

EDUCATION MATTERS

A publication of the Association of American Educators Foundation



By Olivia Valentine

Millennial Teachers Choose AAE This Back-to-School Season

Words of Wisdom from an AAE Millennial

As a rookie educator fresh in the field, it didn't take long for me to recognize AAE as an organization that not only represents, but also truly supports, the teachers of my generation. Packed with tons of excellent member benefits and continued dedication to even new and student teachers, AAE is affordable and its positions on education policy fit the millennial paradigm like a glove! That's why I have a message for millennial teachers this back-to-school season: you have options!

Free from the confines of internal "good ole boy" union politics and support for an outdated seniority structure that puts younger teachers at a disadvantage, the AAE family accepts millennial educators with open arms. I'm proud to be part of an organization willing to embrace the future of the profession.

"Young teachers become the foundation of the theoretical 'totem pole' and are the most vulnerable to being fired simply because they're the newest addition to the team or were born in a later year."



I take comfort in AAE's reform-minded approach to education because it means outstanding teachers can be recognized for their hard work in addition to their time in the field. That innovation and results are seen as valuable parts of improving our national standing in education, and students will ultimately come out on top because we hold ourselves as educators to the high standards that our students deserve.

AAE's mission elevates the teaching profession for educators of all ages because it focuses on bringing authentic teacher voices to the table when discussing policy. Other organizations spend their time focusing on how to fund their next big political initiative. My students deserve the best, and I do my best to give them the best of me. AAE gives me the peace of mind I need to be able to do that because it values me as more than a number on a spreadsheet or padding to their wallet.

AAE member surveys on teacher tenure reform are another reason millennials are better served with AAE. While tenure does indeed serve to protect some teachers, the policy of last-in first-out (LIFO) hurts good teachers even when their impact on students is making great gains. Young teachers become the foundation of the theoretical 'totem pole' and are the most vulnerable to being fired simply because they're the newest addition to the team or were born in a later year. This policy hinders both student and teacher growth and discourages new teachers like myself from getting involved because our dedication isn't valued in this model. It's critical that great teachers of all ages are valued!

Similarly, millennial teachers are drawn to AAE because of its support for innovation and choice. I know first hand how choice in education allows new teachers to thrive in environments that are best suited to their dreams and talents. As a young teacher in a majority-minority school district, I've seen how school choice plays a big part not only in uplifting minorities but in giving me options to harness the power of teaching in ways that highlight both my strengths and passions.

As a millennial teacher, I feel that other organizations are antiquated and focused on their own interests. Their top-heavy internal politics couldn't be better evidence of that fact. If they spent even half the time focused on helping millennial educators like me exceed in the classroom as they did on frivolous partisan issues unrelated to education, they wouldn't have to try so hard to force us into membership.

Thankfully I live and work in a Right-to-Work state as opposed to a compulsory union state where I have no options. The partisan political lobbying and hidden agendas of other organizations have never been a good fit for me, my wallet, or my mission to help students reach their highest potential.

In connecting with AAE, I was surprised that many of my colleagues across the country don't realize they even have options outside of union membership! Contrary to what many want you to believe, teachers need to know they do have choices!

I encourage my fellow teachers, novice and veteran, to educate their colleagues about AAE and about preserving their rights of association. The teachers deserve the facts about all organizations.

To be a part of AAE is to be a member of a family of educators that constantly seeks to give its best to students. From this millennial's standpoint, putting teachers in the drivers seat is exactly what teachers need to be able to give more to their students. And AAE is making it happen. ■



Olivia Valentine has a B.A. in history and is currently a graduate student at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia pursuing a master's degree in history and a teaching license. She is a political activist online under the name "LibertyNerd" and will be speaking at LibertyFest in New York City later this year.

AAE Supports Innovative Teachers: David Fassler Awarded Grant



APPLY THIS FALL

The AAE Foundation's National Scholarships and Grants competition is held twice a year in the fall and spring and is open to all educators. The deadlines are March 1 and October 1 of every year. Don't forget to apply this fall! For more information, visit aaeteachers.org/awards.

