

## **Supporting Materials for**

### **Resolution on NCA's Support for High School Communication Education (Speaking, Listening, and Media Literacy) as a Graduation Requirement**

(resolution originally adopted by the NCA Legislative Assembly, November 2010; revised November 2012)

Submitted Jean Ann Streiff, Michelle Morris, Sara Chudnovsky Weintraub, David Wendt, Anna Wright on behalf of the Educational Policies Board and Elementary/Secondary Education Section in November 2012.

#### **RATIONALE**

Elementary and secondary education provides the foundation for our nation. Its importance in establishing in students the intellectual curiosity, commitment to goals and strong work ethic valued throughout our nation and within our institutions of higher learning must never be underestimated. We, the Educational Policies Board and the Elementary and Secondary Education Section, believe all members of the Legislative Assembly can identify a teacher, an administrator or an event in elementary and secondary education which has produced such an impact that they have chosen to demonstrate their strong commitment to education, particularly communication education, by sitting as members of the Legislative Assembly. Consequently, as products of this system, as parents of students currently in the system, and as citizens of the United States the condition of communication education in elementary and secondary schools should be of utmost importance to the Legislative Assembly.

This resolution which we, the Educational Policies Board and the Elementary and Secondary Education Section, propose to become part of the NCA Academic and Professional Standards as a revision of the 2010 Policy, meets all the criteria stated in the NCA Preamble. To support our claim, we submit the following argument:

The Elementary and Secondary Education Section, an integral part of NCA since the 70's, has presented programs at the Annual Convention since the section's creation. These programs deal with curricular offerings and methodological procedures in elementary and secondary classrooms and these programs have always been open to all members of the Association. In addition, these programs are frequently attended by those teaching in both two-year and four-year institutions. Many educators from post-secondary institutions work with elementary and secondary teachers in these programs. In both its section meetings and its presence in the Legislative Assembly, Elementary and Secondary Section members have brought attention to the need for support for the teaching of communication in the elementary and secondary schools.

The commitment of the organization and the Legislative Assembly to support of elementary and secondary education is evident from the following history. The Legislative Assembly has endorsed both Comprehensive Language Arts as part of the Policy Platform (1996) and the Standards for Speaking, Listening and Media Literacy in K-12 Education (1996).

In addition, in 2005 the Elementary and Secondary Section endorsed the *College Board Standards for College Success: English Language Arts*, which includes Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening and Media Literacy. Subsequently, the Executive Committee endorsed these Standards as a replacement of the 1996 NCA K-12 Standards. Deliberation of this decision began with the inclusion of NCA members, Melissa Beall, David Wendt, Sherry Morreale, John Heineman and Mary Bozik in the writing and reviewing of the Standards. Prior to the publication of the College Board Standards, the Elementary and Secondary Education Section established a Task Force under the leadership of John Heineman to review the 1996 Standards and begin the process of revising them. The task force then determined, once it read the College Board Standards, that its work would be superfluous. With this strong support for speaking, listening, and media literacy from the College Board, it is obvious that others within education understand that what happens in the elementary and secondary schools is foundational to the discipline of communication. This level of education should be of concern to all.

Furthermore, forty-eight states and one territory have endorsed the Common Core State Standards Initiative sponsored by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Unfortunately only 21 of those states and territories actually grant licensure or certification in 7 to 12 communication education for teachers or require that those teachers pass the *Praxis II* test in Speech Communication. (See attached list). Several members of NCA contributed to the creation of the Speech Communication *Praxis II* test, further emphasizing the commitment of NCA and its membership to these issues. This gap between requirement and licensure or certification presents the perfect opportunity for NCA to take positive action to offer services to states and school districts whose teachers are not properly trained in our discipline. Requiring that all students who graduate from high school have participated in a course specifically geared to meet these Standards should be of utmost importance to our profession.

For several decades, the importance of communication skills to employment has been substantiated by numerous popular press articles and scholarly works. The necessity of preparing high school students, who make up 16.4% of the civilian labor force according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for October 2009, in effective communication while they are in high school not only improves their chances to receive employment but also benefits their employers who gain from a competent and effective work force. Since many of these students work in the service area of the economy, their prior training improves the quality of service we all receive. Finally, NCA's mission, its Strategic Plan for 2010-2015, and the debate over substantive issues within the Legislative Assembly itself reinforce that the inclusion of the Resolution on NCA's Support for High School Speech as a Graduation Requirement in the NCA Policy Platform is, in the words of the NCA Policy Platform Preamble, "central to the contribution of communication to the health and richness of the human condition."

