

Stronger Together

Amplifying Educator Voice & Building Power through Collaboration



The Association is always working to build educator voice.



Empowered educators exercise voice and influence over important decisions in their professions. Often, that is interpreted as "having a seat at the table."

But *true power goes beyond that.* It means that the Association is critical in positioning educators to co-design solutions that matter and to actively join, co-create and even build the decision-making tables throughout our system. It allows us to be sure that those closest to the students (our members) can meaningfully shape teaching and learning decisions.

Building Lasting Voice Requires A Strong Affiliate

Two-Way Member Communications

More members involved in decision making; ongoing listening to address most important issues; regular and transparent information sharing vehicles

Align with Parents & Community

Pro-union community (coalitions & authentic partnerships) increases power to negotiate, act collectively for change, and/or collaborate

Strong Affiliate Structure

Association Representatives & leadership roles filled; distributes work load

Advocacy:

Support for pro-public education policies and politicians improve the broader education environment



Blueprint for a Strong Affiliate

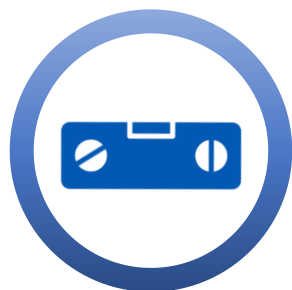
Know The Strategies to Build Educator Voice & Influence



The most well-known strategy is **negotiation**, through collective bargaining or meet & confer. Used cyclically, as it must be revisited for each contract or negotiation cycle. Interest-based processes can be extended outside the contract cycle.

