

NCCESEU REPORT

2010 Delegate Assembly Report

As noted in the 2010 MSEA Political Committee Report, MSEA is part of the National Coalition of Classified Education Support Employee Unions. Other members of the NCCESEU are SEIU Local 284, the California School Employees Association (CSEA – affiliated with AFL-CIO), the Public School Employees of Washington (PSE – affiliated with SEIU), and the National Education Association (NEA). Classified school employee unions in Utah and Oregon had previously been involved, but the Utah union recently affiliated with the NEA and the Oregon union affiliated with AFT. NEA now represents Utah’s interests within the NCCESEU, and the Oregon union is no longer involved.

Meetings/Conferences

During 2009-10, the NCCESEU conducted two meetings in Washington, D.C. and a variety of conference calls. Another meeting is scheduled for May 2010, also in Washington, D.C. President Mapes and Executive Director Christina Clark attended both meetings and Christina also participated in the conference calls. While in DC for the first meeting, President Mapes and Christina also met with every Minnesota congressional office, including personal meetings with Reps. Tim Walz, Keith Ellison, and Betty McCollum, as well as Sen. Amy Klobuchar.

For your information, MSEA’s membership by federal congressional district is as follows:

CD 1 (Walz)	1400	CD 5 (Ellison)	0
CD 2 (Kline)	525	CD 6 (Bachmann)	1078
CD 3 (Paulsen)	760	CD 7 (Peterson)	1744
CD 4 (McCollum)	20	CD 8 (Oberstar)	316

Ironically, our strongest supporter in Congress is Ellison from CD 5! We might think about organizing a unit or two in his district! Could be St. Louis Park, Richfield, or Fridley....

At the first NCCESEU meeting this year, the participants first committed to moving forward as a coalition. We then chose NCCESEU as the coalition's name, and agreed to create and use a coalition letterhead. Because of NEA’s membership, we are able to say that we are a coalition of more than 1 million members. (MSEA is the smallest of the group, followed closely by SEIU Local 284. PSE has about 26,000 members, and CSEA has 190,000.) We also adopted a consensus decision-making process. If the coalition does not reach consensus on an issue, then those who support the issue are free to move forward with it, but agree not to use the coalition’s name when doing so, and agree to confirm that the issue does not have the coalition’s support if they are asked about it.

At the second meeting, the participants agreed on the following statement of purpose: “The purpose of this national coalition is to maximize the power of our united voice to gain respect, rights, and recognition for classified education support employees to win the resources needed to rebuild the world-class public schools our children deserve.”

The participants also agreed on the following: no dues, no paid coalition staff, each affiliate will pay its own expenses, and each affiliate will designate one spokesperson. The participants also agreed to continue meeting at least annually (in May), and to rotate the responsibility for calling the meeting, setting the agenda, making the necessary arrangements, and facilitating the meeting and follow-up. For 2010, CSEA is responsible, followed by PSE for 2011, SEIU 284 for 2012, NEA for 2013, and 2014 for MSEA. (MSEA is talking with SEIU 284 about teaming up with them in 2012).

Major Activities and Work Projects

The NCCESU is currently engaged in three major activities: 1) lobbying, 2) resource and data sharing and networking, and 3) publishing a report regarding the value of paraprofessionals. It should be noted that for MSEA, the most important of these is #2. California, however, is focused primarily on #1, while Washington's first priority is #3.

The NCCESU's first work project was to lobby Education Secretary Arne Duncan to distribute a letter to state school commissioners/superintendents to inform them the best and most appropriate use of the stimulus bill monies is to save jobs. Although Secretary Duncan initially agreed to sign and distribute the letter this past summer, other seemingly unrelated events delayed the process and the letter has yet to be sent to the states. Because so much time has passed at this point (and Race to the Top is the only topic under discussion), it is unlikely that he will actually send the letter.

The second work project is to develop common federal legislative priorities. At the 2nd meeting this year, the participants agreed on a list of possible priorities, and each coalition member agreed to prioritize these independently before reconvening to work on a single agreed-upon list. During its March 2010 meeting, the MSEA Board divided the list into three categories, as shown below. NCCESU will work on the final list during its next conference call, with the goal of identifying 4-5 common top priorities. These top priorities will suggest the need for speakers, data, and actions.

Very Important:

- Living wage
- Health care
- Recruiting other coalition partners
- Positive PR for classified school district employees (including promotion of CSEY* bill)
- Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA)

Somewhat important:

- Privatization
- Head Start/early childhood impact on classified school district employees on Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, school transformation efforts, online education, charter schools
- After school programs, with focus on generating more employee jobs

Lesser importance:

- Pensions
- H1N1
- Higher Ed issues
- Family/school/community partnerships
- Training/Best practices on internal capacity

*The Classified School Employee of the Year program. See below.

The third work project is to promote passage of a bill that will establish a Classified School Employee of the Year program. The bill has passed the House of Representatives and is in search of an author in the US Senate. We are currently lobbying Senator Al Franken to sponsor that bill, and the other NCCESU members are lobbying their own senators for the same purpose. The bill is not particularly controversial (it had strong bipartisan support in the House) but it is also not viewed as a priority by most senators. Stay tuned as we continue to push for Congress to establish the CSEY program.

This has been an exciting year for this newly formed coalition. We look forward to NCCESU activities and events in the upcoming year.