

Donna M. Harris-Aikens

(b)(6)

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Working families advocate ▪ Executive leader for equity and excellence
Social justice engineer ▪ Bridge builder

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Senior executive member in Executive Director's Cabinet of country's largest labor union with 50+ statewide chapters and thousands of local affiliates
- ✓ Talented matrix executive management skills, layered with specialized direct reports focused on preparing, justifying, and administering \$9.2 million budget and on leveraging provision of strategic counsel and technical assistance
- ✓ Leader of matrixed 84-person enterprise-wide team for COVID-19 response by schools and campuses, focused on student learning, health and safety, and racial and social justice, and taps into the voice of members, parents, students, and community allies
- ✓ Successfully led NEA's 2020 Presidential election policy engagement with candidates, consistently engaging diversity of members, and strengthening union's influence
- ✓ Head of cross-unit team focused on bipartisan implementation of federal education law to ensure educators' and families' voices and expertise were part of teaching and learning decisions, and to address equity and opportunity gaps for students
- ✓ Co-chair of Governor Northam's Transition Policy Council on PreK-12 Education
- ✓ Member of the 2020 DNCC Platform Committee

National Education Association

Senior Director, Education Policy & Practice (current position)

Sept 2006 – Present

Salary: (b)(6)

Significant Accomplishments:

Build Strategic Alliances

- Lead and optimize cross-unit COVID response team for and with NEA members, affiliates, and staff to ensure guidance, sample activist tools, member-created resources, and legal support are available for issues arising as part of school and campus decisions
- Engage proactively with leaders in communities of color, state and local education unions, civil rights organizations, education nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, and international education entities to advance NEA's agenda for great public schools

- Help secure \$1,000,000+ in philanthropic support for NEA initiatives related to building members' practice, voice, and advocacy to support student success and closing equity gaps
- Empower educators and invite their contributions to policy decisions to ensure NEA's successful navigation of the design and implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Build and deliver comprehensive advocacy framework for identifying the elements of great public schools to strengthen them
- Contribute as education policy spokesperson to media, including print, radio, and television interviews

Lead Effective Teams

- Foster team commitment and strengthen workforce by recruiting talented colleagues, reducing duplication, creating equity in staff workloads, and committing to authentic and effective delegation
- Prioritized diversity of skills, expertise, and backgrounds of team to maximize equity and creativity and build cohesion
- Built leadership and collaboration capacity within team by creating opportunities for colleagues to lead, learn and grow
- As part of executive team, lead budget development process and implementation strategies for one of organization's major strategic objectives and monitor expenditures against fiscal goals and constraints.
- Led team that achieved 100% analysis rate for 100s of legislative amendments with a 24-hour response time for statutory reauthorizations

Shape Student-Centered Advocacy

- Encourage new ideas and innovation, such as building student voice, particularly in communities of color, into policy decisions and engagement strategies
- Deliver model state legislative language for a variety of issue areas, including prek-12 and higher education, reflecting the input of and coordination with NEA's 50+ state affiliates, and voice of educators, families, and students
- Double the number of participants for content-specific association-wide tele-town halls
- Build internal and external alliances by boosting activism levels of association's professional practice leaders
- Position NEA for future success by optimizing the number of affiliate leaders and staff who are accessing NEA-generated information in a networked online community
- Develop the ability of others to contribute by successfully cultivating team of educators who became experts in building consensus in their own communities with colleagues, leaders, policymakers, and the media around an NEA-enterprise wide strategic plan focused on the benefits and challenges of implementation efforts

Effect Change

- Maximize NEA's equity and excellence agenda as NEA's official policy liaison to Democratic Presidential candidates
- Developed engaging candidate comparison of Presidential candidates on education, working families, economy, and racial justice that accounted for more than 25% of web traffic to site
- Secured all of NEA's priority language in Democratic platforms as a member of the 2008 and 2012 Democratic Platform Drafting Committee, and as a 2016 and 2020 member of the full Platform Committee, representing educators' diverse voices and expertise
- Secured first primary paraprofessional negotiator on federal negotiated rulemaking team at U.S. Department of Education, who worked with the NEA primary teacher negotiator
- Selected to serve as primary negotiator with U.S. Department of Education to help craft regulations for higher education grant program for teachers pursuing college degrees, as part of comprehensive effort to attract more teachers to the profession in priority schools

Focus on Collaboration

- Optimize staff expertise and skillsets by leading effective cross-center policy development and implementation teams from multiple NEA departments and affiliates
- Launched weekly webinar series that generated deeper affiliate and member engagement to strengthen the public school and higher education systems and extended timeline for series by 50% due to popularity
- Generated ESSA implementation resources and tools that were widely used by member-leaders, as well as oversubscribed intensive training and plan-building sessions

Selected Appearances:

- What Will the 2020 Elections Mean for Education? (November 4, 2020)
<https://www.aei.org/events/what-will-the-2020-elections-mean-for-education/>
- Learning First Alliance: What is Equity in 2018? (April 24, 2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t-8pggl9Ow&t=111s>
- Urban School Superintendents Conference, Panel Discussion (April 24, 2018)
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?450441-2/urban-school-superintendents-conference-panel-discussion>
- Taking Action on School Diversity (April 19, 2016)
<https://tcf.org/content/event/taking-action-on-school-diversity/?agreed=1>

Selected Publications:

- 2020 NEA Policy Playbook for Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration (November 2020)
<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/2020-nea-policy-playbook-congress-and-biden-harris-administration>
- 2020 Presidential Candidate Comparison
<https://educationvotes.nea.org/presidential-2020/biden-vs-trump/>
- All Hands on Deck: Guidance Regarding Reopening School Buildings (June 2020)
<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/all-hands-deck-guidance-regarding-reopening-school-buildings>
- Voices of Leaders for Just Schools (May 2020)
<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Voices%20of%20Leaders%20for%20Just%20Schools.pdf>
- ESSA Federal Funding Guide (December 2018)
<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/ESSA-Federal-Funding-Guide-2.pdf>

Service Employees International Union

Dec 2003 – Sept 2006

Public Services Policy Manager

- Oversaw federal budget analysis for Division
- Created engaging advocacy tools to inform working families about key issues affecting public sector workforce
- Expanded partnerships and SEIU coalition presence to advance agenda for working families
- Managed a team of researchers and communications professionals, including participating in recruitment, training, evaluation, and supervision of staff

Advance CTE (formerly NASDCTEc)

Sept 2002 – Dec 2003

Director of Government Relations

- Led bipartisan legislative strategies for advancing the positions of career technical education in education and workforce arenas
- Implemented media and external partner engagement strategies to build public awareness, consensus, and support of quality career technical education programs in public high schools and community colleges

Dean Blakey & Moskowitz (defunct)

Oct 2000 – Aug 2002

Associate Attorney

- Advised colleges, universities, and student loan servicers regarding student loan program regulations and reviewed technology licensing contracts
- Implemented government relations plans for HBCUs, associations, and coalitions focused on elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and career technical education, in addition to workforce and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families issues
- Negotiated to secure federal funding for national coalition working to end sexual violence

EDUCATION

Howard University School of Law

Washington, DC; Juris Doctor

Activities: Howard Public Interest Law Society, *Howard Scroll: The Social Justice Review*

James Madison University

Harrisonburg, VA, Bachelor of Science, cum laude

Public Administration (Minor – Economics; Concentration – Statistics)

BOARDS

Learning First Alliance

Member, Board of Directors

Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum

Vice Chair, Board of Directors

James Madison University Political Science Department

Member, Alumni Board
