



2020 DELEGATE GUIDE

BE A PARTY DELEGATE!

You (yes, you!) can ensure public education is a central issue in the 2020 presidential race by serving as a delegate at your party's National Convention.

Interested in becoming a delegate?

Right now, presidential hopefuls are vying for supporters as they criss-cross the country to debate their policies, and you, NEA members, are taking action to ensure we make strong public schools a priority in the 2020 election cycle!

While there are many ways for you to take action now, one unique opportunity is to participate in the delegate selection process to become a party delegate to a national convention (DNC or RNC). By becoming a convention delegate, you help ensure that strong public schools are a major topic of discussion by 2020 candidates and both political parties.

**STRONG PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

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NATIONAL
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION

2020

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FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BEING A DELEGATE:

1. Those people you see waving banners at the national conventions are state delegates. They are sent to the national convention to choose the party's nominee. Entrusted to pick the next nominee for president.
2. The number of delegates (i.e., votes) a state gets depends on its population and voting history. Some states allocate their delegates (votes) proportionally to candidates according to the number of votes they won in the primary (or caucus). Other states take a winner-take-all-approach, allocating all delegates to the single candidate who got the most votes.
3. Anyone can be a delegate. While some seats are reserved for party bigwigs (see below), most are wide open. Aspiring delegates simply pledge themselves to a candidate and campaign for a spot in the delegation.
4. There are different types of delegates. Most of the delegates who make up a state's delegation are district-level delegates who are elected within a geographic area, and at-large delegates who are elected by the whole state. Most states have superdelegates, party influencers who are there to represent the party's longer-term interests. Superdelegates do not vote in the first round of voting.
5. Delegates have major power at a convention. They get to vote on the party platform and choose the party's nominee for president.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A DELEGATE?

As experts in education and champions for our children, NEA members are the very best convention delegates. This is an opportunity to put the interests of our students and our profession at the top of our nation's political and policy agendas - and party delegates have influence over who will be selected as their party's presidential candidate. Often, party delegates are treated as VIPs and are invited to attend fun events with star entertainment.



The parties need our diversity. States strive to reflect their diversity in the makeup of their delegations. NEA's membership is largely female, and ethnically diverse to boot, making union members a natural fit.



It's a powerful way to shape education policy. Educators' voices deserve to be heard. As a delegate, you vote on the party platform, including making public education a central issue in the upcoming election.



You could end up picking the party's nominee. If nobody wins in the first ballot, delegates are free to shift their votes to the (pro-education) candidate of their choice.



We'll help you. If you're selected as a delegate, NEA will provide training opportunities, logistical coordination, and some financial support. Want to join our trainings? Indicate your interest on our site [here](#)



It's fun. Getting to see democracy in action, up close, as a party VIP, is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for most of us.



Past members on why they ran and you should too.

Bucket list; it's a once in a lifetime opportunity!

If you care about public education and the future of our country and you are willing to do the outreach, it's worth trying. Just be ready to commit the time. The experience is life-changing.

It is vital to have educators in the room.

I wanted to make a difference in electoral politics.

Cared about issues of public education more than any given individual candidate.

It was about public education — being a delegate gave me the platform to communicate the importance of public education.

I wanted to elevate the presence of my state affiliate.

You will have the opportunity to meet people from all around the country - and famous people, to boot! I met Andrea Mitchell, and Cory Booker, and was sitting near Wolf Blitzer.



HOW DO I BECOME A DELEGATE?

What's the Process?

- ▶ Find out about your state's delegate selection process on the NEA delegate site here <https://educationvotes.nea.org/presidential-2020/delegates/>. Check out your state party site as well, they usually have resources on how to go through the delegate process. Most of the time, the first step is filing a statement of candidacy.
- ▶ Craft your story of self (see the following section in this guide, it outlines the process)
- ▶ Recruit friends and allies (including NEA members!)
- ▶ Show up to your local/convention or caucuses!

Types of delegates

There are different kinds of delegates and each party has its own rules. Generally the breakdown is as follows.

