DELEGATE ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER BYLAW AMENDMENTS

Proposals boost hours used to determine part-time members, adjust dues calculation based on date a new member joins, and add three committees to NJEA standing committees

At its June 10, 2020, meeting, the NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA), will consider three amendments to the Bylaws of the New Jersey Education Association. They propose:

• Amending the calculation of first-year dues for new members based on when they join NJEA after Sept. 1;
• Amending the hourly threshold at which members are eligible for part-time membership status from the current less than 20 hours a week to less than 25 hours a week;
• Adding three committees – Educational Support Professionals, Minority Involvement and Recruitment, and Urban Education – to the current list of NJEA standing committees.

As specified in the Bylaws, amendments to NJEA’s Bylaws require two votes by the DA. Bylaw 52 states “Amendments to the Bylaws may be proposed by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of the Delegate Assembly. Amendments so proposed shall be submitted to the Constitution Review Committee for review and recommendation and shall be published in full in the Official Publication of the Association. A three-fourths vote of all the members of the Delegate Assembly shall then be necessary for the adoption of such amendments.”

At the DA meeting on May 16, 2020, a majority of DA members voted to propose the three Bylaw amendments. The DA will vote at its meeting on June 10, 2020, whether to adopt these amendments. At least a three-fourths majority of all delegates must vote in favor of any proposed amendment for it to be adopted. If approved, these amendments will take effect Sept. 1, 2020.

Because of the current statewide executive order banning large gatherings to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, the meeting will be held virtually.

Directions on how to provide comments to the DA on the proposed amendments and deadlines for such comments can be found at njea.org/da.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO FIRST-YEAR DUES CALCULATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

At its Nov. 7, 2019, meeting, the DA sent to the Constitution Review Committee, upon recommendation of the Membership Committee, a request that a Bylaw amendment be drafted to provide that NJEA dues for new members would begin in the month in which the individual signs the membership application.

New member applications are received throughout the year, but under the current Bylaws individuals eligible for active membership who join later in the year are assessed full dues prorated over the fiscal year from the time they join.

In its November 2019 report to the DA, the NJEA Membership Committee noted that “With member acquisition being of utmost importance to the Association’s survival, the committee believes that the imposition of back dues is an unnecessary hurdle to enrolling active members beyond the August-September window. The proposal would enable NJEA to develop more flexible enrollment procedures and parameters as appropriate member-entry and fiscal software applications become available.”

The proposed amendment is as follows:

That the following section of Bylaw 1(h) be approved for amendment as follows (with additions in boldface and underlined; deletions in brackets and struck out) and renumbered as Bylaw 1-(j):

“(j) Membership start date and dues for individuals joining after Sept. 1 – For individuals joining after Sept. 1, the dues shall be calculated from the first of the month in which the application is signed and shall be based on the proportionate amount owed for the remaining portion of the fiscal year.”

If approved, this amendment to the NJEA Bylaws will take effect on Sept. 1, 2020.

MOVE TO EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR PART-TIME DUES BASED ON HOURS WORKED

Regarding payment of dues, the current NJEA Bylaws state that: “The dues for persons eligible for active professional or active supportive membership…are to be considered part-time employees and are employed for less than 20 hours per week, shall be one-half of the full dues for their respective active membership category.”

At the Nov. 7, 2019, DA meeting, the Membership Committee recommended that the DA request the Constitution Review Committee to draft a Bylaw amendment to modify the hourly weekly workload used to determine whether individuals qualify for the part-time dues threshold from the current “less than 20 hours” to “less than 25 hours.”

Prior to the Constitution Review Committee drafting its recommendation, the Membership Committee—aided by NJEA Membership Processing—conducted a survey of local associations regarding:

• the number of district part-time employees;
• a breakdown of how many hours weekly each of those employees works—broken down for under 20 hours and by the full hours falling between 20 and 30 hours;
• whether the individuals fall into the active professional or active supportive member categories.