AAE is committed to elevating the teaching profession and supporting our talented members. In the effort to recognize the work of great teachers, we give away thousands of dollars every year to teachers with big ideas. These teachers exemplify AAE's goals and prove that teachers are on the front lines of innovation.

Mr. David Fassler, a 7th-grade science teacher at South Saint Paul Secondary School in Mendota Heights, Minnesota, earned a classroom grant by the Association of American Educators Foundation this past spring to purchase model skeletons for his school.

"Until now, my school has only had one full-sized human skeleton for the entire IB Diploma Program. This model is old, has missing parts due to heavy use, and is in high demand by all biology and life science classes," explained Mr. Fassler. "But thanks to AAE, we've been able to purchase eight more for our classrooms, benefitting upwards of 525 students in the secondary school building! A human skeleton model as a resource has many uses outside of the standards to include use in physical education with how the body moves; immunity as the long bones of the legs produce both red and white blood cells; sensory abilities with the eyes, nose, ears, and mouth located on the skull of humans and relayed through the spinal column; disease diagnosis and identification such as rickets in the bones and scurvy in the connective tissues;

as well as in first aid. I'm so thankful to AAE for helping me provide such an important resource to my students."

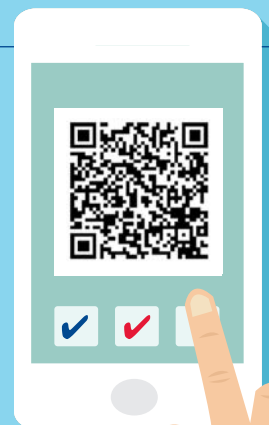
The AAEF is committed to offering individual educators the means to optimize student learning with out-of-the-box initiatives like these. "David is clearly a class act! I'm so impressed with the way he teaches his students the intricacies of the human body," said AAEF Chairman Gary Beckner. "Teachers like David make AAE scholarships and grants worthy investments in empowering educators to meet their professional potential!" ■

Teacher Survey of the Month

What one school supply do you never have enough of?

Take the survey at tinyurl.com/August15Survey today and be entered to win an AAE Prize Pack just for letting us know.

Scan the QR code to take this survey on your phone!



Comparing Notes:

Why Teachers Choose the AAE Way

The National Educators Association (NEA)—the nation’s largest teachers union—has been hemorrhaging members for decades. What started as a noble effort took a turn for the worst during the mid-1970s when the unions began refocusing their efforts on political power.

AAE was founded to offer teachers a professional alternative to union membership with comparable benefits, and has since become the nation’s fastest growing professional association for educators.

The mounting reasons for that success couldn’t be clearer...

► Refer to page 7 for sources.

Americans believe in teacher freedom

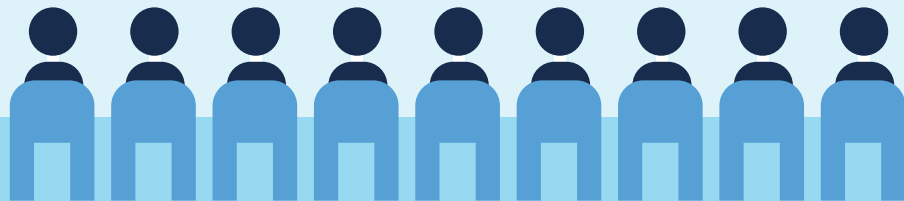
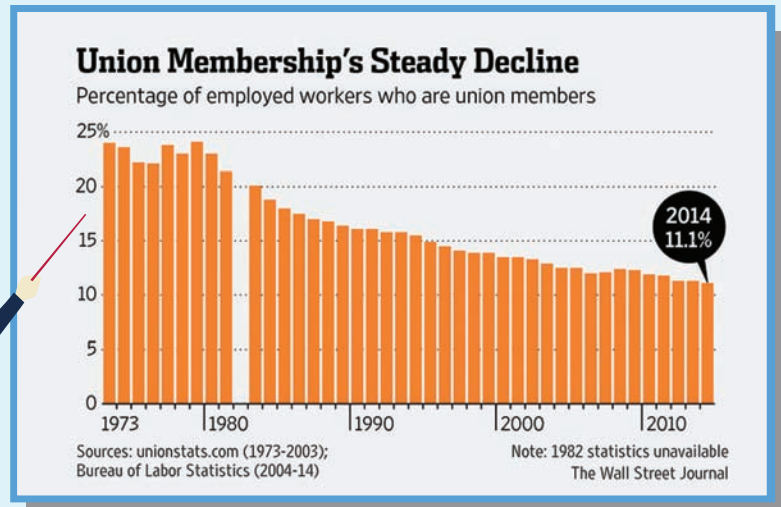
83% of survey respondents believe that **EMPLOYEES SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE**, without force or penalty, whether to join or leave a labor union.¹

