The Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors and other Members of the Council of the National Council of Teachers of English was called to order by President Keith Gilyard at 5:30 p.m., November 16, 2012.

Platform guests included Keith Gilyard, University of Pennsylvania, University Park, NCTE President; Erika Lindemann, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NCTE Parliamentarian; Kent Williamson, NCTE Executive Director; Kathy Short, University of Arizona, Tucson, NCTE Incoming Vice President; Yvonne Siu-Runyan, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, NCTE Past President; Adam Banks, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Resolutions Committee Chair; Sandy Hayes, Becker Middle School, MN, NCTE President Elect; Ernest Morrell, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY, Vice President; and the NCTE Resolutions Committee Members: Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Conference on English Education Chair; Jeffrey Golub, Middle Level Section Chair; and Frank Sibberson, Elementary Section Representative-at-Large.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes a person or persons, either volunteer or staff, who have exhibited valuable professional service within and outside the Council, including scholarly or academic distinction at any level; who have demonstrated distinguished use of language; and who have exhibited excellence in teaching.

Hayes announced the recipient of the 2012 Distinguished Service Award: Beverly Ann Chin, University of Montana, Missoula.

President Gilyard introduced Carol Jago, Chair of the 2012 James R. Squire Award Selection Committee. Jago thanked this year’s committee members: Kathy Yancey, Florida State University, Tallahassee; Kyoko Sato, California State University, Northridge; and Patti Stock, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

The James R. Squire Award, formerly called the NCTE Executive Committee Award, was established in 1967. In 1999 the Executive Committee renamed the award to honor former Executive Director James R. Squire for his contributions to NCTE and the profession at large. The award is given in recognition of outstanding service, not only to the stature and development of NCTE and the discipline that it represents but also to the profession of education as a whole, internationally as well as nationally. The award—given only to an NCTE member who has had a transforming influence and has made a lasting intellectual contribution to the profession—is not an annual award. In fact, it has been presented only 15 times in the past 40 years. The award is bestowed only when selection committees, composed of past presidents of the Council, decide that nominations in a given year warrant its presentation.

Jago announced the recipient of the 2012 James R. Squire Award: Miles Myers, Oakland, CA.
President Gilyard introduced Carol Olson, Chair of the 2012 David H. Russell Award Selection Committee. Olson thanked this year’s committee members: Kenneth Goodman, Emeritus, University of Arizona, Tucson, and Jamal Cooks, San Francisco State University, CA.

The David H. Russell Award is given for any work or works of scholarship or research in language, literature, rhetoric, or pedagogy and learning published during the past five years. Works nominated for the award should be exemplary instances of the genre, address broad research questions, contain material that is accessibly reported, and reflect a project that stands the test of time.

Olson announced the recipient of the 2012 David H. Russell Award: Judith Langer, University of Albany, NY, for her book, Envisioning Knowledge: Building Literacy in Academic Disciplines. Attendees were invited to the Closing Session of the Day of Research, Saturday, November 17, 5:45-7:45 p.m. (MGM Grand, Room 105, Level One) to hear Langer speak. Langer accepted the award at the Sunday General Session at 10:00 a.m. (MGM Grand, Premier Ballroom, Level Three).

President Gilyard introduced Leila Christenbury, NCTE Historian, who provided the following moment of NCTE history:

The moment in NCTE history I would like to share is actually moments that involve the event in which we are now participating, that is, NCTE conventions. I would also like, for the first time in a Moment of History presentation, to single out an individual, NCTE staff member Jacqui Joseph-Biddle, who has been central to the success of those conventions and who, with this annual fall conference, will be retiring.

First to the event: NCTE, as you may recall, began with a very small professional gathering. In early December of 1911 at the Great Northern Hotel in Chicago the first group of members—numbering 50 to 60 or so—met to discuss ideas and plans and, incidentally, to found the National Council of Teachers of English. Every year since 1911—and that is now, with our Centennial behind us, over 100 years—NCTE has held an annual convention with only an infrequent hiatus. The 1918 convention was postponed until February due to the national influenza epidemic, and 1942’s convention was suspended by World War II. For much the same reason, the 1943 NCTE convention was a Director’s Meeting only.

Though the first NCTE convention was held in December, years later it became traditional to hold the meeting near the Thanksgiving holiday. In recent times, the convention ends just before Thanksgiving, but as Dick Robinson reminds us every year in his Scholastic banquet speech, it was his father, touched at the sight of so many lonely NCTE members, stranded far from home, who decided to host an annual Thanksgiving dinner for NCTE convention goers.

