

Ken Zarifis

President

Education Austin

Ken Zarifis is president of Education Austin, a merged local of the NEA and AFT that represents teachers and support personnel in the Austin Independent School District, or AISD. Prior to taking over at Education Austin in 2010, he taught eighth grade language arts for 12 years at a high-needs middle school in AISD where he says he learned much more from the students than he ever taught them. This experience shaped the way he views social justice as it relates to public education and the labor movement. While Ken and Education Austin were instrumental in developing a campus-community lead in-district charter school in AISD through an AFT Innovation Fund Grant, he is currently taking what he learned from the in-district chartering experience and directing the union's efforts to developing transformative community schools in Austin ISD. Ken has spoken on the local, state and national level to explain Education Austin's work with community schools, the school-to-prison-pipeline and social justice unionism. He is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa, is married and has children in the public school system.