In fact, union membership has been in steady decline for decades.

Fifty years ago, nearly a third of U.S. workers belonged to a union. Today, it’s one in 10.

NEARLY 1/3

OF UNION MEMBERS WOULD LEAVE THE UNION “if it were possible to opt out of membership in a labor union without losing your job or any other penalty.”¹



Why AAE Membership is Growing in Light of Union Declines

AAE is the cost-effective alternative

The cost of annual membership dues in 2015



UNION DUES

\$400–\$1200²
depending on state and locality



\$198 per year nationwide
or just \$16.50/month

AAE has benefits the union doesn't

- ✓ AAE doesn't promote adversarial relationships between teachers and administrators
- ✓ \$2M insurance policy
PROTECTS THE MEMBER, NOT THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT
- ✓ Ability to join and drop **AT ANY TIME**
- ✓ Nonpartisan and **WILL NEVER SPEND DUES** on issues unrelated to education

But Why is Union Membership in Decline?

■ Overt partisanship doesn't represent membership values



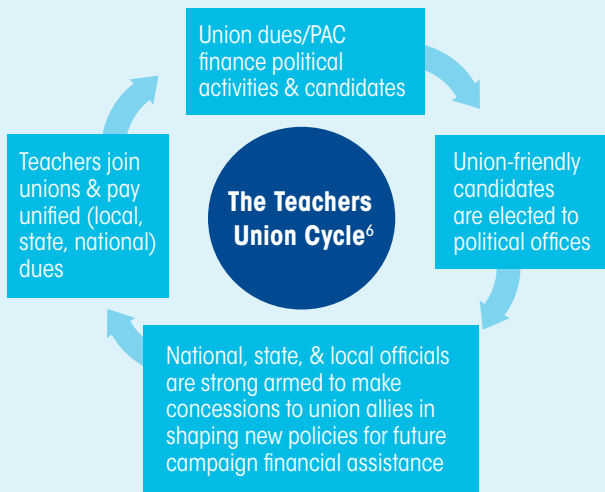
of the **POLITICAL DONATIONS NEA MADE WITH TEACHER UNION DUES** have gone to Democrats since 1996.⁴

The total of teacher dues spent on partisan politics in 2012



NEA & AFT
(the two largest teachers unions)⁵
\$45 Million+

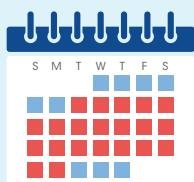
AAE
\$0.00



“The unions have been exposed as a honey pot for left-wing political causes that have nothing to do with teachers, much less students.” —*The Wall Street Journal*

WSJ

■ Union policies impair student success and hike cost of teacher dues



31.5 Million+
The **CUMULATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS** that 350,000 faultless students lost in Chicago alone after 3 weeks of union-initiated strikes.⁷

NEA DELEGATES VOTED 61 to 39 against an amendment that would neutralize their stance on abortion.⁸

\$1.3 Million
The amount of teachers' dues NEA's California affiliate spent over the course of 6 months on **MARRIAGE ADVOCACY**.⁹

\$200 Million
The amount of the donation NEA **PRESSURED LAWMAKERS TO TURN DOWN** when an independent philanthropist pledged to build public charter schools in Detroit with no strings attached.¹⁰



