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AP<sup>®</sup>

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# AP<sup>®</sup> United States Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 1**

- Scoring Guidelines**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

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**Question 1: Concept Application****3 points**

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**A.** Describe a strategy that this interest group can use to address the issue in the scenario. **1 point**

**Acceptable descriptions include:**

- The National Education Association (NEA) can organize political participation (e.g., protests, letter-writing campaigns, canvassing) throughout the country to draw attention to the issue of teachers' salaries.
- The NEA can launch a media campaign that supports increasing teachers' salaries.
- The NEA can lobby lawmakers to increase funding for teachers' salaries.
- The NEA can support candidates for Congress that advocate for higher salaries for teachers.

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**B.** In the context of the scenario, explain how the resources available to the NEA could impact the effectiveness of the strategy in part A. **1 point**

**Acceptable explanations include:**

- The NEA's resources include a large member base. Having a vast membership at its disposal makes it easier to organize political participation that could effectively address the issue of teachers' salaries.
- The NEA's resources include an annual budget. To be effective, the NEA could allocate part of its budget to pay for strategies (e.g., influencing lawmakers, launching a social media campaign, buying advertisements) to increase teachers' salaries.

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**C.** Explain how a block grant for education could affect the issue in the scenario in some states but not in others. **1 point**

**Acceptable explanations include:**

- Block grants allow states flexibility in determining how the money is spent. Some states might decide that the block grant funds should be used for educational spending other than teacher salaries. This may create variation in teacher pay between the states.

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**Total for question 1 3 points**

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

A. The National Educational Association - a national teachers' union - could address the issue of a teacher shortage by using their large funds, over 300 million dollars, to lobby to Congress to apportion more government funding to education to increase teacher salaries. This would incentivize more people to become teachers.

B. The NEA has significant membership and funding. This would significantly enhance the effectiveness of their lobbying. First, the significant money the union has could make certain members of Congress attracted to the NEA policy because the NEA could help in that members re-election. Secondly, if the Congress member would help push the NEA's agenda through legislation, the 3.2 million members of the NEA could look much more favorably on that candidate.

C. A block grant is money given to the states by the federal government with significant freedom given to the states on where to spend that money. Some states could certainly use the money to help increase teacher salary; however, some states might not want to increase teacher salary and instead use it to purchase other educational materials or ~~helping to~~ <sup>PM</sup> construct new schools.

Page 2

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

1. A. A strategy interest groups could use this issue is to fund and contribute to the Campaigns of Politicians who promise to provide more funding to education to boost teachers' salaries to help them get elected.

B. Due to the NEA being a national organization with a sizable budget, it can make the strategy of Campaign contributions more effective as the NEA could potentially use their large amount of resources to influence ~~high level elections on~~ high level national elections, instead of just local ones.

C. A block grant might affect some states and not others because some states may be lacking the money to pay their teachers a higher salary, and hence the block grant would help them, but other states may suffer from a lack of qualified teachers in the labor pool, and hence the extra funding wouldn't be as effective, as their problem is in lack of manpower and not lack of money.

Page 2

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Question 1

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Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

A. This interest group can employ a strategy to use lobbying for a specific member of congress that can propose a bill to increase pay for teachers. By publically supporting an official who will propose and vote for what the NEA needs, they are increasing their chances of higher pay for teachers with a trustee upholding their goals.

B. The resources available to the NEA could impact the effectiveness of the strategy by making it difficult to find support for the ~~low po~~ high poverty areas. With teacher shortages in areas of poverty there is less likely to be funding for them. Even with a large budget, the high poverty areas are less likely to be lobbied for and supported by trustees therefore making the strategy more difficult.

C. A block grant for education would positively affect the issue in the scenario for some states because the states with more support and better lobbyists will receive larger block grants and more funds can be allocated to increasing teacher's pay. These states can increase the number of teachers; however, the states that do not have support for block grants with a Congressional bill will receive less or no money and the teaching shortage can not be helped in these states.

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## Question 1

**Note:** Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

### Overview

The Concept Application question expected students to describe course concepts using real-world scenarios. In this scenario they were given information about teacher shortages and low teacher salaries across the country based on a report issued by the National Education Association (NEA). As an interest group, the NEA advocates for teacher benefits. Students were expected to recognize interest group influence on policy making in the context of the scenario. Students were expected to describe a strategy that the NEA could use to address teacher shortages and low teacher salaries: organizing political participation, raising awareness of the issue through media campaigns, lobbying lawmakers, and/or supporting candidates via electioneering strategies.

In addition, students were expected to recognize how variation in types of resources of interest groups, in this case, NEA membership and annual budget, affected their ability to influence the strategy earlier in the response. This effect could have been positive or negative: not having enough of the resource versus having a lot of the resource, were both acceptable to demonstrate these variations. Students could interpret 3.2 million members and an annual budget of over \$300 million dollars as either excess or insufficient resources to address teacher shortages and low teacher salaries.

Finally, the question required students to understand how the issues in the scenario could potentially remain unsolved, even if states were given block grants for education, as a result of state discretion over funds. Students needed to address how one state could choose to use the funds to raise teacher salaries, or hire more teachers, and another state could use the grant on something else related to education spending (i.e., school facilities, textbooks, classroom technology, etc.), but they did not need to state specific examples as long as discretion was implied.

### Sample: 1A

#### Score: 3

The response earned 1 point in part A for describing that “the National Education Association ... could address the issue of a teacher shortage ... to lobby to Congress to apportion more government funding to education to increase teacher salaries.”

The response earned 1 point in part B for correctly explaining how a resource (membership or funding) available to the NEA could impact the effectiveness of the strategy in part A by explaining, “The NEA has significant membership and funding. This would significantly enhance the effectiveness of their lobbying.” By stating “significantly enhance,” the response explains how a resource available to the NEA impacts the effectiveness of the strategy.

The response earned 1 point in part C for explaining, “A block grant is money given to the states by the federal government with significant freedom ... on where to spend that money. Some states could certainly use the money to help increase teacher salary; however, some states might not want to increase teacher salary.”

### Question 1 (continued)

**Sample: 1B**

**Score: 2**

The response earned 1 point in part A for correctly describing a strategy that an interest group can use to address the issue in the scenario as “fund and contribute to the Campaigns of Politicians who promise to provide more funding to education.”

The response earned 1 point in part B for correctly explaining how a resource (“budget”) available to the NEA could impact the effectiveness of the strategy in part A by stating, “Due to the NEA being a national organization with a sizable budget, it can make the strategy of campaign contributions more effective.”

The response did not earn the point in part C because “some states may be lacking the money” and “other states may suffer from a lack of qualified teachers” are not acceptable explanations.

**Sample: 1C**

**Score: 1**

The response earned 1 point in part A for correctly describing a strategy that an interest group can use to address the issue in the scenario by stating, “This interest group can employ a strategy to use lobbying for a specific member of congress that can propose a bill to increase pay for teachers.”

The response did not earn a point in part B because it does not explain, in the context of the scenario, how the resources available to the NEA could impact the effectiveness of the strategy in part A. While the response mentions the resource “large budget,” it does not explain how the NEA could use this resource to make their strategy (lobbying) effective.

The response did not earn a point in part C because “states with more support and better lobbyists will receive larger block grants” is not an acceptable explanation.