- ▶ **District delegates:** District delegates represent geographical units within states, generally following Congressional district boundaries. District delegates need only to live and vote in that district. Running for delegate is like any other campaign, seeking to influence people to choose you — and the candidate you represent — over others. Decisions are often made at caucus meetings among voters who choose to attend. In other cases they are made in coordination with the candidate campaigns, who want to choose their own district delegates. In both cases, our relationship with voters or with local campaign offices can make a difference.
- ▶ **At-large delegates:** At-large delegates are chosen statewide. They are typically selected by party officials or influencers. In states where affiliates have strong relationships with their state party, leadership can suggest NEA members as their state at-large delegates. State affiliate leaders and public education activists are natural candidates to become at-large delegates.
- ▶ **Pledged Party Leaders and Elected Officials (PLEO):** Many PLEO positions are reserved for big city mayors or statewide elected officials, but some are typically set aside for “party leaders,” creating space for our own member or affiliate leaders to be chosen.
- ▶ **Automatic Delegates (a.k.a. Superdelegates):** Superdelegates are defined in advance: members of the national party committee who live in the state, along with party governors, members of Congress, Presidents, Vice Presidents or other party leaders. Superdelegates are not pledged to any particular candidate. In the Democratic nomination they do not vote during the first round of voting, entering only if nobody wins a majority in the first round.

Other good resources:

- ▶ Your state party website — look for a delegate selection or DNC/RNC portion of the site.
- ▶ State or local affiliate — check in with your local or state affiliate. Affiliates are running delegate programs and serve as a great resource to help you get elected.



Don't be afraid to Campaign!

Tips and Tricks from previous delegates:

There are several steps to the process - be sure to seek out information on each one.

Reach out to/Talk with party members/officials: Introduce yourself and share your story!

Have a conversation with your local party County Chair. Make a case for why you should be a delegate (be sure to address your level of participation in campaigns and the community). Make a commitment to work with the campaign from that moment forward until the 2020 election.

Go For It! It's a wonderful experience. Print flyers to pass out at (your local) Congressional Caucus. Bring volunteers (family and friends!) to help you; Facebook campaign; make phone calls if possible.

Be prepared to campaign for yourself at both your local NEA and in your political party. Print some cards with your qualifications, even t-shirts, if you like. Pretend you are running for public office.

I bought an ad in the local newspaper several times prior to the voting. I did email outreach, and community outreach. Used social media — made a Facebook page, asked all my contacts to share it. Used same photo and design across all outreach.



CRAFTING YOUR STORY OF SELF

Running for to be a party convention delegate? You'll need to craft a personal statement for your statement of candidacy. Here are some helpful tips and education-focused messages!

The first step will be determining your **state's filing and candidacy deadlines**. This information can be found on NEA's delegate page here, but your state party often has additional information on their site. Check it out! Often, the first step is a statement of candidacy or interest to file — make sure to ask about that!



That's where the story of self comes into play — the information below will help you to craft what you wish to say in a compelling way.



Be sure to tell your friends, family, and allies that you are attending and running, so they can come to **support you!**

Show up and introduce yourself — tell your story.

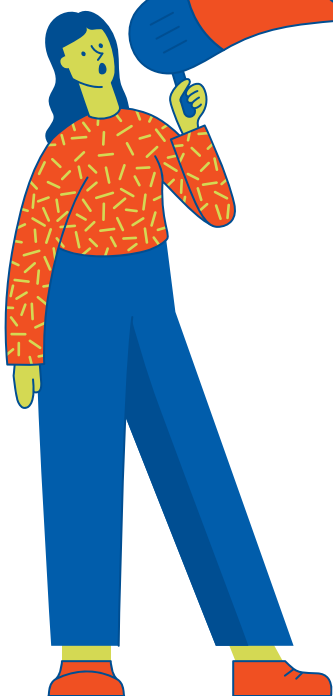
It's key to make a human connection introducing yourself, which means sharing some information about yourself and sharing that you are an educator.

One thing we know is that educators are some of the most trusted and respected professionals in our country.



This is one of your super powers. Your voice matters, and it can play a powerful role in engaging and organizing others the 2020 election.

Once you introduce yourself — the key is to make a real connection. Telling your own story is the best, most effective way to make connections with others. What is the message you wish to share with others? What do you care most about?





Stories help...

Us speak out more effectively for our students, our professions, and public education.

Connect with members, the public, and community leaders while providing insight into the challenges and realities educators and students face, and motivate them to join our cause.

Make a stronger case for educator engagement in the democratic process and the importance of educator voices, our students, and our professions.

Elements of a story:

Stories need events and characters. They must have **color**, **feelings**, and **action** to pull in the audience. What are the main events and characters in your life?

Include details, but keep numbers, statistics, and processes to a minimum. No jargon allowed!