This year, 2012, our NCTE convention is in Las Vegas, formerly known as Sin City Incarnate and now repurposed as Family Friendly and Bachelorette Party Destination. As appealing a meeting place as this city may seem, it has only once before been a site of the annual NCTE convention; the Council met here in 1971 at the Stardust Hotel. Forty-one years later, we are here in 2012 to Dream, Connect, Ignite, but the 1971 Las Vegas convention was notable for its concentration on self-discovery, using an obscure quotation from Thomas Wolfe’s The Web and the Rock to urge the inarticulate to “utter” their understanding.

If we consider the whole of NCTE conventions, some of the more interesting challenges have not been war or worldwide epidemic, events that caused conventional cancellations, but weather. Along with sleet, snow, and rain (Milwaukee 2000, Pittsburgh 1993, Philadelphia 2009, and last year’s 2011 Chicago), in past years at NCTE conventions members experienced a hurricane (Orlando 1994), a blizzard (Denver 1999), and an earthquake (Los Angeles 1987). NCTE conventions have also had to confront a number of political and economic issues. Due to our resolutions over the years, we have not held conventions in non-ERA states and in states that had anti-sodomy laws, a move that has not always been fiscally prudent or geographically convenient, but which has been consistent with members’ beliefs and values. NCTE conventions have also been held in the wake of air-traffic controller strikes, hotel strikes, and the Baltimore 2001 convention was held a scant five weeks after 9/11. More recently, we are in Las Vegas this year because of the restrictive immigrant laws enacted by the state of Arizona, laws that NCTE members did not feel consistent with our values as an organization. Thus we relocated the 2012 fall convention from its original location, Phoenix, to Las Vegas.

But what is behind all these events and coordination and schedules for a convention? In this moment of history I would like to highlight NCTE staff member Jacqui Joseph-Biddle, who has been with the organization and working with its conventions for 27 years, since joining NCTE in 1987. She worked for some time with Convention Director Bob Harvey and then became Director herself in 1997, working with other staff members, notably Eileen Maley and Carol
Wagner. This 2012 Las Vegas convention is Jacqui’s last and her 26th NCTE Annual Convention.

So what does it take to be Jacqui Biddle and in charge of an NCTE convention? First, you start your convention work five years ahead of time, making days-long site visits to see the convention hotels, the convention center, the neighboring restaurants and attractions. You help negotiate the hotel and convention center contracts; you work with the Local Arrangements Committee; you coordinate the professional presentation/proposal acceptances with the meeting rooms available; you watch the registration numbers and deal with the specialized requests from the heads of NCTE sections, committees, commissions and from the presidential team. You juggle the room locations and assignments, the meal events, the workshops before and after the convention, and the larger events that open and close the Convention. And that is all before the convention even starts. Onsite, you work behind the scenes and work, non-stop, for almost nine days, arriving on Tuesday and leaving the next Wednesday. On a daily basis, you begin at 5:30 a.m., end at 10 p.m., and if you are Jacqui Biddle, your drink of choice before retiring is a chocolate martini. Or two.

During the convention, you wear track shoes because you walk almost 15 miles a day around the convention site, you wear bright colors so that other staff members can see and find you down the very long corridors of a convention center or a hotel. You arrive at virtually every main convention event an hour ahead of time to check arrangements, and while you used to use Walkie Talkies to communicate, now you use a cell phone. All the time.

And all those last minute crises? The ones members never hear about? You are the one who sets up alternative programs and speakers (and also refunds) when, as in this convention, Jonathan Kozol, has had to cancel because of illness, when as in past conventions Elie Wiesel’s plane is stuck on a runway, or Paulo Freirie cannot come because of national elections in his native country. When filmmaker Ken Burns (Baltimore 2001), due to 9/11 issues, was rerouted to another airport in a neighboring state, and initially could not find a cab to drive him to Baltimore, you found a car and got him, late but not that late, to the packed Secondary Section luncheon, where he went on to give his address and to preview his new film on Mark Twain. When Irish-American novelist and high school teacher Frank McCourt spoke to one of the largest opening session audiences in NCTE history (Milwaukee 2000), underwritten for the first time also in NCTE history by a generous publisher, you handled the absolute last-minute relocation of the speech due to the convention center’s unexpected booking of a rock group. For Frank McCourt you handled the set-up of large video screens, and the extra rooms, and all the signage to make sure members found the relocated venue. When the Nashville 1998 convention Night Out was a pending disaster—members paid for an evening of entertainment, dancing, and dinner at the Nashville Wild Horse Saloon, but the Wild Horse had the wrong date and was totally unprepared for the bus loads of arriving NCTE partiers—you negotiated free drinks, free lessons in line dancing, and got the kitchen to roar into action until a late dinner finally appeared and everyone left happy. Behind the scenes, you dealt with stringent and at times unexpected union regulations in New York and Philadelphia, an unannounced—and large—charge for daily trash pickup for the New York Javitts Center, and even NCTE member demonstrations in Orlando (2010) and an NCTE member sit-down in Chicago (2011). You figured out what to do when in Atlanta (2002), despite all the planning, the booked exhibits would not fit into the exhibit hall, and the publishers were furious. At all of the conventions, you talked with individual NCTE members, hotel staff, convention center staff, NCTE staff, the press, and the public. It almost always, regularly, all went like clockwork; the crises where handled, the disasters averted. And, most interestingly, few NCTE members knew what was going on behind the scenes and simply noted that, once again, NCTE had pulled off another fine annual convention. Whew. And thank you, Jacqui Joseph-Biddle. History is all around us, and, here in Las Vegas in 2012 at our 102nd annual convention we are making more of it tonight. And if you have a chance, say something nice to the blonde woman in the track shoes and the brightly colored outfit. She’s been our angel behind the NCTE convention scenes, and she has earned her own moment of history. Thank you.

