

# CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Lindsey Smith for NEA Director

1. How long have you been working in education?

I have enjoyed each of my 15 years in public education. Each challenge, victory, and experience has turned me into an advocate of indomitable will. Standing in solidarity to create the equitable public schools that we all deserve is what inspires and grounds me.

2. What positions of leadership have you held (elected, appointed or voluntary) at the local, region, state or national level?

I have held many positions of leadership throughout my years in education. A leader is someone who inspires confidence in people and empowers them into collective action. I believe that all educators have the agency to create positive change. Together, we can!

<b>Local</b>	<b>Region/State</b>	<b>National</b>
LEA Interest Based Bargaining Team	IEA Region 2 President	NEA Priority Ambassador
LEA Building Representative	IEA Leaders for Just Schools Founding Leadership Team Member and Facilitator	NEA Leaders for Just Schools Facilitator
LEA Vice President 2017-2019	IEA Statewide Trainer	NEA College/Career Readiness Workgroup
LEA Targeted Local Team 2018-2020	IEA Delegate 2017-present  IEA Summer Institute Presenter 2016-Present  IEA IGNITE Committee Founding Member  IEA SPARKS Retreat Facilitator 2017-2020  IEA Instructional PD Committee 2017-2020	NEA Leadership Summit Presenter 2019  NEA Representative Assembly Delegate 2018

3. What do you believe are the three primary responsibilities of this office?

Amplifying the voices of educators in Idaho, implementing policies established by the Representative Assembly, and serving as a direct link between the national and state level are the three primary responsibilities of an NEA Director. As educators, we improve the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively. NEA Directors

make critical decisions about association policy. If elected to this position, I will ensure that Idaho is represented throughout the nation as I help administer decisions made by delegates of the NEA Representative Assembly (the NEA's highest decision-making body). I will also serve as a direct line of communication and you will remain informed about what is happening at the national level. NEA Directors are the voice of their constituencies. I may be from the North, but I am committed to ALL regions of the IEA and will listen to your concerns and seek to understand all perspectives. I have the heart of an advocate and as I prepare to take on this position, I am making a commitment to continue to amplify your voices and share your stories. Your voices matter!

4. What do you see as the greatest challenge IEA members will face in the next five years? What ideas do you have to address that challenge?

The continued attacks and attempts at dismantling public education will be the greatest challenge that IEA members will face in the next five years. Over 90 percent of Idaho's children attend public schools, which are already underfunded. It will take solidarity and collective voice to prevent vouchers or similar schemes from taking scarce funding from students in our Idaho public schools. With programs like these, resources are given to private schools without accountability measures. Taxpayer dollars should go only to public schools open to all students, not for-profit, private institutions that can choose their students based on economic status, academic achievement and disability status, among a number of other factors. Several states have already been subjected to this harmful legislation. Studies have shown that voucher programs spike taxes, exclude rural communities and do not improve student achievement and growth.

To address this challenge, we must continue to use our voices and make our stories known. Whether we make phone calls, send emails, write letters, testify at the legislature and/or show up in numbers, we need to hold our lawmakers accountable and make sure they understand the impact these decisions will make. In addition to this, I will make a concerted effort to continue my work to persuade and inspire members to donate to PACE. Together, we will continue to show up, speak out and do what's best for our students, our economy and the future of education in Idaho.

5. What is your plan for increasing membership and member engagement?

I often say that my role as a Building Representative in my local is one of the most challenging and rewarding positions that I hold. It has taught me everything that I know about the importance of having courageous conversations regarding the power of membership. I have a passion for building capacity and connecting with members. I believe that the number one priority in increasing membership and retaining valued members is building lasting, authentic relationships with the educators you work with everyday. When members trust you and know that your intentions are genuine, they begin to listen to the reasons why union membership is for them. When educators are respected, appreciated, heard, and have the resources needed to succeed, we can give

students our very best. I will forever remind potential and active members that by joining together, we have more power to advocate for better pay and benefits, better working conditions and better learning conditions for our students. If educators want to change something at school, in their district, at the state level or even nationally, our union is the way to make that change a reality. I will continue to recruit and retain educators to our professional organization by building strong relationships, communicating effectively with members and actively looking for new ways to engage members state-wide. My involvement as a founding member of the IGNITE committee and IEA Leaders for Just Schools program have stemmed from my passion for creating additional ways that our professional organization can engage and inspire educators to be the best versions of themselves. My ability to increase membership has led to new opportunities to share and collaborate with others. I will be joining our Region 2 Director on a tour around the state to share best practices for recruiting, retaining and engaging members. When we come together to win for our students, our schools and ourselves, we are powerful!

6. How do you intend to communicate with members in order to keep them informed and to find out their concerns?

Strong communication shapes perceptions as well as relationships. My goal is to build and execute an effective communications strategy that assists in driving the mission, vision, core values and strategic goals of the association. A combination of email, Zoom communications, in-person opportunities and working closely with our IEA communications team will allow for effective communication and the ability to organize members and inspire action to support public education in Idaho. Open lines of communication will allow me to stay updated on member suggestions and concerns. I would like to continue to use email to offer insight, share information from the national level and inspire members to action.

7. Provide other information you would like members to know:

My diligence and dedication to public education has offered me many opportunities throughout the years. I have nearly a decade of experience at the national level working directly with the NEA Center for Education Policy and Practice. For many years, I have been working with educators across the country to create policy changes by leveraging the power of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and claiming our rightful seats at the table. While I have loved and am deeply grateful for each minute of national work that I have been a part of, it is time for me to apply my knowledge and effective leadership at home in the great state of Idaho. The insight and experience that I have gained from my many association roles have prepared me as an optimistic leader who looks around and says, "We can fix this!" We have the tools to transform policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels and create real change in our schools. Sharing our collective voice with decision makers will ensure positive outcomes for educators, public schools and the extraordinary students that we serve in Idaho.