Talk **people**, not policy. Tell a story to get your message across.

Include a call to action: Why should others support you in becoming a delegate?

Be direct. Ask those in attendance to support your candidacy for delegate.

Keep at the front of your mind why **this is important to you** and why you think **others would find it important.**

Be energized and engaged! ●



FAQS:

When are the national conventions taking place?

The Democratic National Convention will be July 13-16, 2020 in Milwaukee; and the Republican National Convention will be Aug. 24-27, 2020, in Charlotte, N.C.

Why do NEA members make good delegates?

As experts in education and champions for our children, NEA members are strong choices as delegates to our presidential conventions. Being a delegate provides an opportunity to put the interests of our students and our profession at the top of our nation's political and policy agenda. It might even provide an opportunity to influence who will be selected as the party's presidential nominee.

Who can be a delegate?

Every state has different rules and there are many different types of delegates — but in general, the field is wide open. Any voter who lives in a Congressional district is qualified to become a delegate for that Congressional district. Party activists and state affiliate leaders are natural candidates to become at-large delegates from the state.

What do state parties look for in a delegate?

The Democratic party has deliberate affirmative action plans, seeking to make its delegation look demographically like the state as a whole. These plans require an equal split by gender, as well as proportionate divisions by race, ethnicity and sexual orientation at the state and district levels. We should hold state Democrats to the demographic goals in the plans — especially on race and gender — and help them to achieve those goals. The Republican Party has not provided similar demographic targets.

Why be a delegate?

Delegates have an opportunity to influence education policy and practice at the highest level. They help write the party platform and they help select the president. There is no better way to advance education than to have educators in the room. Plus, going to the convention as a VIP is fun.

How many delegates are there?

Delegates are elected from each state, in proportion to its size and voting history. The formula includes the state's popular vote for the Democratic nominee in the previous three elections, the state's electoral votes (which

reflects size), and when the state's primary is held (states get "bonus" delegates for delaying). In 2020, the Republican party will have approximately 2,550 delegates, including 172 from California and 16 from Delaware; the Democratic party will have 4,500 delegates, including 530 from California and 30 from Delaware.

How do states choose their delegates?

Under Democratic party rules, states have proportionate representation according to candidate preference. In other words, the number of delegates any given candidate receives is dependent on the outcome of a state's primary or caucus. Delegates are proportionally allotted to candidates after the outcome of the primary or caucus with a 15% threshold required to receive any delegates. Delegates run for a slot with their candidate of choice, and usually hear if they were selected after their state's primary or caucus. In the Republican party, states choose between a proportional share, winner-take-all or some kind of hybrid system.

What do delegates do?

First, delegates help draft the party platform, which defines the party policy preferences and priorities. NEA member delegates could push the party to commit to strong pro-public education language in its official platform.

Second, delegates vote for who will be each party's candidate for president.

Third, delegates become spokespeople for parties, candidates and issues during the presidential campaign cycle — and often beyond. Simply being at the convention makes them part of the process and part of history.

Finally, if no candidate wins enough delegates in the first round of voting (very rare, but possible), the party is thrown into a "brokered convention." In a brokered convention, delegates have more freedom to choose how to vote as candidates become eliminated and prior commitments break down. In this case delegates would have power at a historic level. If NEA has a large delegation we could make a historical difference.

How Does NEA Help?

The NEA Delegate Team provides staffing support and training for members to navigate the delegate selection process in your state, logistical coordination, and is even able to provide a travel stipend to selected delegates to help offset costs.

How can I learn more?

NEA is committed to seeing our members and leaders become delegates at the party conventions. To share your interest and receive updates on plans, make sure to join our mailing list by signing up on educationvotes.org/presidential-2020/delegates/



Past NEA delegates on the best part about being a national party convention delegate:

It is like the RA (NEA Representative Assembly) on steroids!

Great networking opportunities; a way to push education issues; determine education platform and policy.

Networking within your state; you are seated with people from your state and have the opportunity to talk about state issues and politics. You see that there is more commonality than most see (we are all working toward similar issues). You are able to get the essence of the issue at hand.

Developing a stronger relationship with state party officials.

Seeing the whole process in action. After teaching about it, it was exciting to see the action.

The most amazing part for me was to see the whole democratic process — especially how the decision was made. The networking with other people that cared about public education was very inspiring. I still have many of those contacts today. I consider these relationships to be lifelong and allows me to continue to spread my message as an educator.