President Gilyard introduced Past President Yvonne Siu-Runyan, who introduced the NCTE past presidents and executive directors in attendance: Yetta Goodman, Julie Jensen, Ruth Cline, Beverly Ann Chin, Carol Avery, Sheridan Blau, Anne Gere, Leila Christenbury, David Bloomer, Patricia Lambert Stock, Randy Bomer, Kyoko Sato, Joanne Yatvin, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Kylene Beers, Carol Jago, and former executive director Miles Myers.

President Gilyard asked for a moment of silence for those members who had passed away since the last Board of Directors Meeting. They included Betty Blaisdell, Marby
Blanchard, Cindy Bowman, Robert Carey, Adam Casmier, Patricia Cianciolo, George C. Cowie, Margaret (Meg) Dulaney, Holly Berman Fink, Robert Gorrell, Marcia Kinsey, Lefteris Lavrakas, William D. Lyons, Dorothy Menosky, Bill Neal, Virginia O’Keefe, Andrea Rosenblatt, Leo Ruth, Lenore Sandel, Silver Stanfill, Sandra Stokes, Raymond Stopper Jr., Gary Tate, Bonita Tompkins, and Elizabeth Turpin. A special note at the loss of two NCTE Past Presidents, Marjorie Farmer and Nancy McHugh, was made.

President Gilyard introduced Katherine Bomer, Chair of the NCTE Nominating Committee. Bomer solicited nominations for the 2013 ballots. Candidates are needed as follows: Vice President to be chosen from the College Section, Elementary Representative-at-Large, Middle Level Section Representative-at-Large, Trustees of the Research Foundation, and members for the NCTE Nominating Committee. The Section Nominating Committees, CEE, and TYCA are soliciting nominations as well. Representatives from each of these Nominating Committees were seated at tables in the back of the room. Open meetings of the Nominating Committees were scheduled for Saturday, November 17, 12:00-12:45 p.m. in the MGM Grand, Grand Ballroom 120, Level One, and on Sunday, November 18, 8:00-9:00 a.m. in the MGM Grand, Grand Ballroom 121, Level One.

President Gilyard gave his presidential report:

I am pleased to report that virtually one year into its second century, NCTE continues to make progress in its basic mission to promote “the learning and teaching of English and the related arts and sciences of language.” The word related is especially important in this context because it gives the Council the flexibility to consider an expanded charge in the absence of formal redefinition, which could come at some point. In the meantime, the Executive Committee has been reflecting carefully and planning strategically. Staff remains energetic and conscientious in implementing Council policies and directives. Many members have shared expertise and contributed support. All of these activities suggest that we can be guardedly optimistic—always guardedly—about our future.

Allow me to highlight four recent developments:

1. Resolutions from the Chicago Convention

You will find the resolutions from the NCTE convention in Chicago posted on the NCTE Web site. Further, staff distributed the resolution on Challenging Current Education Policy and Affirming Educator’s Expertise to leaders of the CCSSO, NGA, and US Department of Education. This led to requests from top-level staff at CCSSO and NCATE/CAEP to better understand the Council’s position and, more specifically, to gain a perspective on how standards implementation efforts might “adversely affect social and educational equity.” The NCTE executive director explicated widely held concerns among NCTE members that top-down implementation measures could easily lead to “mechanical” implementation of methods and programs claiming to be the sanctioned way to implement ELA standards, thus undercutting the professional knowledge, expertise, and judgment of literacy educators and local administrators. Obviously, much still needs to be discussed in this regard.