## DOCUMENTATION

We are submitting three bibliographies relating to communication education.

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## **Favorite Media Literacy Resources from Amy Aidman and Debra Spitulnik**

Links updated September 2009 (descriptions taken or adapted from those provided on sites)

**Learn more about how media work and how people are taking action to end communication injustices. Resources include membership organizations, organizations with a focus on news, policy and regulatory issues, children and families, media literacy in education settings, corporate media and democracy, independent media, and more.**

### [Action Coalition for Media Education](#)

<http://www.acmecoalition.org/>

ACME is a strategic network linking media educators, health advocates, media reformers, independent media makers, community organizers and others. ACME attempts to promote synergy in the media reform movement, and strives to prevent media education from becoming watered down by profit-driven agendas.

### [AdBusters](#)

<https://www.adbusters.org/>

Learn how media manipulate our mental environments and get us to buy what we don't need. They produce reports, funny anti-advertising campaigns, and actions such as a [declaration](#) advocating The Right to Communicate as a Universal Human Right.

### [Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood](#)

<http://www.commercialexploitation.org/>

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood is a national [coalition](#) of health care professionals, educators, advocacy groups, parents, and individuals who care about children. Headquartered at the [Judge Baker Children's Center](#) in Boston, CCFC is the only national organization devoted to limiting the impact of commercial culture on children. CCFC's [staff](#) and [Steering Committee](#) are activists, authors, and leading experts on the impact of media and marketing on children. Most of us are also parents.

## [The Center for Media Literacy](#)

<http://www.medialit.org/>

A nonprofit educational organization, CML is dedicated to promoting and supporting media literacy education as a framework for accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating media content, CML works to help citizens, especially the young, develop critical thinking and media production skills needed to live fully in the 21st century media culture.

## [Children Now](#)

<http://www.childrennow.org/>

Children Now is a research and action organization dedicated to assuring that children grow up in economically secure families, where parents can go to work confident that their children are supported by quality health coverage, a positive media environment, a good early education, and safe, enriching activities to do after school. Recognized for its expertise in media as a tool for change, Children Now designs its strategies to improve children's lives while at the same time helping America build a sustained commitment to putting children first.

## [Commercial Alert](#)

<http://www.commercialalert.org/>

The goal of Commercial Alert is to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy. The nonprofit concentrates on the role of commercialism in culture, education, government, and health.

## [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

<http://www.cpj.org/>

Dedicated to defending press freedom worldwide. This organization issues reports from over 100 different countries, documenting cases where journalists have been censored, harassed, and abducted.

## [Critical Media Literacy in Times of War](#)

<http://www.ncr.vt.edu/mediaproject/home.htm>

Teaching modules that get you to think about the contradictory news stories about civilian casualties, the effects of sanctions, and protests. You can use the modules in a classroom or simply read them on your own.

## [FAIR](#) **Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting**

<http://www.fair.org/index.php>

Our national media watch group, operating since 1986. It defends journalists, exposes neglected stories, and works for greater diversity in media. You can join their email list to receive free newsletters and alerts.

### [Free Press](#)

<http://www.freepress.net/>

Free Press is a national nonpartisan organization working to increase informed public participation in crucial media policy debates, and to generate policies that will produce a more competitive and public interest-oriented media system with a strong nonprofit and noncommercial sector.

### [IndyMedia](#) (or **Independent Media Center, IMC**)

<http://indymedia.us/en/index.shtml>

A collective organization of independent media centers in over 100 cities worldwide. It features hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage from their home countries.

### [Media Awareness Network](#)

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/>

MNet is a Canadian non-profit organization that has been pioneering the development of media literacy programs since its incorporation in 1996. Working out of offices in Ottawa and Montreal, it promotes media and Internet education by producing online programs and resources, working in partnership with Canadian and international organizations, and speaking to audiences across Canada and around the world. In English and French.

### [Media Education Foundation](#)

<http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?display=home>

MEF “produces and distributes documentary films and other resources to inspire critical reflection on the social, political and cultural impact of American media.” You can order films like War Made Easy, Wrestling with Manhood, or Dreamworlds (an analysis of MTV imagery) from their website.

