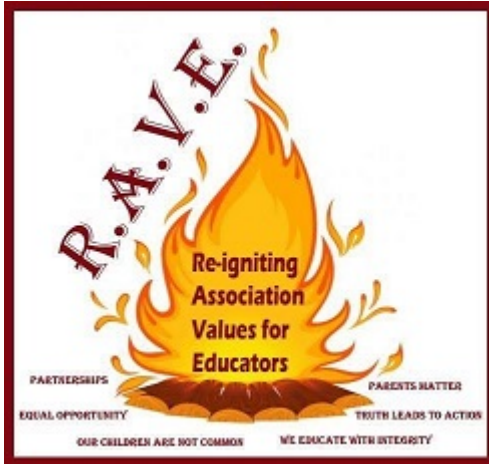


# NEA feels the heat

April 16, 2014



It's official. Colorado teachers and parents have launched a state-wide caucus, RAVE, that aims to transform both the AFT and NEA affiliates in their state. To my knowledge theirs is the first caucus that includes teachers in both AFT and NEA as well as parent activists. They've also reached out to student groups who oppose testing. Though the leaders of the group started their political journey with a determination to halt standardized testing, they've evolved politically and have developed a program that configures testing as part of a bigger, deadlier, project of privatization and deprofessionalization of teaching. They're committed to building a new kind of teacher unionism, one that has a strong presence in the schools and supports teachers to stand up for kids. I met many of the leading activists when I visited Denver for the United Opt-Out (of testing) conference recently. They have wonderful energy and drive and are fast learners too.

Educators for a Democratic Union and the campaign to elect Barbara Madeloni President of the Mass. Teachers Association (NEA's state organization in Mass.) started off as an educational campaign but the caucus and Barbara have garnered more attention and support than Barbara and the group of activists who initiated the campaign imagined. As a teacher educator she risked her job to stand up to Pearson's corporate take-over of assessing teacher ed students. Barbara is a passionate supporter of social justice and transformed teacher unionism, and her election as President of the MTA would jolt the NEA nationally as well as energizing reformers far beyond her state. The campaign has produced three short videos, "Teaching or Testing?" , "A Different Vision" and the soon to be officially released "What Kind of Union."

The campaign needs money to continue its work. I contributed and hope you do too. You can send checks (in any amount) to The Committee to Elect Barbara Madeloni, 43 Munroe Street, Northampton MA 01060. (Or, if you prefer, send checks to Educators for a Democratic Union, same address.)

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