

# Planning Resource for Principals American Education Week

November 13<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> 2011

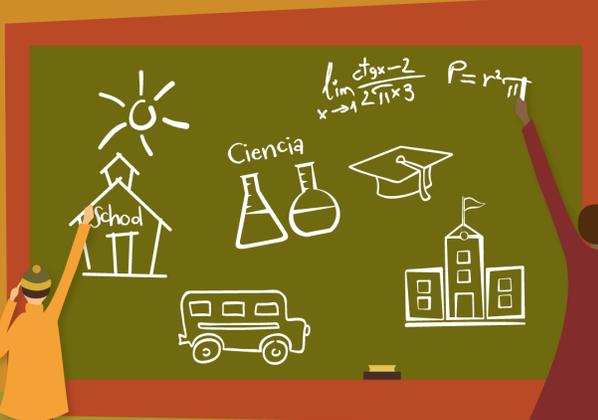
## AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

90th Anniversary 1921-2011



### NOVEMBER 2011

- 14 AEW KICK-OFF DAY**  
Organize activities at your school for neighbors, families and community leaders.
- 15 PARENTS' DAY**  
Invite parents and family members into the school for a first-hand look at a typical school day.
- 16 EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS DAY**  
Recognize individuals such as bus drivers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, maintenance staff, and others who provide invaluable services and outstanding work.
- 17 EDUCATOR FOR A DAY**  
Encourage elected officials and community leaders to serve as "educators for a day" for a hands-on school experience.
- 18 SUBSTITUTE EDUCATOR DAY**  
Honor the educators who are called to substitute for the regular classroom teachers in their absence.



Get involved in AEW. Visit [www.nea.org/aew](http://www.nea.org/aew) for activity ideas, downloadable tools and resources.



Great Public Schools  
for Every Student

## AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

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Compiled by  
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## Sources

- » National Education Association (NEA)
- » National School Public Relations Association
- » U.S. Department of Education

## AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK 2011

During American Education Week, November 13–19, 2011, Americans nationwide will join together in raising awareness about the need to provide every child with a quality public education. The celebration highlights the importance of bringing together educators, parents, students, and communities in a unified effort to build great public schools. Sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA) and others, it highlights the importance of mobilizing communities to share in the responsibility of making schools great for every child so that they can grow and achieve in the 21st century.

*“Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility”* is the theme of this year’s celebration. This celebration highlights the importance of providing every child in America with a quality public education, and the need for everyone to participate in making public schools great. Throughout the week, schools have an opportunity to recognize the important partnerships they have forged with parents, students, and civilian and military communities to improve the quality of education for children of military families. Our schools take on an additional role and significance in our communities, often providing the stability, routine and focus for families affected by current global events, deployments, and separations.

**TO FURTHER REINFORCE AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK’S THEME, EACH DAY OF THE WEEK WILL SPOTLIGHT THE DIFFERENT PEOPLE WHO ARE CRITICAL IN BUILDING GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE NATION’S 50 MILLION K-12 STUDENTS. AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK’S CELEBRATION DAYS INCLUDE:**

- » **Monday, November 14:** Kick Off Day. From national commemorations to local community events, millions of Americans will celebrate public education.
- » **Tuesday, November 15:** Parents Day. Schools will invite parents into the classroom for a hands-on experience of what the day is like for their child.
- » **Wednesday, November 16:** Education Support Professionals Day. Individuals who provide invaluable services to schools are recognized for their outstanding work.
- » **Thursday, November 17:** Educator for a Day. Community leaders will be invited to serve as educators to get a glimpse of a day in the life of a school employee.
- » **Friday, November 18:** Substitute Educators Day. This day honors the educators who are called upon to replace regularly employed teachers.

We have compiled some of the information developed by NEA and others in this planning guide to assist schools in planning local celebrations. To help plan American Education Week’s celebration days, NEA is offering a free, online toolkit, complete with promotional materials, activity ideas, and downloadable templates. The toolkit is available at [www.nea.org/aew](http://www.nea.org/aew). The NEA toolkit provides some great templates that you can personalize to your specific school before it is sent out.

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If you have any unique activities planned that would have widespread media interest, kindly send the details to your area Public Affairs Office and your DSO well in advance of the planned event.

Please ensure that the attached information receives wide distribution among your staff members, command officials, School Advisory Committee, and Parent Teacher Student Association. Plan early, involve, communicate, and publicize.

Source: <http://www.nea.org/grants/47604.htm>

Office of Communications

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## AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK HISTORY

Distressed that 25 percent of the country's World War I draftees were illiterate and 9 percent were physically unfit, representatives of the NEA and the American Legion met in 1919 to seek ways to generate public support for education.