2. NCLE

We are steadily advancing toward our goal of making the National Center for Literacy Education (http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/about/national-center-literacy-education) fully functional. You may recall from some of my posts in the Connected Community that the NCLE represents the belief by NCTE leadership—and we are backed in that belief by 30 national organizations and a grant of 4.4 million dollars from the Ball Foundation—that building capacity for teacher-collaboration at the school/site level is crucial to attempts to improve literacy learning and is a vital component of education reform overall. Moreover, a presumption behind the NCLE model is that the responsibility for improving the quality of student literacy learning is shared by faculty, administrators, parents, and community members. Thus, the focus is not on literacy methods in and of themselves, but on the fruitful planning, experimentation, implementation, and refinement that can result from collaborative inquiry and sustained professional development. As of September, several key mechanisms for operating NCLE have been in place, including the Literacy and Learning Exchange (http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/) and the NCLE SmartBrief newsletter (https://www2.smartbrief.com/nCLE/index.jsp?campaign=exchange%20), which now has 15,000 subscribers. Of course, I urge you to take advantage of these resources. In
addition to infrastructure building, NCLE has initiated a national study of the school conditions that support teacher-collaboration and teacher decision-making. NCLE has incorporated about 60 participating groups so far. As that number increases over the coming months, NCLE will obviously become a more powerful demonstration of school reform. This should help us to attract investments from organizations, agencies, and foundations as we construct a sustainable model for NCLE.

3. Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation, one of our legislative planks for 2012, was also a focus issue for Executive Committee meetings. The overall guiding question was this: What should the Council accomplish regarding teacher evaluation in the next three to five years? Subsidiary questions related to members’ perceptions, our knowledge of external realities and trends, our organization’s strategic position and capacity to act, and the ethical implications of choices that we would make. Perhaps most notable at this point is the strong position that the Council is taking against the reliance or proposed reliance on value-added measures. In line with this concern—and our legislative platform—the EC adopted the “NCTE Position Statement on Teacher Evaluation.” In sum, we hope that our advocacy, governance, and informational endeavors will lead to, as indicated in the position statement, “increased teacher effectiveness and improved student learning.”

4. Revisions to the Constitution

The Executive Committee has agreed to forward proposed constitutional and bylaw changes to the membership for consideration and vote. The matter will be discussed more at this meeting. The proposed changes involve provisions for electronic balloting and electronic meetings, procedures for adopting official position statements of the Council, and election processes. The Executive Committee intends the net effect of the proposed changes to be more inclusive and efficient governance. But you will make up your mind about that prospect as you receive more detailed information.

On other fronts, we remain active in groups that share our commitment to improving language arts teaching and learning, entities such as the Connected Learning Coalition, the Coalition for Teaching Quality, and Advocates for Literacy. In addition, we continue to promote NCTE positions and spread our expertise among legislators, Department of Education staff members, and others.

In response to a request from then-MLA president Russell Berman, I submitted a letter on behalf of NCTE supporting that organization’s call for government and institutions to provide expanded opportunities for students from elementary school through college to study formally at least one foreign language.

Fiscally, our organization is stable. We are not teeming with riches by any means, but we have survived the recession and its aftermath in reasonable shape in the world of membership associations. Our Executive Director, Kent Williamson, will say more about the fiscal picture. Thus, I yield the podium to him.

President Gilyard introduced Kent Williamson, NCTE Executive Director, who presented his report:

As has been the case for the past three years, the Council suffered a modest loss on operations in FY12 but benefitted from a substantial gain on the value of its invested reserves, ending the year with a net income of $922,342. Our small operating fund loss (-$168,665) included $293,610 in spending from our contingency reserve funds (money available for investments in new programs or infrastructure). FY12 was characterized by relatively weak demand for most Council services, balanced by ongoing austerity measures and progress toward critical professional development alliances/engagements tied to the NCLE project. Through careful planning and some good luck, our reserves grew by nearly a million dollars and by the end of FY12 stood at an all-time high of $24.28 million—roughly triple the $8.147 million needed to cover all Council operations last year (double our targeted 1.5 times annual spending benchmark for operating reserves).

Taking a closer look at our operating “bottom line,” we see that operating income ran more than $1.25 million below budget (operating income had been budgeted to increase by $1.559 million by the end of the fiscal year, with the bulk of the increase coming from the NCLE grant; in fact, operating income grew by little more than $307,000 over FY11 levels), and spending was roughly $1.22 million below budget. Much of the
reduction in income and spending resulted because we had intended to award NCLE funding through our stakeholder partners at the very end of FY12, but decided to delay that until our initial NCLE research project is completed around the end of Q2 FY13. If we disregard the effect of the NCLE/Ball Foundation grant, operating income and spending changed very little between FY11 and FY12, with both operating income and expense coming very close to $7 million in both years. One can view this as a sign of stability and health in a time when the education and non-profit sectors are undergoing tumultuous changes, or one can see it as stagnation. Paradoxically, there is truth to both conclusions.

