeup have utilized creative tactics with little money or time and, in some cases, few members. By studying successes, members will build a plan to escalate and win their own campaigns through a menu of direct action options.
	Learning Lead(s): Karmen Lee Ortloff, Sean Ferguson
ORG303	Title: Organizing for Power
	Description: The session will present a study of how a local used person-to-person and worksite-level organizing to maintain member density and overcome the loss of payroll deduction. These organizing efforts also led to significant success at the bargaining table. Participants will gain insight into building a strong organizing campaign—even under adverse conditions—that focuses on worksite infrastructure, strong communications, and issue-based organizing.
	Learning Lead(s): Kelley Stephenson, Michael Petty, Nicole Sipka
ORG304	Title: Public School Strong: Statewide School District Organizing and Leadership Training Infrastructure
	Description: This session will introduce the national Public School Strong campaign model. Through the campaign, district teams of students, educators, parents, and families will learn to recruit and support pro-public education school board members who will promote equity. In this session, we will share lessons on how community organizing and labor coalitions can build a statewide organizing committee that can recruit and train teams in every school district to connect across communities and fight to promote, protect, and strengthen public education Learning Lead(s): James Haslam, Asma Elhuni
ORG305	Title: Recruitment and Retention: Them's Bargaining Word

	Description: In many districts, staffing shortages create increased
	demands on current staff. The additional workload significantly impacts staff and students. This session will discuss language and strategies designed to increase respect for educators and the profession and strengthen recruitment and retention practices to ensure student success.
	Learning Lead(s): Nancy Behe, Shannon Burch-Errett
ORG306	Title: Right-to-Collaborate: Partnerships Between Educators and District Officials in Difficult Climates
	Description: Members in areas with barriers or restrictions to collective bargaining still have options and opportunities to forge meaningful partnerships with district administrators and officials to support students and educators. In this session, we will discuss the ongoing collaboration between Fayette County Public Schools and their local NEA affiliates, Fayette County Education Association (FCEA) and Fayette County Education Support Professionals Association (FCESPA), which has yielded positive policy outcomes, such as recruitment and retention efforts, increased pay and benefits, and a defined workday. Learning Lead(s): Jessica Hiler, Tyler Murphy
ORG307	Description: Member leaders will explore ways to move from being a "doer" to being a "leader." Many of us are excellent in our work, but when put in charge of a team, do we end up doing all the work so that it "gets done right"? We use examples from a formerly dormant local that was revived through effective leadership development strategies, organizing, strategic communication, and relationship-building. These transferable strategies can help local leaders increase engagement and organizational health. Learning Lead(s): Alana Ward
ORG308	Title: Build Your Gym: Moving Your Local from Service to Organizing
	Description: How do you want to present your association? How can you communicate your association's message? Do you need a boost in engagement within your association? Branding is an

effective way to let others know who you are and what you do as an association. This session will teach participants how to create a brand for their association and use their brand to improve engagement and communication within their association.
Learning Lead(s): Tony Martinet



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Understands the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that create healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals; demonstrates ability to feel and show empathy, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible, caring decisions.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
SEI300	Title: Methods of Mindfulness
	Description: Participants will have the opportunity to learn what mindfulness means and about the benefits of being mindful. They will also practice mindfulness strategies that they can use both in the classroom and in their personal lives. Please wear comfortable clothing, and bring a snack and a journal or piece of paper. Learning Lead(s): Jodi Favazza
SEI301	Title: Mindful Leadership: Cultivating Self-Awareness for Effective Leadership
	Description: This interactive session highlights self-awareness as a key tool for leadership development in education. Participants will explore its connection to the NEA Leadership Competency Framework, gaining strategies to strengthen leadership, advocacy for public education, and community engagement. Through experiential learning, they'll enhance emotional intelligence, communication, and conflict resolution skills, driving positive organizational change and fostering inclusive environments. Learning Lead(s): Comeshia Williams, Courtney Jolly, Comelia Franceschi
SEI303	Title: Taiji for Movement Work

	Description: The session will utilize the mindfulness-based techniques of the Taiji system to help participants learn techniques to calm and strengthen their minds and bodies. The session will be a series of either standing or seated postures (depending on the abilities of each individual) that help regulate the nervous system and balance the physical body and the emotions of the participant. One goal of this contemplative practice of self-care is to help participants develop trauma-informed practices. Learning Lead(s): Chalene Jones
SEI304	Title: Nurturing Emotional Intelligence: A Social-Emotional Learning Program for Educators
	Description: Educators play a pivotal role in fostering students' social-emotional development. However, to effectively support students' emotional well-being, educators must cultivate their own social-emotional competencies. This social-emotional learning (SEL) session aims to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to enhance their emotional intelligence, promote self-awareness, and create a positive and supportive learning environment. Learning Lead(s): Amber Hill
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SEI305	Title: Reclaim Balance: Leading with Purpose, not Perfection
	Description: This session is designed to empower educational leaders to reclaim their balance and reimagine leadership. It's time to ditch the "superhero" mindset and embrace a more holistic, sustainable approach to leading that will promote, protect, and strengthen public education—which is the foundation of our democracy. By the end of this session, the participants walk away with practical strategies to lead with purpose and cultivate a thriving community. Lead(s): Linda Miller
SEI306	Title: Shifting the Paradigm: Equity-Centered Conversations for Building the Leader Within
	Description: This session empowers union leaders to engage in a transformative, equity-centered dialogue that is designed to