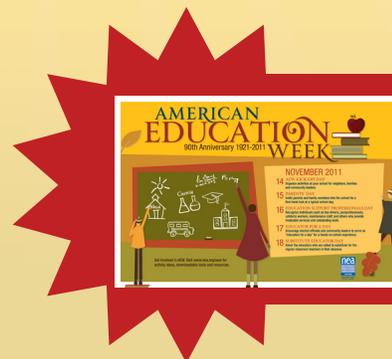
The conventions of both organizations subsequently adopted resolutions of support for a national effort to raise public awareness of the importance of education. In 1921, the NEA Representative Assembly in Des Moines, Iowa, called for designation of one week each year to spotlight education. In its resolution, the NEA called for: "An educational week ... observed in all communities annually for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools and to secure the cooperation and support of the public in meeting those needs."

The first observance of American Education Week occurred December 4-10, 1921,

with the NEA and American Legion as the cosponsors. A year later, the then U.S. Office of Education joined the effort as a cosponsor, and the PTA followed in 1938.

Other co-sponsors are the U.S. Department of Education and national organizations including the National PTA, the American Legion, the American Association of School Administrators, the National School Boards Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American School Counselor Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National School Public Relations Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

American Education Week is always celebrated the week prior to the week of Thanksgiving.



**DOWNLOAD A POSTER OR WEB BANNER TO CELEBRATE.**

# AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

## FACT SHEETS FROM THE NEA ONLINE TOOLKIT

At the link below, you can find fact sheets to provide your audiences with background information about American Education Week and its individual days. They are linked to resources on the NEA site. <http://www.nea.org/grants/34854.htm>

### » American Education Week Fact Sheet

The National Education Association's 90th annual American Education Week—November 13-19, 2011—presents all Americans with an opportunity to celebrate public education and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring every child receives a quality education. Our AEW tagline, “Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility,” reflects NEA's vision of calling upon all Americans to do their part in making public schools great for every child so that they can grow and achieve in the 21st century. ([More](#))

### » Invite Parents to School Day Fact Sheet

On this day, schools across the nation will invite parents into the classroom for a hands-on experience of what the day is like for their child. The initiative is part of the National Education Association's American Education Week celebration and is designed to spotlight the importance of parental involvement. ([More](#))

### » Education Support Professionals Day Fact Sheet

Education Support Professionals Day was first celebrated in 1987 after the National Education Association's (NEA's) Representative Assembly called for the creation of a way to honor contributions of school support staff. National Education Support Professionals Day is a time to strengthen support and respect for these colleagues. In 2003, Karen Mahurin, then president of NEA's National Council of Education Support Professional (NCESP) members, led a successful campaign at the NEA Representative Assembly to change the formal name from “Education Support Personnel” to “Education Support Professionals.” ([More](#))

### » Educator for a Day Fact Sheet

Educator for a Day is a National Education Association (NEA) program that allows individuals from the community to experience an entire school day, with the guidance of school employees. The visiting educator performs all the duties of a regular school employee in a normal work day—teaching class, performing lunch and corridor duty, recess supervision, working in the cafeteria, among other responsibilities. ([More](#))

### » Substitute Educators Day Fact Sheet

Substitute Educators Day is a result of the National Education Association Representative Assembly's New Business Item (NBI) 2003-41. The purpose of this NBI is to increase appreciation of school substitute employees. These professional educators provide a critical link in the education of public schoolchildren by serving as a bridge to provide continued quality education to children in the temporary absence of regular classroom educators. ([More](#))

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## TURNING AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK INTO A STAR SPANGLED CELEBRATION

*Source: From NSPRA PRincipal Communicator/September 2011*

We celebrate the Fourth of July with cookouts, fireworks, parades and a show of patriotism. Why not apply the spirit of the Fourth to make American Education Week (AEW) – November 13-19, 2011- a red, white and blue opportunity to showcase your school.

While some may voice skepticism about U.S. education in general, Americans continue to show support for their local schools. Capitalize on this with an AEW celebration that positions your school as an integral part of democracy, deserving of active public support. Develop your AEW awareness campaign around three goals:

Connect the dots between what your community values and what your school delivers.

Show your community; with words and deeds, how your standards are rigorous; how successful and struggling students alike are given more time for in-depth learning and greater personal attention; how support for learning is delivered by qualified staff. Start your thinking with phrases such as: “These are just a few of the ...”; “Best of all ...”; “That’s why ...”; “But there’s even more ...”

Then, turn your ideas into a declaration of the truths you “hold to be self-evident:”

Illustrate the great things happening in your school as part of the effort. Invite others to join you in speaking onto Ask teachers, parents, community leaders and graduates to add their testimonials and tributes, substantiating your school’s significance in supporting democratic principles such as the learning needs of all children. Communicate your declaration widely in print, electronically and face-to-face.

Reach out to those in your community and give them a reason to step up.

Even people who appear to shun participation have identities that need to be respected. Organize an AEW celebration that shoots for the stars of universal engagement. Make your call to action specific, simple and low risk. There are lots of good resources to start your thinking. Check out [www.nea.org/aew](http://www.nea.org/aew).

The most important constant in American society is education. With a little imagination, you can turn American Education Week into an event where your community stands under your school’s flag and salutes a job well done.