Probably the most significant thing to understand about Council operations is that FY12 was a year when the Council accelerated its shift in strategy towards serving department, school, or district-wide groups in addition to individual educators. We can only accomplish this, and our policy goals, by working in concert with allied organizations. Keith mentioned that we were serving 60 teams through NCLE; 85 teams signed up today. In FY12, this meant deepening alliances across the 30 organizations that have joined forces to create the National Center for Literacy Education, as well as investing in research and a Web site to deliver services to teams across the US. Fortunately, we have the financial and human resources to make this historic shift. If we are successful over the next few years, our ability to influence improvement in the conditions that shape literacy teaching and learning should increase significantly. With the foresight of NCTE’s leaders and the talent and goodwill of its members, we stand a very good chance of navigating these changes successfully.


President Gilyard presented the “Proposed Constitutional and Bylaw Changes” document that everyone received at the door. Those members present proceeded to move into groups at roundtables, with an Executive Committee member seated at each table. Though no revisions could be made to the proposed amendments, they were open to discussion and questions. A ballot will be sent to all members of the Council after the meeting. Twenty minutes were set aside for the discussions. (See attached document.)

President Gilyard moved to “New Business” and called on Adam Banks, Chair of the Committee on Resolutions, to present this year’s resolutions. Banks thanked the committee for its work: Kristen Hamilton, Associate Chair; Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz; Samuel Reed III; and Shari Frost. Banks also thanked the NCTE Parliamentarian Erika Lindemann and NCTE Staff Liaison Lori Bianchini.

Adams presented the following resolution:

Resolution 1

Resolution on Teacher Expertise and the Common Core State Standards

Resolved, that in recognition of teacher professionalism and the complexities of teaching and learning, the National Council of Teachers of English support teacher agency in implementing Common Core State Standards or other state standards for student learning; and

that NCTE urge policymakers, school leaders, and legislators to acknowledge and respect the expertise of teachers as they

• make instructional decisions that positively impact student learning;
• design differentiated instruction that reflects the importance of students’ academic, social, and emotional needs; background knowledge; and cultures;
• choose materials that respond to students’ interests and that broaden and deepen students’ understanding;
• provide students with choices that increase motivation, promote engagement, and encourage personal response;
• engage students in experiences with multiple forms of literacy; and
• use multiple measures of student learning, including classroom-based assessments, to monitor student progress and guide instruction.
Be it further resolved, that NCTE and its members

- publicly critique and oppose Common Core State Standards and all state standards that conflict with NCTE policies;
- engage in public dialogue and debate regarding implementation policies of Common Core State Standards and other state standards; and
- critique and oppose implementation policies when they adversely affect social and educational equity.

On behalf of the Committee on Resolutions, Adams moved the adoption of the resolution.

President Gilyard called for a discussion.

Michael Shaw, NY, Director of NCTE Reading Collaborative, co-author of the resolution thanked the Resolutions Committee for thoughtfully reviewing it, and he strongly urged the membership to adopt it. It builds on the resolution adopted in 2011, on Challenging Current Education Policy and Affirming Literacy Educators’ Expertise. One year later, as Common Core State Standards are being implemented, we are seeing polices and publisher guidelines that conflict with NCTE position statements, resolutions, and policy research briefs. Examples include using a one-size-fits-all approach, in which all students regardless of individual differences are expected to read grade level text. This approach also disregards the great body of research that identifies the importance of; prior knowledge and comprehending text. It disregards the transaction of the reader and the text to construct personal meaning and responses. He urged adoption so that NCTE will continue to be a leader in making sure that implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and all state standards, supports instruction that positively impacts student motivation, engagement, and learning. And respects the professionalism of teachers to make educational decisions that respond to needs of all their students.

Another member also spoke in favor of the resolution: As I understand it, 31.8 million students in this country receive free or reduced lunch—11.8 million are second language learners. Every year we lose three million out the door. My understanding is that you can take two school desks, put them back to back, and extend them to four miles and that’s the number of students we lose each day. So, how are these students going to reach some kind of skyscraper in reading without an adequate scaffold to reach it? I think this resolution is urging professional judgment to be kept in the mix. I agree with Miles Myers, who says we’re for standards but we question how the standards are going to be applied and what say teachers should have in implementing them. I think that is what this resolution addresses. I urge you to adopt it.

