

Mx. Kylar McNeal for NEA Executive Committee

My name is Mx. Kylar McNeal (they/them), and I am a high school social studies teacher in Shawnee Mission, Kansas running for NEA executive committee. My academic research and writing on the intersections of feminism and labor history—particularly the Lowell Mill Girls—first ignited my passion for union solidarity and collective action. My heart, passion, and academic interest lies with the power of unions and solidarity. As your representative on the executive committee, I promise to be a voice for all workers in education. My goal is to shift conversations from being centered around K-12 educators, and start talking about the NEA as a union of workers. Regardless of your institution and position, we are all workers. This shift in framing, to focus on class consciousness and working-class solidarity, is what will unite us, give us power, and strike fear into the hearts of the owning class.

Higher education is under siege. Academic freedom and tenure—the foundational protections that allow educators to pursue truth and challenge power—are being systematically dismantled. Meanwhile, higher education teaching is performed by contingent faculty who lack job security, living wages, and benefits. This isn't happening by accident. The corporatization of academia isn't just a threat—it's class warfare against education workers. As venture capitalists and administrative bureaucrats colonize our institutions, NEA must become the militant vanguard for higher education liberation. I propose:

1. Establishing worker-controlled university governance throughout education, where faculty, staff, and support workers collectively make decisions about budgets, hiring, and academic policy—not board members selected for their wealth
2. Dismantling the administrative hierarchy that drains resources from classrooms while exploiting academic labor—replacing presidents earning seven-figure salaries with democratic councils of those who teach and support students
3. Building a unified education workers' movement that rejects artificial divisions between K-12 and higher education, recognizing that capitalist forces are weaponizing precarity and forms of otherization against all of us

The crisis in higher education is fundamentally about power. When administrators slash departments while padding their salaries, when trustees with no pedagogical experience dictate policy, when free speech and protest rights are threatened, when staff are forced into poverty wages, when sports devour more funding and salaries than academics and research — these aren't policy problems but the result of workers being stripped of control over their labor. Only by reclaiming that control can we build the educational institutions our communities deserve.

I have enthusiastically acted as a building rep since my first teaching contract. I have served on the executive board of my local, attended every state RA, worked as a summer organizer, and have served on my State resolutions committee. This past summer I donned a bullhorn and walked in solidarity with NEASO in their strike with NEA. I am committed to improving the lives of all working people. I promise to speak truth to power, center those who are marginalized, and do what is right, even if unpopular. I am a firm believer in the power of strikes. I am fearful of the fascist rhetoric facing our professions, but I am not afraid to fight it. I humbly ask for your vote in this fight for our respect, wages, working conditions, and rights.