### [Media Literacy Clearinghouse](#)

<http://www.frankwbaker.com/default1.htm>

Originally the South Carolina Middle Grades Schools State Policy Initiative's study of media literacy skills and health-related risks among young adolescents, this site includes comprehensive information and links about the media education frameworks found in the standards of 48 states, as well as excellent general media education links. Excellent educational resources and training. Mainly for K-12 teachers.

#### [Media Literacy Online Project Resources](#)

<http://interact.uoregon.edu/medialit/mlr/home/>

Extensive links to a wide range of media literacy resources and curricula.

#### [Media Reform Information Center](#)

<http://www.corporations.org/media/>

Over 100 links!!

#### [National Association for Media Literacy Education \(NAMLE\)](#)

<http://amlainfo.org/home>

(formerly Alliance for a Media Literate America)

A national membership organization dedicated to advancing the field of media literacy education in the United States. NAMLE is committed to promoting media literacy education that is focused on critical inquiry, learning, and skill-building.

#### [National Telemedia Council](#)

<http://www.nationaltelemediacouncil.org/>

A professional, non-profit organization promoting media literacy education through partnerships with educators, informed citizens, and media producers across the country.

#### [Project Censored](#)

<http://www.projectcensored.org/>

The Mission of Project Censored is to educate people about the role of independent journalism in a democratic society and to tell The News That Didn't Make the News and why. Project Censored is a media research group out of Sonoma State University which tracks the news published in independent journals and newsletters. From these, Project Censored compiles an annual list of 25 news stories of social significance that have been overlooked, under-reported or self-censored by the country's major national news media.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

NCA has established itself as strongly committed to K-12 education. The following merely highlights some of the actions not mentioned in earlier statements.

The quality of instruction on the K-12 level has been of concern to the discipline since Pamela Cooper's book, *Activities for Teaching Speaking and Listening: Grades 7-12* published in 1985 by SCA and ERIC, and *Creating Competent Communicators: Activities for Teaching Speaking, Listening, and Media Literacy in Grades 7-12* and *Creating Competent Communicators: Activities for Teaching Speaking, Listening, and Media Literacy in K-6 Classrooms* edited by Pamela Cooper, Sherwyn Morreale, and Amy Aidman. These books were published by Holcomb Hathaway in association with the NCA. Both works were published in 2003 to coordinate with NCA's *Competent Communicators: K-12 Speaking, Listening, and Media Literacy Standards and Competency Statements* (1998). This 1998 publication expanded the original 1996 list by adding competency statements.

Currently, the book, *A Communication Assessment Primer* edited by Phil Backlund and Gay Wakefield is in press and should be published by NCA this summer. Chapter 12, "Assessing Communication in P-12 Classrooms", by Douglas K. Jennings, contains rubrics and a substantive bibliography of work on P-12 assessment. Professor Jennings has worked with the Elementary and Secondary Education Section for at least 25 years and has had a tremendous impact on many secondary teachers' use of rubrics.

While this is not an exhaustive view of the way the members of NCA work with and for elementary and secondary education, it does stress the underlying commitment of the organization and its members.

## **SUGGESTED ACTION**

The Educational Policies Board wishes to take responsibility for this initiative. The action statement of the resolution follows.

The Educational Policies Board of the National Communication Association will launch an initiative consistent with the *College Board Standards for College Success: English Language Arts* and the new Common Core State Standards Initiative to require communication education in the nation's high schools and to stress the importance of using appropriately trained teachers to teach communication education. This will include the following:

1. Development of a strategy to acquaint the Departments of Education in the states implementing the Common Core Standards with the resources available through association with the National Communication Association, and also to determine the areas in which these Departments of Education believe NCA resources can be of most help.
2. Development of resources to meet the needs of those implementing the common Core Standards in Speaking and Listening.
3. Development of resources to encourage the adoption of media literacy instruction within the implementation of the Common Core Standards.
4. Creation and dissemination of a list of consultants for curriculum development and implementation.

### **ASSESSMENT OF COST AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Executive Director, Nancy Kidd, and I, Jean Ann Streiff, spoke recently. During this conversation, Dr. Kidd assured me of the NCA's support for this initiative and asked what resources we believed were required. At this time, since the Educational Policies Board will be implementing this initiative, we believe costs will be minimal because all work will be done electronically. The cost of mailings and any reproduction of materials appears to be well within the funding currently available.

If this initiative expands and a Task Force is required to look at the entire area of P-12 communication education, Dr. Kidd expressed her willingness to bring the matter to the Finance Board.