Leah Zuidema, IA, expressed reservations about the resolution: I understand the spirit of the resolution and I support it overall. But I want to tell the same story I did last year when I spoke against the line “publicly critique and oppose Common Core Standards and all state standards that conflict with NCTE policies.” I live in a small town in northwest Iowa, a town of 2000 people. There are two state representatives from my town. When I can talk to them about stories about classrooms, they get it, and they understand what the problems are with the standards. However, when they hear a news announcement or a mandate that says we oppose standards, what they hear is that we oppose accountability. All though I support the spirit of this resolution, I think the wording is problematic and locks us into a box where the people we are trying to reach can’t hear us because our voice becomes closed off in their perception.

Leila Christenbury, VA, spoke in favor of the resolution, calling attention to the end phrase of that first bullet, “to publicly critique and oppose . . . that conflicts with NCTE policies.” There is a body of policies and resolutions quickly accessible on the Web site. What the legislators need to know is that this body is highly consistent with best practice and with research. The only caveat would be to explain to them, show them, direct them to what these policies are. If that bullet simply said, “publicly critique and oppose,” I really understand the tremendous danger. We as an organization have a really large library and numbers of resolutions that make sense and are eminently defensible and sensible to our legislators. So I would urge that we adopt this resolution.

Sandra Wilde, NY, offered a friendly amendment to the first bullet under “Be it further resolved that NCTE and its members.” She wanted to amend the clause to read “publicly critique and oppose any Common Core State Standards or state standards that conflict with NCTE policies.” To make it clearer that NCTE does not oppose standards “generally” but “opposes particular ones that conflict with NCTE policies.”

President Gilyard said that, without objection, the Committee on Resolutions would accept the friendly amendment as “publicly critique and oppose any Common Core State Standards or all state standards that conflict with NCTE policies.”

President Gilyard called the question. The resolution CARRIED.

President Gilyard asked for a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Jeanette Toomer, NY, made the motion, seconded by Kathy Nelson, WI.

President Gilyard asked for those presenting sense-of-the-house motions to read their motions.
Sense-of-the-House Motion #1

Jesse Turner, CT, offered the following sense-of-the-house motion: In response to commercial/political pressure to adopt lists of approved programs, materials, and literature for implementation of Common Core State Standards, NCTE members hereby assert their right to exercise professional judgment and choice in the selection of all instructional materials that respond to the academic, cultural, and social diversity of students. The motion was seconded by Michael Shaw, NY.

President Gilyard called the question. The motion CARRIED.

Sense-of-the-House Motion #2

Sheila Carter-Tod, VA, offered the following sense-of-the-house motion: It is moved that the Executive Committee, in conjunction with the Committee Against Racism and Bias, explore issues of racism and bias presented in the Common Core State Standards and its implementation developing strategies for advocacy, teacher support, and curriculum development consistent with NCTE past resolutions on language rights and 21st century literacies. The motion was seconded by Rick Meyer, NM.

President Gilyard called for discussion.

In response to the member’s question as to why the motion had been presented, Carter-Tod explained that the concern had arisen last year as teachers began looking at how the Standards are being implemented and what texts are being selected. She regarded the motion as an extension of the public critique called for in Resolution 1, by examining the content level: “We should start thinking about what are we doing, who we are excluding, and whether we are creating an environment of inclusivity in our classrooms that is consistent with what we are already committed to.

President Gilyard called the question. The motion CARRIED.

President Gilyard asked anyone who wanted to make declarations to move to the microphones.

Bruce Novak, PA, invited members to attend the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning Conference, featuring Peter Elbow this summer. The conference focuses on his new book, Vernacular Eloquence: The Untutored Tongue.

Elizabeth McAninch, CA, invited everyone to the California Association of Teachers of English conference in Santa Clara, February 8-10, 2013. The topic is “Keep Calm and Read On.”

Bess Altwerger, MD, invited members to Washington, DC, April 4-7, 2013, to join United Opted-Out to protest corporate reform of education.

President Gilyard called for a motion to adjourn. Bob Dandoy, PA, moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Franki Sibberson, OH. The motion CARRIED and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.
PROPOSED NCTE BYLAW AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Proposed NCTE Bylaw Change

New Bylaw 6: Any time this constitution authorizes a vote of the entire membership of the Council, that vote may be conducted by electronic means. NCTE staff shall establish and oversee a secure process that validates the electronic ballots while protecting the identity of the voter.

Rationale: Electronic balloting is now permissible under Missouri law (NCTE is incorporated under the laws of Missouri) and offers an option that may be appropriate, expedient, and financially responsible. Though mail ballots can continue to be used, electronic balloting cannot be an option unless it is authorized by the bylaws. Consistent with this bylaw, if adopted, all references to “mail ballot” in the NCTE Constitution would omit the word "mail" and read simply as “ballot.” Current Bylaw 6 would be renumbered as Bylaw 7.

