

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

(Applies to candidates running for IEA President, Vice President, NEA Director, IEA Representative on the NEA Resolutions Committee, At Large Member(s) on the IEA Board of Directors – this questionnaire is to appear on the reverse of the “Nomination Form for IEA Office” provided to potential candidates.)

1. Provide a brief overview of your experience in education

Thirty years ago I began my education career with the Twin Falls School District. In this time, I have taught 7th and 8th grade Language Arts, 6th grade at an elementary school, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Math and most recently I have been an Instructional Coach at O’Leary Middle School. .

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

I have been an active education leader for the Twin Falls School District for the majority of my tenure; Team Leader, District committees, two of which I am currently co-chairing, and the Twin Falls School District Budget Advisory committee are broad examples of my leadership. For the past 8 years, I have been the lead negotiator. I have served as the local Vice President, Building Rep, Secretary, and Local President.

At the state level I served two terms as Region President, I served as a Region 4 Board Member and was on the Budget Committee. I also represented Region 4 on the GR/Pace committee. For the past 3 years I have served as your NEA Director and have chaired the Personnel Committee and Co-Chaired the GR/Pace Committee. I also worked with the President to help with Vice President Duties when the position was unfilled.

My first experience as a national leader was being one of 3 Idaho teachers who were selected to represent Idaho as facilitators on the NEA GPS website, now known as Ed Communities. In my 3 years as the NEA Director, I have served on the Membership Committee, On the Higher Ed Planning Committee, and The Future of Organizing Think Tank Committee. I am also a Leaders for Just Schools trainer and most recently was appointed to be on the NEA Board Steering Committee.

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

- 1) Communication! The NEA Director is the liaison between the state association and the national association. Idaho members deserve to know what is going on at the National Level. The NEA Director must be a clear communicator, one who not only shares what is taking place at the National Level, but one who will listen to the members across the state and share any concerns with the appropriate person. And in order to communicate effectively, the NEA Director must understand NEA policy as it pertains to the state and the national levels. In order to be successful with this particular role, it is imperative that the NEA Director be actively involved in the NEA’s strategic plan and understand how it can be implemented at the state level and be an effective communicator.
- 2) Fund-Raising for the NEA Fund. Educating and communicating the members in Idaho about the importance of Political Action and its role in education policy is so important to build relationships from the state to the national levels of the association. By effectively involving IEA members in fundraising for the NEA Fund, they will become more aware of policies and actions that directly affect the work they do in the state of Idaho.
- 3) Participate in Congressional Lobbying and be responsible for contacting the states congressmen to actively seek out ways to garner support for the agenda of the NEA. It is important that in doing this work, the NEA Director research and communicate with members

about political consequences can affect our state and the country.

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?

Three years ago when I was running for this position, I said the greatest challenge was education funding and I still believe that to be the case. We have made significant gains and that has a lot to do with the leadership of the IEA. We have spent many hours working with education stakeholders to make a difference in funding, this year the Governor has asked for an 11% increase in education funding. It's a start, we still have a long way to go. However, currently, I believe the Pandemic is a great challenge that we will face for many years to come. The pandemic is still affecting our schools today. Many of our students have not had a "normal" year for 1/4th of their educational career. Yet, we are still using standardized assessment based on standards that are expected to be taught during a normal year. We must address the assessment issue in Idaho. I have begun having conversations with members of the state board as well as the legislature. Those conversations will continue. But as educators, we all need to work together to elect pro-education candidates and once we elect them, we need to continue to build our relationship with them. As NEA director, I will continue to lobby legislators and push for appropriate funding and assessment. We must strengthen our collective voice. I will work with regions and organizing centers to recognize pro education candidates and I will work with members in educating them to use their voice to help strengthen our association.

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

Membership is the heart and soul of our association. When I won the state Membership Recruiter of the Year Award, it was because I successfully put a plan in place in our region and was diligent in following through with that plan. That is the key, having a plan and being diligent in following the plan. I currently sit on the NEA's Future of Organizing task force. Part of our work includes developing state and local strategies around member recruitment and engagement. I will share this information with our state leaders and the IEA Board of Directors. I will continue my work with leadership in each organizing center and develop a strategy that will work for them. The most important role I will play is communicating with those people and offer support to ensure that the plan they create is being followed and implemented. The plan must be unique to each area of the state, everyone has different needs and expectations and it will be my responsibility to find those needs.

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

Communication is the key to any successful organization. As your current NEA Director, I feel that I have been very deliberate in communicating with our membership. I have sent out NEA updates through our email platform and I will continue to do so. I also create an NEA Director report four times a year that is shared with IEA Board members.

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

IEA members deserve the highest standard of representation. I believe I have kept my campaign promise to listen to your concerns and to share them at all levels of the association. Communicating with members in our local, region, and state is something I do well. Because of that communication, I was appointed by NEA President Becky Pringle to be on the NEA Board Steering committee where I will be expected to communicate at an even higher level with our state delegates as well as other delegates from around the country during the NEA/RA. I am trusted. Most importantly, I will continue to work with the IEA Executive Board and with members across the state to strengthen our collective voice, I will always be your advocate.