



## **Demanding Support for Claims (New Business Item 2016–48)**

*NEA will encourage and empower its members to question, challenge, and demand other stakeholders and themselves to provide facts and evidence to support their claims, ideas, and policies.*

NEA President Lily Eskelsen García has written on the issue of using evidence and facts instead of “alternative facts.” In her January 25, 2017, post on Lily’s Blackboard (<http://lilysblackboard.org/2017/01/thetruth/>), President Eskelsen García calls out the new Administration for its use of claims “that bear little resemblance to our experiences or even what we see with our own eyes.”

The NEA Handbook (updated yearly, <http://www.nea.org/handbook>) is an excellent resource of information on resolutions, legislative programs, and policies that cover an immense amount of information on both a variety of broad and specific topics and issues related to the core values and beliefs of NEA.

In addition, the NEA has a wealth of resources and materials to provide members with facts and information to support their own and their allies’ claims, ideas, and policies. Policy briefs on many education topics can be found on the NEA website (<http://www.nea.org/home/36073.htm>). Some of the policy briefs cover topics including Blended Learning, Curriculum Standards, Early Childhood Education, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and School Reform. These policy briefs include best practices, current research, resources, and recommendations associated with the particular topic that are in alignment with NEA’s principles and core beliefs.

NEA offers sample lesson plans that foster student success by encouraging students to think critically and support their ideas and claims. For example, “Buy, Use, Toss?” (High School Curriculum) is featured on NEA’s Web site (<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/60370.htm>) providing ways and means for student analysis of claims, especially in film but also employing other tools and strategies.

In Higher Education, NEA provides resources that can be used to clarify difficult legal issues, such as the one that lists “Core Principles of Law that Define and Limit the Right to Academic Freedom” (<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/legalissues.pdf>).

The NEA publication, *NEAToday*, regularly provides articles that focus on current topics of interest regarding efforts to distinguish between facts and opinions, such as this one—“Who Stands between Fake News and Students? Educators—providing guidance concerning the media, “fake news,” and “alternative facts” (<http://neatoday.org/2016/12/16/fake-news-students-educators/>).

Finally, to have the ability to support claims, ideas, and policies one needs to be able to marshal the evidence. This is a skill that needs to be developed. The difference between fact and opinion can be difficult to discern if one is not prepared and doesn’t have the tools needed to appreciate and understand the difference. To help foster these skill sets, NEA produced “Awareness of Education Research Methods. A Guide to Resources: Understanding Validity in Education Research” (<http://www.nea.org/home/awareness-of-education-research-methods.htm>). It provides answers to the question, Why is “validity” important in education research?, that can be used in community and legislative debates.