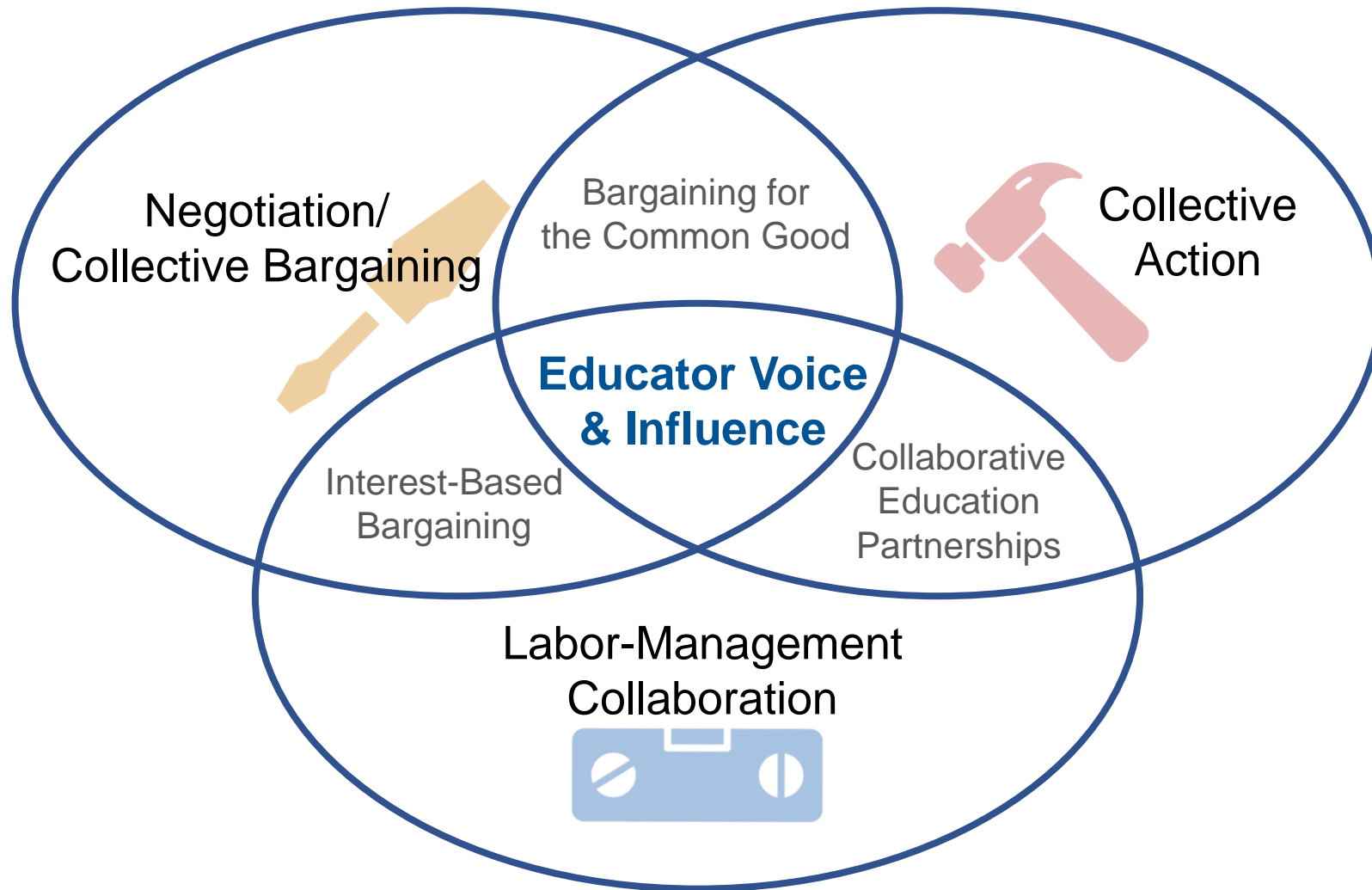


Collective action (demonstrations, strikes, walk-ins) are used to put pressure on decision-makers. This is used episodically, and often as a last resort to show power when lawmakers or decision-makers will not negotiate.

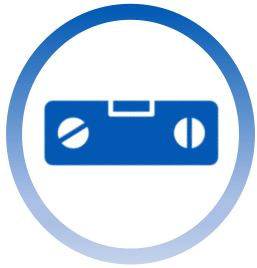


Labor-management collaboration, most often between Association members & administration (and other stakeholders) is a strategy focused *on shared student-centered interests and collective problem-solving*. This strategy builds *ongoing, long-term power*.

These Strategies Can Be Complementary



These strategies can be used alone, or together, depending on what you want to accomplish, and blended approaches can be very useful in increasing and amplifying educator voice.



Collaboration is Shared Decision-Making

A formal partnership catalyzes shared decision-making in schools and leads to positive educational outcomes.



Labor Management Partnership for joint problem-solving



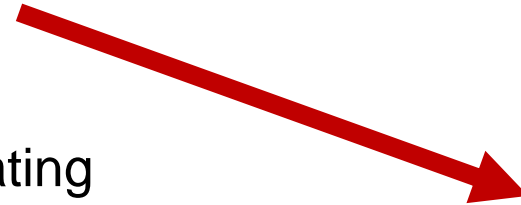
Educators Collaborating and Making Decisions in Schools



Student Success



Educator Engagement



Teacher Retention

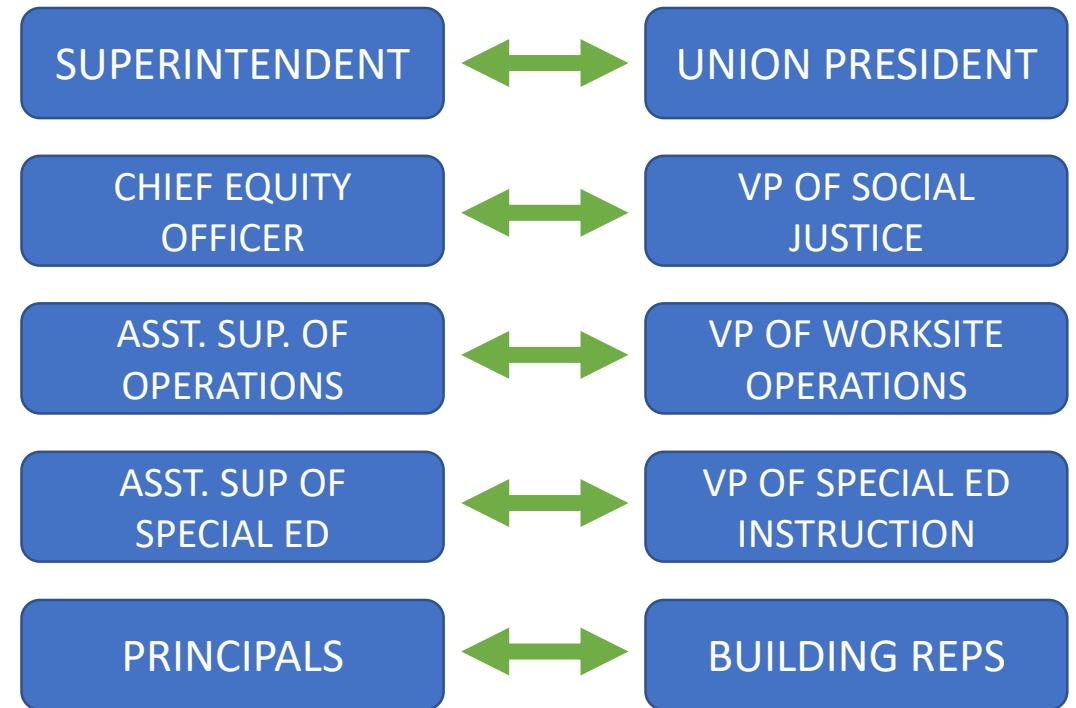


Collaboration Offers Power Building Structures

Collaboration creates greater opportunity to structure and formalize the Association's power.

