

The VOICE

State Education Association April 2024



ENGAGED LEARNING

Helping Students Thrive

Be brave enough
to ask for help

2024 Delegate
Assembly Information

Summer Coursework
options inside



Nebraska State Education Association
 605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
 www.nsea.org
 402-475-7611 • 1-800-742-0047
Volume 77, No. 8
 ISSN Number: 1085-0783
 USPS Number: 000-369

Executive Director	Trish Guinan
Assoc. Exec. Director	Isau Metes
Business Manager	Michelle Raphael
Dir. of Public Affairs, Communications	Karen Kilgarin
Asst. Dir. of Visual Communications	Kristi Capek
Multimedia Communications Specialist	Kelsey Foley

NSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Jenni Benson, Lincoln jenni.benson@nsea.org
Vice President	Paul Schulte, Millard paul.schulte@nsea.org
NEA Director	Renaë Noble, Chadron nobledr635@gmail.com
NEA Director	Edward Ventura, Jr., Omaha venturaomaha@gmail.com

Official publication of the Nebraska State Education Association, 605 South 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to NSEA Voice, 605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Published 10 times yearly according to this schedule: September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May and August.

Payment of annual NSEA membership dues entitles Nebraska educators to receive *The Voice*. Total cost of producing 10 monthly issues of *The Voice* each year is less than \$2 per member.

Advertising rates available upon request. All advertisements and advertisers are screened prior to publication. Appearance of an advertisement in *The Voice* does not necessarily imply NSEA endorsement of either the product being advertised or the views expressed.

**A Great Public School
for Every Child.**

 www.fb.com/nsea.org

 [@nsea_org](https://twitter.com/nsea_org)

 [@nsea_org](https://www.instagram.com/nsea_org)

 **NSEAMEDIA**

 www.linkedin.com/company/nsea



Lights, Camera, ACTION!

Several NSEA members will be featured in an upcoming outreach campaign focusing on all the ways Nebraska Public Schools are the heart of their communities.

The diverse group of Nebraska educators and leaders will share the ways public schools serve as symbols of community pride and identity.

Betsy Thomas is a Library Instructional Leader for Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) Library Services Department. A 20-year veteran educator, Betsy works to build library curriculum lessons and offer resources that teach LPS students important skills including information literacy and digital citizenship. Betsy loves that the Lincoln community is so supportive of its public schools.

Betsy is a Nebraska native from Trumbull, a village in Clay and Adams counties. She is a graduate of nearby Giltner Public Schools.

“Our small-town Nebraska Public

Schools are where communities come together,” Betsy says in her featured ad. “They are learning centers and they’re where families gather for special events, cheer the home team and make sure every kid has an opportunity to succeed.”

The campaign will also feature LPS special education teacher Nicole Lopez-Bettendorf, West Lincoln Elementary School teacher Nuru Roach, Crete Public Schools teacher Jenn Uher, Fremont Middle School teacher and psychologist Becky Turner and North Bend Public Schools retired teacher and 2011 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, Bob Feurer. Public school supporters Guadalupe Esquivel and Michelle Faltin will also be featured in the campaign.

Funding for the campaign was made possible through a National Education Association (NEA) grant.



Time to Make Plans for Summer Class! Summer Coursework Options Found Inside

Nebraska colleges and universities offer the necessary summer classes to enable teachers to enhance their skill and knowledge base, add endorsements, and to advance on their school district’s salary schedule.

What is the best method for determining which courses might best meet your needs? Start by reviewing the informational

ads from Nebraska colleges and universities in this issue of *The Voice*.

Nebraska colleges and universities were invited to submit advertising. Those who chose to advertise offer details about programming, as well as contact details and information.

Let your college or university of choice know that you read about their course offerings in *The Voice*!

On the Cover: Professional learning takes center stage for members working to implement a whole-child approach to education. Read this story on pages 7-9.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JENNI BENSON

“Ask for help. Not because you are weak. But because you want to remain strong.”