In compulsory union states, **TEACHERS PAY 10% Higher Dues** and unions pay their top officers **\$20,000 MORE A YEAR**.¹¹

\$560,000 The amount NEA **SPENT ON ISSUES UNRELATED TO EDUCATION** including healthcare and fracking initiatives, bloggers conventions, and tax limitation opposition in Michigan, in 2014 alone.¹²

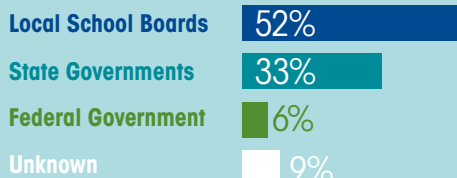
■ AAE puts teachers in the driver's seat



AAE takes stances on issues based only on annual member surveys

64% **PREFER TO NEGOTIATE THEIR OWN SALARIES**

Who should have the greatest influence on public education?



■ AAE supports accountability



AAE teachers report that **STUDENT GROWTH (80%) & ADMINISTRATOR REVIEW (76%)** are the two **MOST IMPORTANT** criteria when labeling teachers as “effective.”

TEACHERS HAVE OPTIONS!

In compulsory union states teachers can choose to become a religious objector or an agency fee payer.

In Right-to-Work states, teachers are free to drop union membership. However, even in these states, dropping membership is often confined to short drop windows.

Visit aaeteachers.org/yourrights to learn more about how you can help your colleagues make informed decisions. And if you know someone who is ready to make the switch, tell them to visit aaeteachers.org/membership to learn more about why AAE is the preferred professional choice for educators nationwide!



Member Spotlight:

Chad Booth Selected Middle School Teacher of the Year

Chad Booth is a dedicated teacher, to say the least. In addition to being a member of AAE's state chapter, Northwest Professional Educators (NWPE), Mr. Booth has been teaching for 16 years and currently empowers students at Lakes Magnet Middle School, in Coeur d'Alene, ID. Mr. Booth has become deeply involved with his local community and dedicates large amounts of his free time to the well-being of his students, offering extra time after and before school for studying, advice, and community engagement. Mr. Booth is a role model, not just for his students—who even after graduating still seek out his sage advice—but for fellow teachers as well.

Lakes Magnet Middle School emphasizes advanced learning in science, arts, and health. Mr. Booth plays an integral part in fostering the school's deep sense of community and innovation. While teaching 7th- and 8th-grade world cultures and U.S. history, he engrains in his students a sense of something bigger than themselves. It is because of his dedication to his students, his school, and his greater community that Mr. Booth has been selected as Coeur d'Alene School District's Middle School Teacher of the Year (TOY), an accolade he can add to a long list of others from previous years!

What motivates you as an educator?

I have a passion for kids and being a part of their developmental years. My ultimate goal is to build positive

relationships with them so they know that they always have someone there for them.



What do you like about teaching in your school?

The students are the reason I get up and go to work every day. We also have an unmatched support system within our community.

What sets your school district apart? Why do you think so many state TOYs hail from Coeur d'Alene schools?

I think what sets us apart is our dedication to our profession. So many Teachers of the Year hail from here because we are supported professionally.

If you have taught in other schools, how is this school different from the others?

Lakes Magnet Middle School is different from other schools I've taught at because of the opportunities we make available for students to develop new skills and how involved we are in our community.

What does it mean to you to be chosen as the district's middle school TOY?

It's a wonderful honor. It means that my peers respect me and see good things in my classroom and school. I'm excited to have an opportunity to share my stories with my fellow teachers!

Please describe your best idea for raising the professionalism of teaching as a career and how it will help to enhance respect for the profession of education.

My best idea is to have a growth mindset when it comes to teaching. If you think you have it all figured out, you better start to worry. We ALL have room to learn and grow. As professionals, we can't complain anymore about what we don't have. We need to focus on what we DO have and make it even better!

Please describe your primary reasons for joining AAE/NWPE and how membership has personally benefited your career as an educator.

