



Utah School Employees Association

Affiliation with NEA

Questions & Answers

Why is the USEEA Executive Board recommending affiliation with the National Education Association (NEA)?

For a number of years, the Utah School Employees Association (USEEA) has worked in partnership with other groups representing classified employees, including the American Association of Classified School Employees (AACSE) and the National Association of Classified School Employees (NACSE). These groups are not full-service national organizations like NEA; they are coalitions that are primarily made up of classified organizations like USEEA. USEEA's involvement with these groups provided us with a national presence for lobbying issues and a network of colleagues with common interests.

Affiliation with the National Education Association (NEA) would improve USEEA's national presence and would greatly expand our network of like-minded colleagues across the nation. We would have a national lobby presence with the largest public education advocate in the United States, a network of colleagues of approximately **350,000 education support professionals (Classified Employees) nationwide** and 2.7 million total members. *NEA is not just a teacher organization; in fact, NEA represents far more classified employees than any other national association in the country.*

Affiliation with NEA goes far beyond the lobbying benefits of participating in a coalition of state associations. USEEA would have access to services and programs that would help us to improve our effectiveness as an organization. NEA can enhance USEEA programs and services for members in a variety of ways.

NEA has extensive leadership and staff training programs that include national, regional and local training conferences/workshops with knowledgeable trainers. These trainers can present the latest information on bargaining, lobbying, political action, member representation, communications, fighting privatization of classified jobs and more, to help us improve our skills in these areas. NEA also has additional experienced staff and resources to help with bargaining, member representation, legal concerns, research and other member advocacy issues.

The NEA Department of Legal Services and Member Advocacy would provide USEEA members with up to \$1 million dollars in liability insurance and enhanced legal services. The NEA Member Benefits Department is able to use the purchasing power of 2.7 million NEA members to get discounts on travel, credit cards, retirement planning, annuities and a wide array of other benefits

and services beyond what USEA has been able to provide until now. By affiliating with NEA, all of these benefits and services will be available to USEA members.

As part of NEA and together with 350,000 other classified employees who already belong to NEA, we can help shape the programs and priorities of the nation's largest lobby team and leading advocate for public education in the country.

Will USEA members continue to have control over USEA programs, services, policies and priorities?

The USEA Board of Directors has negotiated a unique arrangement with NEA. Under the proposed agreement, USEA will be a *direct statewide local affiliate of the NEA*. Classified employees in Utah will maintain their autonomy and continue to control USEA through our own state executive board, elected by and accountable to the members of USEA. We will retain our ability to determine our own programs, services, policies and such things as state legislative priorities. *USEA members will not be members of the Utah Education Association (UEA) and will not be expected to automatically support positions taken by UEA*. However, we will work in partnership with UEA, the state's largest advocate for teachers, students and public education, on issues that are beneficial to the educational system and our respective members. The USEA Board believes that this partnership will improve the ability of classified employees and teachers to more effectively work together on issues of mutual concern at the state and local level.

What will these additional benefits/services & programs cost?

Eventually there will be an additional cost for affiliation with NEA. However, USEA has negotiated a dues implementation schedule that will make the transition between additional benefits and costs to members a gradual one. USEA will be able to eliminate or reduce the cost of benefits and services that duplicate NEA benefits and/or services.

By affiliating with NEA, NEA will provide to USEA and our members: various grants; training programs; member advocacy programs; lobbying services; information on state and federal legislation affecting classified employees; NEA publications; a website (www.nea.org/esphome); and legal services protection, etc. In other words, dues paid to the NEA will come back to the organization in direct financial assistance and in additional programs and services that directly benefit members of USEA. By eliminating any duplication of our current services, we will be able to reduce the actual cost to our members for these additional benefits and services.

We are in the process of working with NEA to identify the areas of service duplication so we can be accurate in predicting additional cost to members. We will have these details finalized and ready to present to local officers at USEA's Spring Officers Workshop. This workshop is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 20th, 2004. All USEA local officers are invited.

What is the process used in deciding to affiliate with NEA?

The USEA Executive Board will propose an affiliation resolution at the USEA Delegate Conference on Saturday, May 1, 2004. The Board's resolution to affiliate will be discussed in detail at the USEA Officers Workshop in March. Delegates attending the 2004 Delegate Conference in May will have the opportunity to further discuss and vote on the proposed

affiliation with NEA at that time. Between now and Delegate Conference, the USEA Board and/or staff are available to answer questions in regularly scheduled local executive board meetings or local mass meetings. If you would like someone to attend a local meeting to discuss this important issue, please contact your USEA Labor Relations Representative to schedule.

UEA Delegates will meet with their own house of delegates, also held on May 1, 2004, to discuss and vote on amendments to UEA's governing documents, making USEA's direct affiliation with NEA possible.