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## CELEBRATION IDEAS FOR EACH DAY OF AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

### OPEN HOUSE DAY/AEW KICK-OFF IDEAS - MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14

- » Coordinate a pep rally on Monday to celebrate American Education Week and preview each of your celebration days.
- » Print the American Education Week poster to decorate your school's common areas. Reproduce the smaller, 11 x 8 version of the poster to distribute. ([View poster](#))
- » Organize an American Education Week bulletin board contest. Each classroom works together with their teacher to design a bulletin board that reflects American Education Week's theme, "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." The winning class is announced at an American Education Week kick-off assembly.
- » Familiarize students with American Education Week and its components, including theme and celebration days, in the morning announcements on Monday and throughout the entire week (highlighting the observance of the day, i.e., Invite Parents to School Day, Education Support Professionals Day, and other days).
- » Encourage students to create American Education Week artwork reflecting the 2011 theme and display students' designs at your local post office, bank, mall, or library.
- » Ask your local base/post library to set up a special American Education Week exhibit outlining the observance from its beginning to present.
- » Contact your commander's office to issue a proclamation officially designating your community's American Education Week participation. ([View sample proclamations](#))
- » Organize an American Education Week kick-off open house to celebrate education, teachers, education support professionals, substitute educators, parents, and students.
- » Host an American Education Week kick-off potluck breakfast for school staff and/or bake sale to salute public education.
- » Distribute laminated bookmarks with the American Education Week logo to staff and students.
- » Distribute a media alert and press release about your American Education Week event. (View [sample media alert](#) and [sample press release](#))

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## PARENTS DAY IDEAS - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

- » Create a planning committee. Spread the word to let school staff and employees, as well as parents, know about the details.
- » Draft and distribute a letter inviting parents to join their children for a day at school. (View [sample letter](#) and [sample response form](#))
- » Host a welcome reception in the school auditorium for parents and their children.
- » Create an agenda for parents to follow throughout the day detailing class schedule and activities.
- » Engage parents in classroom grade specific activities and projects.
- » Provide parents with certificates of participation and packets of information to take home with them, such as tips on parental involvement and how to encourage reading and writing at home. (View [parental involvement tips](#))
- » Distribute a media alert and press release about your Invite Parents to School Day event. (View [sample media alert](#) and [sample press release](#))

## EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS DAY IDEAS - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

- » Provide a breakfast and/or lunch for Education Support Professionals to show your appreciation. Or, bring an Education Support Professional some home-baked treats.
- » Demonstrate your support for Education Support Professionals by experiencing the school day as an Education Support Professional.
- » Encourage a letter-writing campaign among teachers and students to thank Education Support Professionals for all that they do.
- » Distribute a media alert and press release about your Education Support Professionals Day event. (View [sample media alert](#) and [sample press release](#))

## EDUCATOR FOR A DAY IDEAS - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

- » Form a committee to develop a specific plan for the program. The proposal should then be reviewed by your local leadership.
- » Plan to meet with your principal or other school leaders to develop a final plan.
- » Decide how many guest educators you need to invite to make the program a success. Then, decide how many school employees you want to accompany the guest educators.

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- » Set guidelines for guests and cooperating educators, and communicate them to both groups.
- » Develop a public relations strategy for the program. You will want to spread the word among local media outlets. ([View sample media pitch letter, media alert, and press release](#))
- » Arrange for adequate evaluation and follow-up for the program, including an end of the school day reception, certificates of appreciation, and thank you letters.

## **SUBSTITUTE EDUCATORS DAY IDEAS - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

- » Present each substitute educator with a flower and a note or poem of thanks and appreciation.
- » Identify and honor each regular staff employee who has served as a substitute educator sometime during their career.
- » Have staff or students bring a bag of snacks into the classroom. Substitute educators often stay in the classroom, using breaks and lunchtime to prepare for the next part of the day.
- » Arrange a school-wide recognition of substitute educators in the read-aloud school bulletin, or on the intercom announcements.
- » Create and present substitute educators with a certificate of appreciation.
- » Showcase digital photos of the “Substitute Educators of the Week” on a central bulletin board or banner.
- » Distribute a media alert and press release about your substitute educator event. ([View sample media alert and sample press release](#))

## GRAPHICS

The NEA toolkits <http://www.nea.org/grants/41184.htm> includes a banner and poster that you can use print locally. There is also a web button/icon to add to your website.

Online Toolkit: Promotional Materials

Provided below are resources you can use to promote you American Education Week (AEW) events and activities linked to the NEA site <http://www.nea.org/grants/34952.htm>



DOWNLOAD A POSTER OR  
BANNER TO CELEBRATE.

## MEDIA TOOLS

View the toolkit on the DoDEA Celebrates page to find these available resources:

- » Director's Message
- » Key Messages and Talking Points
- » Media Advisory
- » Media Release
- » Newsletter Article
- » Proclamation
- » Sample Radio Public Service Announcement
- » Quotes
- » DoDEA's 2011 PSA - *Every Child Deserves a Great School*



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