Proposed NCTE Constitutional Changes

Article VI. A. 1. Board of Directors, Authority

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<th>CURRENT LANGUAGE</th>
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<td>The Board of Directors and other Council members present at the Annual Business Meeting shall approve or disapprove official position statements on educational issues.</td>
<td>The Board of Directors and other Council members present at the Annual Business Meeting shall approve or disapprove official position statements on educational issues, such position statements being subject to ratification by the membership. [see Article XI. C., Annual Business Meeting] A second, separate procedure for adopting position statements may originate with the Executive Committee. An official position statement may also be adopted 1) when the Executive Committee submits it on a mail ballot to the entire membership and it is approved by a majority of those responding within 45 days, or 2) when two-thirds of the members of the Executive Committee have voted to approve it. The Board of Directors and other Council members present at the Annual Business Meeting shall have the further responsibility to recommend new Council programs and to advise the Executive Committee on its direction of Council operations. The Board shall receive annually reports on headquarters operations and on the activities of the Executive Committee and of all other duly constituted Council bodies.</td>
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Rationale: Prior to the 1990s, the NCTE Constitution gave the elected and appointed members of the Board of Directors sole responsibility for establishing Council positions on educational issues by approving resolutions at the Annual Business Meeting. Roughly twenty years ago that privilege was extended to all members who attend the meeting. Still, the number of members who have the opportunity to attend the meeting and participate in the process comprises less than one percent of the total membership. Since an average of no more than 200 individuals attend the Annual Business Meeting, as few as 100 voting members may effectively approve “official position statements on educational issues” (resolutions). In establishing Council policy on educational issues, these actions encumber Council resources, direct how members’ dues will be spent, and influence the Council’s standing among other professional organizations.
A right of membership ought to include having the opportunity to vote on policies approved by those attending the Annual Business Meeting. This revision calls for submitting official position statements approved at the Annual Business Meeting to the entire membership for ratification, according to democratic procedures outlined below (see Article XI). In effect, this change would extend the trend toward more democratic participation in policymaking begun a generation ago.

The revision also makes clear that the Executive Committee can establish Council policy in two ways: by a majority vote of a ballot submitted to the membership or by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee. These procedures are separate from the process whereby the Annual Business Meeting approves a resolution that is subsequently submitted for ratification by the membership.

Other revisions in this article—deleting “mail” and replacing “45” with “30” days—are consistent with proposed changes described below.

**Article VI. B. 4. A. Election Procedures and Calendar, Nominations**

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<td>The Nominating Committee shall send to the Executive Director not later than December 15 the following slate of candidates: three candidates for vice-president, two candidates for representative at large, two candidates for each vacancy on the Board of Trustees of the Research Foundation, and fifteen candidates for the five places on the Nominating Committee during the following year.</td>
<td>The Nominating Committee shall send to the Executive Director not later than December 15 the following slate of candidates: <strong>two three</strong> candidates for vice president, two candidates for representative at large, two candidates for each vacancy on the Board of Trustees of the Research Foundation, and fifteen candidates for the five places on the Nominating Committee during the following year.</td>
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**Rationale:** One of the original intentions behind increasing the nominees for vice president from two to three was to create greater opportunity for women and members of color to assume leadership roles in the Council. Over time, the change has had mixed results. The Nominating Committee has sometimes found it difficult to encourage three qualified candidates to stand for office, votes have been split among the three candidates to the detriment of women and people of color, and those who were not elected have questioned the fairness of pitting three candidates against one another. Returning to a slate of two candidates for each office puts all electoral contests on equal footing.

**Article VI. B. 5. Continuity of Officers**

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<th>CURRENT LANGUAGE</th>
<th>PROPOSED AMENDMENT</th>
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<td>For such vacancies [among the office of president, president-elect, or vice president], the Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of three candidates for a special election by the members at the next Annual Business Meeting held in conjunction with the convention. Those appointed by the Executive Committee to fill the offices until that annual meeting shall not continue in succession of offices unless their names are included in the slate submitted by the Nominating Committee and they are elected by the members at the Annual Business Meeting. A president-elect who serves as president pro tem through the annual meeting shall succeed to the presidency, and the retiring past president shall be invited to serve an additional year on the Executive Committee. Should that person decline, the post of past president shall be left vacant and the quorum specified in Article VI, Section C, Part 1 shall be</td>
<td>For such vacancies [among the office of president, president-elect, or vice president], the Nominating Committee shall submit within two months of the vacancy a slate of two three candidates for a special election by the members. The individual so elected shall assume office at the next annual meeting. A president-elect who serves as president pro tem through the annual meeting shall succeed to the presidency, and the retiring past president shall be invited to serve an additional year on the Executive Committee. Should that</td>
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should be left vacant and the quorum specified in Article VI, Section C, Part 1 shall be reduced by one. Should the successful candidate for vice president withdraw after the election but before assuming the duties of that office, the candidate on the same slate with the next greatest number of votes shall assume the duties. Should that candidate decline to serve or be unable to serve, the Executive Committee shall fill the post by one-year appointment as stipulated above.