- Les Brown



*Be strong enough
to stand alone,
Smart enough to know
when you need help,
and brave enough
to ask for it.*

—MARK AMEND



I became a teacher because I was a natural helper. As a child, I helped my parents, my grandparents, and my family. I may have become too good at caring for others and sometimes neglected my own needs. As empathetic educators, I know many of you can relate.

A recent example of needing help myself was when a pain I've had in my shoulder for years began getting worse and waking me up at night. After undergoing an MRI, we found the source of my pain: a torn rotator cuff, bicep tendon separation and a lot of arthritis in my joint. Surgery was the only option. I remember thinking, “When am I supposed to find time for surgery?” But pain was my motivator.

My surgery in February was successful, but the recovery has been challenging. I do not like to be down and out, and I do not like to depend on others to get things done. However, with my dominant arm out of commission, I quickly came to the realization that I needed help.

I am blessed with family, friends and coworkers who have been amazing. The first couple of weeks were difficult, for sure. I appreciated the food, rides, and cards. I stayed home and returned to work a week after surgery. I needed—and still need—assistance daily as I slowly regain use of my hand, arm and shoulder.

I wore a big sling on my shoulder for four weeks to help with recovery. Wearing it around made me feel like I was wearing a sign that read, “I need help!”

The truth is that we all need help. Our students need help. Our friends, families, and communities need help. Sometimes people may communicate the need for help in different ways. Some might act out while others communicate with nonverbal cues.

We are called upon to offer our help; to ask, “What can I do to ease your load?”

Sometimes we miss the cues due to our own busy lives, our own needs, even our own judgment. We all need to take time to communicate with each other. Offer help, ask for help and be grateful for the help we receive.

I have started physical therapy three times a week for six to eight weeks. Again, I thought, “where is that time going to come from?” But I was again reminded that I need to take care of myself, especially through my recovery. With full recovery from surgery expected to take six to nine months, I will need to communicate and ask for help.

We all must communicate when we need help. I love to assist our members when they reach out. I know our NSEA leadership, members and staff work to help one another and NSEA is here to help educators.

Early Enrollment begins April 1 and I'm asking all current members to help me reach potential members and let them know that NSEA is here to serve. The value of support NSEA offers is the best way for educators to ask for—and receive—the help they need.



Dr. Donna Beegle



From Theory to Practice: Reaching Students in Poverty

Dr. Donna Beegle, who went from 28 years of homelessness to achieving a doctorate, has experience creating education systems that work for students living in the crisis of poverty. In 2010, Amarillo College was grappling with dropping student success rates at its seven campuses in three Texas panhandle counties. Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, who was president of the college at the time, launched a study to identify the reasons behind students' academic challenges. In a letter, penned in 2016, Dr. Lowery-Hart, explained he was, "shocked to find that for 60% of students, success was elusive because of the barriers of poverty—transportation, childcare, food, shelter, and health care."

Dr. Lowery-Hart and a team of community partners sought advice from Dr. Beegle.

"I started working with the team in 2011. They now call their campus a 'culture of caring' but it's actually a poverty informed campus," Beegle explained.

The college developed a systemic approach to focus on their most at-risk students using the Opportunity Community Model (OC). Under the model, retention rates for at-risk students climbed from 48% to 92%.

"We literally altered lives and changed communities," Dr. Lowery-Hart said.

The OC model employs a comprehensive approach, building on the existing strengths of people

in poverty, business, social service, education, healthcare, justice, faith-based organizations, and community members to make a difference for their region. Navigators—community members who agree to become trained through the OC model—commit to using their networks to assist a person living in poverty to access resources and support for moving out and staying out of poverty.

The OC model begins by bringing stakeholders—including educators—together to gain shared language and understanding of poverty impacts. In late February, NSEA members participated in Dr. Beegle's "Breaking Poverty Barriers" targeting areas of growth for educators to challenge

the communication barriers that get in the way of student success. Her advice for educators was rooted in the academic communication of theory of the "Unknowable Potential."