My wife Jodi and I joined because we no longer agreed with where our CEA, IEA, and NEA dues were going. They were helping organizations we didn't morally agree with. We were tired of silly "tactics" of persuasion used by the union. We're tired of them protecting poor teachers and do not like being told who to vote for.

In your view, what's the #1 thing prospective members should know about AAE/NWPE?

AAE/NWPE offer much better coverage without the political affiliation—they're just professionals working hard to better those around them.

In recent years, your school district has ended the practice of excluding AAE/NWPE from its benefit fairs. How do you feel about this and are there additional positive changes the district might make to support teacher choice?

I am working on this in our district. My goal is to professionally collaborate with the people involved in giving teachers a choice. No influence, just choice and let them decide. My goal is also to have a voice at our new teacher orientation.

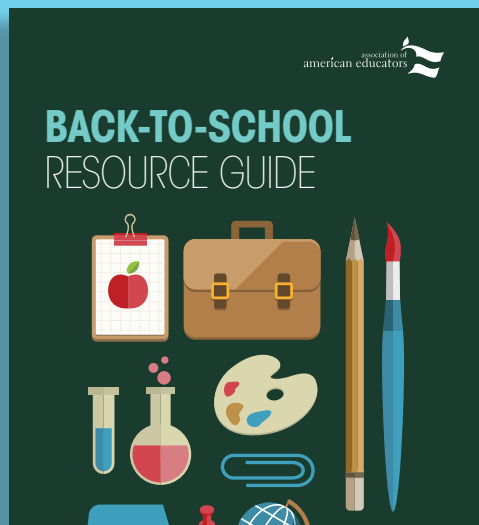
How does having a choice of professional organizations benefit teachers, students, and public education as a free marketplace of ideas?

It's freedom! No hassles and struggles with moral decisions. You can decide where your teaching skills can be best used. Teachers need to know that they have options. And what better way to exercise that right than starting with AAE/NWPE. ■

We love featuring amazing teachers! Do you have a story to tell? Tell us about them by emailing editor@aaeteachers.org.

AAE's Back-to-School Resource Guide

Check out AAE's latest publication! The must-have tool for educators this school year. Email profdev@aaeteachers.org to receive your free copy today!



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Get Involved: A Back-to-School Message from AAE's Membership Team Director

Hello AAE Member Teachers!

As we embrace the new school year, I'd like to introduce myself and my new role at AAE. My name is Shanna Morgason and I've been working as a regional director for AAE's Arkansas state chapter (ASTA) for the past five years. Starting this summer I'm going to be serving you as the membership team director for AAE! I'm excited about this new opportunity to serve you—our members—from coast to coast. You're part of the best professional educators association in the country and we are extremely proud to have been serving our members for over 20 years now. Thank you for being a part of our team!

You can make AAE a stronger force in the fight for teacher professionalism this August just by sharing the AAE mission with your colleagues! Certain tools are effective in sharing your professional association during the busy back-to-school season. Contact me at any time and I'd love to give you some additional tips.

1. Find a good day to share it. We all know how busy teachers are. You know your school district best. Is there an upcoming professional development day or new staff meeting during which you could share for 5 minutes? Your testimonial makes the difference!
2. Like our social media channels and share our blogs—help drive traffic to our website.
3. Share our printed materials with your entire staff before school resumes so they have time to read them and ask questions. Always include a membership application. We'll even send you materials for free when you place an order at aaeteachers.org/materials.
4. Share our AAE videos via email or on your Facebook wall. Visit youtube.com/aaeteachers for videos!
5. Ask to share on your district's app or website. Host a meeting and share a districtwide email introducing AAE. This is truly relational

and by sharing, you could certainly be saving a license and career.

Our staff is dedicated to providing you with all the support you need. Please contact us to help you plan a successful back-to-school strategy! NOW is the time to share!

Warm Regards,

Shanna Morgason
shanna@aaeteachers.org



REMEMBER...

Back-to-School is your new beginning, your blank chalkboard. Make a "new school year" resolution to share AAE with your colleagues and help us make this AAE's best year ever! Visit aaeteachers.org/GetInvolved today for more ideas.