Rationale: Though the circumstances requiring the replacement of an officer are rare, the effective functioning of the Council can be compromised if procedures are not in place to ensure the continuity of officers. The current language of the NCTE Constitution authorizes the NCTE Executive Committee to make temporary appointments if the office of either president-elect or vice president is vacated, then calls upon the Nominating Committee to present a slate of possible successors for an election by those present at the Annual Business Meeting. The person so elected would then take office two days later. The proposed constitutional revision vests with the entire membership the authority to elect a new president-elect or vice president. The revision obviates the need to wait until the Annual Business Meeting to conduct the vote, though the person elected would assume office at the end of the Annual Convention. Depending on the timing of the vacancy, potential candidates likely would have more time to prepare for the duties they will assume if elected.

Note: Removing the hyphen from “vice president” is an editorial change that should be made throughout the document.

Article VI. C. Executive Committee

New Item 4. Electronic Meetings: Any meeting of the Executive Committee may be conducted by electronic means such as conference telephone call, webinar, or similar electronic communication, so long as all persons participating are able to remain in communications contact with one another at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute an individual’s presence in person at the meeting. Provided that a quorum exists, decisions taken by vote during electronic meetings shall be deemed binding, in the same manner that decisions taken by vote during live meetings are.

Rationale: Electronic meetings are increasingly common in professional organizations, including NCTE, because they help address issues in a timely manner and are considerably less expensive than face-to-face meetings. A provision for electronic meetings is necessary so that actions approved during such meetings do not need to be ratified in a subsequent face-to-face meeting.

Article XI. C. Annual Business Meeting

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<tr>
<td>The Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors and other members of the Council shall be held in connection with the annual meeting of the Council at a time and place announced by the Executive Committee. The Directors present and other Council members present shall adopt any special rules governing the conduct of the meeting, including the specification of a quorum. Directors present and other Council members present may participate in debate and vote on position statements and other matters at the meeting. Position statements approved by two-thirds of those present and</td>
<td>The Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors and other members of the Council shall be held in connection with the annual meeting of the Council at a time and place announced by the Executive Committee. The Directors present and other Council members present shall adopt any special rules governing the conduct of the meeting, including the specification of a quorum. Directors present and other Council members present may participate in debate and vote on position statements (resolutions) and other matters at the meeting. A majority of those present and</td>
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voting at the meeting shall become official NCTE positions that go to the Executive Committee for action. Position statements approved by a majority less than two-thirds (from 50.1% to 66.6%) will be presented to the entire membership on a mail ballot, accompanied by explanations of effects, positive and negative, of the statements. Position statements approved by a simple majority (over 50%) of the membership voting by mail shall become official NCTE positions that go to the Executive Committee for action.

Rationale: The first sentence can be omitted because it duplicates Article XI.A. Meetings of the Council: “The annual meeting of the Council shall be held at such place the time as the Executive Committee shall designate, and shall provide in its schedule time for an Annual Business Meeting for the Boards of Directors and other members of the Council.”

The rest of the paragraph describes two changes in procedure. First, it avoids a complicated calculus for counting votes to approve a resolution, calling instead for a simple majority of the votes cast during the Annual Business Meeting. Second, it grants members the right to ratify resolutions approved during the Annual Business Meeting before they become official NCTE policy. Though participants at the Annual Business Meeting are knowledgeable, engaged NCTE members, they comprise a relatively small group of approximately 140 to 150 individuals. A simple majority of this group is smaller still, yet it currently can enact educational policies that have significant impact on the direction of the Council, how members’ dues are allocated, what services NCTE can provide teachers and students, and what alliances it can build with other professional organizations. NCTE members, especially those unable to attend the Annual Business Meeting, have the right to register their approval or disapproval of official educational policies about to be adopted by the organization, and the organization is well advised to pursue policies that have the significant support of the membership.

[Note: As to how this might work in the real world, once a resolution is approved by the Annual Business Meeting in late November, the Resolutions Committee, or the Executive Committee, or individuals designated by one or the other group, would prepare pro and con statements analyzing the implications and the potential impact of each resolution by mid-December. The resolutions, together with the pro and con statements, would be sent to members in early January by electronic ballot, with votes to ratify the resolutions coming due by the end of January or early February.]