	cultivate leadership. Participants will explore strategies to challenge systemic inequities, identify their own leadership strengths, and learn how to lead through an equity-focused lens. By building internal leadership capacity through courageous conversations, participants will leave prepared to advocate for systemic change and elevate the voices of all members. Learning Lead(s): Cameron Primrose, Lekita Howard
SEI307	Title: Using Social and Emotional Tools to Speak Across Generations Description: One of the greatest barriers to building the capacity of our associations and the profession is the difficulty in building stronger, relational networks across generations. In this session, participants will learn how deepening social and emotional intelligence skills, such as self-awareness, can help bridge gaps and create stronger communities of leaders. Learning Lead(s): Bert Stewart
SEI308	Title: Supporting Students, Staff, and Ourselves After Crisis and Loss Description: The session will include practical strategies to support students after a crisis or loss—whether impacting an individual or entire school; the benefits of universal support to promote resilience; the principles of psychological first aid; and practical strategies and free resources to support grieving students. We'll also discuss the challenges of leading after a crisis as well as strategies for preventing vicarious traumatization, compassion fatigue, and moral injury. Questions and discussion will be encouraged. Learning Lead(s): David Schonfeld
SEI309	Description: In this session, participants will gain insight into the nuances of the journey to leadership for ESPs, using real-life examples and beginning with understanding the power of the "story of self." Inner exploration to understand values, vision, and setting goals will provide a road map for leaders on a journey of becoming.
	Learning Lead(s): Audrey Nichols, LaTasha Kimbrough-Tate

Title: Union-Driven Systems Focused on Holistic Well-Being Improve Staff Retention and Build Thriving Schools
Description: In Washington, the Peninsula Education Association used funding from an NEA Great Public Schools grant to design trainings to help education leaders normalize and learn how to discuss educator well-being, address workplace stress, and create practices, structures, and systems that empower educators and lead to higher staff retention and healthier school systems where teaching and learning thrive.
Learning Lead(s): Carol Rivera, Hannah Coffelt-Hollett, Rebecca Maffei



STRATEGY AND FISCAL HEALTH

Builds the brand and accomplishes the goals of the Association through effective financial management and understanding of fiduciary responsibilities.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN FOCUS	SESSION TITLE, DESCRIPTION, LEARNING LEADS
CE11300	Title: The Five-Minute Tax Return
SFH300	Description: Did you know that you can do a typical local's tax return in five minutes or less? Come to this session and learn just how easy it is to file IRS Form 990-N. In addition to doing a practice return, this session will teach you how to file for tax-exempt status with the IRS, and how to implement recording-keeping practices every association needs to know and understand. Learning Lead(s): Paula Purdy, Rodney Rowe
SFH301	Title: SWOT Analysis: An Essential Tool in your Strategy Toolbox Description: This interactive session teaches you how to design and conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis—a key component in good strategic planning in your association. This session is designed to help local association leaders bring better alignment, focus, and member value to their union's work Learning Lead(s): Leigh Kennedy
SFH302	Title: The Basics of Strategic Budgeting and Reserves Description: Learn strategic budgeting basics for maintaining fiscal health. Participants will learn: 1. How to use a strategic plan to develop strategic budget; 2. How to create strategic budgets, and issues to consider when planning and drafting a strategic budget; 3. Guiding principles for creating a strategic budget; and 4. Planning strategically for financial uncertainty by establishing reserves. Learning Lead(s): Robert Maleta

BOD300	Title: NEA Directors: Roles and Responsibilities at the NEA Representative Assembly
Note: For NEA Board of	
Directors Only	Description: Participants will explore how their thoughts and emotions directly influence their actions, often without conscious
	awareness. Using the Energy Leadership framework, you'll uncover how you "show up" in both optimal and stressful situations. You'll

learn: 1) Practical tools to recognize your energy levels and identify the underlying patterns that drive your responses and 2) strategies to make conscious choices that align with your values and serve your goals instead of being driven by stress and habit.

Learning Lead(s): Angie Powers, Jeb Binns, Denise Lake, Paula Merrigan, Robert Rodriguez, Ron 'Duff' Martin, Sherri Schwanz, Ivory Smith, Hannah StClair, Brian Skinner, Edward Ventura