Consider the following example, where collaboration allows an opportunity for a local association to:

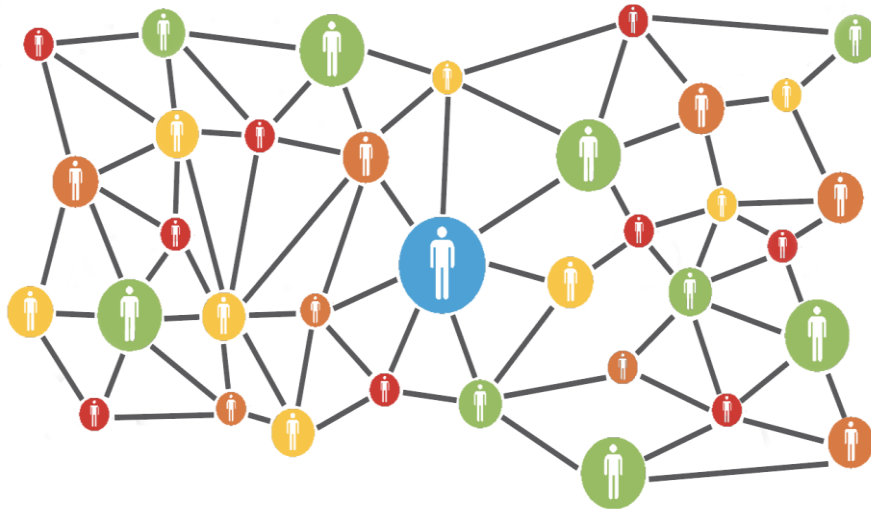
- Intentionally expand the number of leadership roles available to members
- Match those roles to those in the administration
- Hold standing meetings between administration and Association/union counterparts





Collaboration Strengthens Network & Innovation

Collaboration activates the Association's natural network of members in new ways that lead to **marked increases in:**



- Members Engaged in Implementing Innovation across School & District Boundaries
- Association Reps & Leaders Broadly Sharing Information & Best Practices
- Ongoing exchange of ideas and techniques to improve instructional quality
- Ability to Collectively Influence



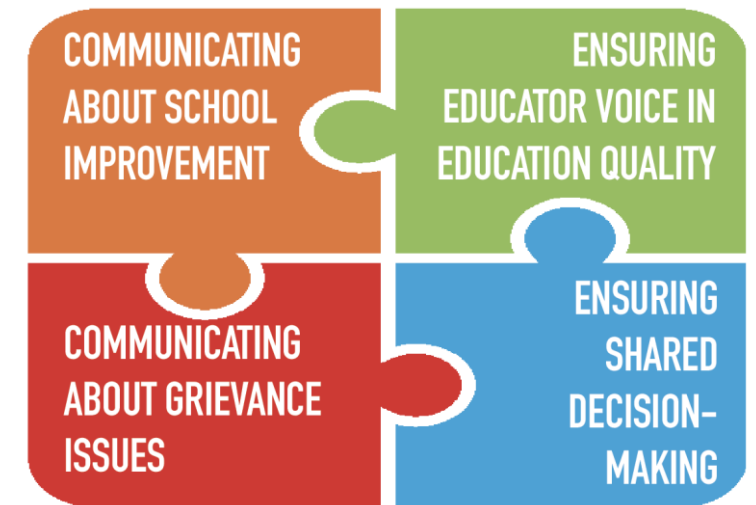
Collaboration Transforms the Role of the Association Rep

With Collaboration, Association Reps see their roles expanded to include professional and social justice issues, in addition to their traditional involvement in grievance processing and information dissemination.

Without collaboration:



With collaboration:

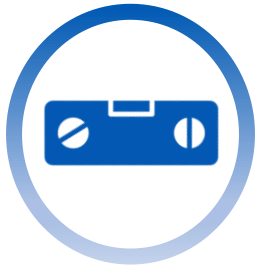




Collaboration Amplifies Educator Voice

When Labor-Management Collaboration becomes the norm, *listening to educator voice becomes the norm.*

- Contract negotiations can become less time consuming & contentious
- Members' professional needs are met with greater ease and clarity
- Grievances and work actions are significantly reduced
- Association/Union Members are able to exercise their power at the decision-making table, **before**, **during** and **after** contract negotiations



Take action and talk to your members



If you're ready to build power, amplify educator voice and move your relationship with your administration closer to the partnership end of the spectrum, review our framework for collaboration, our Guidebook on Collaborating for Student Success, and other resources at [nea.org](https://www.nea.org).

Then “start somewhere” with your members on the path to *power through collaboration*.