The survey garnered responses from 53% of locals representing educational support professional (ESP) members and 57% of locals representing active professional members. These responses were then weighted against the membership counts as of April 2019 and extrapolated to estimate how many members would fall into each range statewide and the subsequent fiscal impact on the Association.

The survey revealed that if the weekly hours cutoff for determining part-time dues is raised to under 25 hours, an estimated 5,570 additional members would fall into the part-time dues category and qualify for half of the active professional or active supportive (ESP) dues, depending on their membership category. NJEA budget revenues would be reduced by an estimated $1.5 million.

While setting a higher threshold was suggested earlier, on May 16 the DA preliminarily approved the Constitution Review Committee’s proposed Bylaw amendment to set a 25-hour threshold for the coming year based on the data provided.

At the same time, the Membership Committee is being asked to survey locals with respect to determining how many members who work under 30 hours are receiving health benefits and how many hours they work. Once the information is obtained, the Membership Committee will review the data and has been asked to report back to the DA by late next fall. Subsequently, a decision will be made whether further amendments regarding the threshold for part-time membership should be proposed.

The proposed amendment is as follows:

That approval be given to amending the following section of current Bylaw section 1(h) and renumbering as shown (with additions in boldface and underlined; deletions in brackets and struck out):

“Bylaw 1…

“(i) Membership start date and dues for individuals joining after Sept. 1 – For individuals joining after Sept. 1, the dues shall be calculated from the first of the month in which the application is signed and shall be based on the proportionate amount owed for the remaining portion of the fiscal year.”

If approved, this amendment to the NJEA Bylaws will take effect on Sept. 1, 2020.
In addition, the following committees and their charges (additions in boldface and underlined; deletions in brackets and struck out) shall be added alphabetically to the list of the standing committees, currently Bylaws 33 to 48, with the Bylaws containing the additions and those that follow being renumbered to reflect the additions:

38. Educational Support Professionals Committee – The Educational Support Professionals Committee shall consist of one member from each unit of representation, with representation from educational support professional and teaching staff members. It shall:

a. examine and make recommendations on active supportive member needs, services, and programs;
b. recommend activities and programs to organize support staff groups not yet affiliated with NJEA;
c. review efforts to develop inclusive local organizations;
d. gather, review, and report on data related to anti-privatization initiatives;
e. develop and initiate training opportunities for school personnel.

If approved, this amendment to the NJEA Bylaws will take effect on Sept. 1, 2020.

**ADDITIONS RECOMMENDED TO STANDING COMMITTEES**

As part of the Bylaws evaluation, the standing committees currently contained in the Bylaws were reviewed.

The Bylaws are not meant to include all NJEA committees. Instead the standing committees are intended to include committees essential to organizational operations. Other committees may be and are established to place greater focus on specific programs or issues that are important but do not need to be included as standing committees.

As a result of the review, three committees were identified as rising to the level of standing committees. They are the Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Committee, the Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee, and the Urban Education Committee. Each of these committees deals with major organizational goals and functions and are considered significantly important to the Association’s continued organizational strength.

The proposed amendment is as follows:

That the following amendment be approved to add to current Bylaw 29, Standing Committees, the following committees (additions in boldface underlined; deletions in brackets and struck out):

29. Standing Committees –

The Standing Committees shall be:

- Affiliation
- Budget
- Certification, Evaluation, & Tenure
- Constitution Review
- Editorial
- Educational Support Professionals
- Government Relations
- Human & Civil Rights
- Instruction
- Leadership
- Membership
- Minority Leadership and Recruitment
- Pension Policy
- Professional Development
- Professional Rights & Responsibilities
- Public Relations
- School Finance
- Urban Education
- Working Conditions
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In addition, the following committees and their charges (additions in boldface and underlined; deletions in brackets and struck out) shall be added alphabetically to the list of the standing committees, currently Bylaws 33 to 48, with the Bylaws containing the additions and those that follow being renumbered to reflect the additions:

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