"If you saw me at 26, with a bad perm from my cousin Wanda, saying 'ain't' every other word, not able to read a newspaper, could you picture me here?" Beegle asked members.

NSEA members can take Beegle's "Poverty Immersion" course on-demand and at no cost. Visit www.nsea.org/NSEAOnline to enroll. For questions, please email NSEALearningOnDemand@NSEA.org and find more learning opportunities at www.nsea.org/webinars.



Migrate to Better Banking!

Checking Savings eServices Auto Loans Mortgages Credit Cards



**Do your banking wherever you are
with online banking and mobile signing!**



**First
Nebraska**
CREDIT UNION

To learn more,
scan the QR code.



Apply online at firstnebraska.org, or call (402) 492-9100

All loans subject to approval. Rates, terms and conditions vary based on creditworthiness, qualifications and collateral conditions.

NMLS# 416540
Federally insured by NCUA





STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH OUR TAX DOLLARS

LB1402 and LB753 represent the erosion of public education funding and steps towards eliminating equal access to our Nebraska public education system.

Channeling public dollars into private schools will undoubtedly lead to a reduction in funding for public education. As resources are diverted, public schools – which serve 90% of students in Nebraska—will face budget cuts, resulting in larger class sizes, a de-professionalized workforce, and a decline in overall educational quality.

Public schools are required to accept all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, academic ability, or special needs. Private schools, on the other hand, have selective admissions processes, leaving behind students who are unable to meet certain criteria. This can further entrench disparities in educational opportunities.

NEBRASKA

90%

Public schools serve 90 PERCENT of kids in Nebraska.

48

48 of Nebraska's 93 counties DO NOT have a private or parochial school.



THINGS TO KNOW



REPEAL LB753, passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2023, creates dollar-for-dollar tax credits totaling up to \$100M for donations by individuals and businesses to organizations granting scholarships to K-12 private schools.



OPPOSE LB1402, which is a direct appropriation from the budget, instead of a tax credit like LB753. LB1402 appropriates \$25 million to be given to the State Treasurer for the purpose of funding private school vouchers. Tell your state senator to oppose LB1402.

THE PEOPLE'S TAX DOLLARS



LB1402 is an attempt to usurp the people's right to vote on using tax dollars to fund private schools. More than 117,000 Nebraskans signed a referendum petition to put the issue on the ballot.



Unlike other measures considered each budget cycle, the **tax credits would be on autopilot**, reducing revenue available to fund state priorities such as career education in public schools.



Unlike LB753, which has a waiting period before its escalator clause balloons the program up to \$100 million, under **LB1402 the program can grow immediately** after the first year.

LESS STATE AID FOR NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Under LB753, state aid to public schools could decrease according to the Legislature's Fiscal Office. **LB753 will divert up to \$100 million in tax dollars to fund private schools.** This means fewer dollars will be available to fund public schools, which are attended by 90% of all children in Nebraska.



UNK ONLINE

ONLINE

English M.A.



Develop powerful results in the classroom

UNK's top-ranked online English M.A. can seamlessly fit into your busy teaching schedule, helping you improve your own skills in writing and literary analysis to enhance your students' learning. Work with accommodating, knowledgeable professors and customize the program to fit your classroom with four unique emphases:

- Literature
- Childhood and Youth Studies
- Composition, Rhetoric, and Language
- Creative Writing

 Visit unk.edu/online to learn more



UNK UNIVERSITY
OF NEBRASKA
KEARNEY

The University of Nebraska at Kearney does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment.



ENGAGED LEARNING: Members collaborate to explore ways to help students thrive

In a playful tone and with a smile, Brooke Hemmer gave attendees of the NSEA Thriving Together conference a language disclaimer before her presentation.

“Just to start off, I want to tell you that I am a high school teacher working with Tier 3 behaviors, sometimes I swear. I’m not trying to offend anybody—it just kind of slips out,” Hemmer joked. “I blame my uncles for this because they are all—quite literally—Navy sailors. I always joke that I have a sailor’s mouth.”

Hemmer works as a 9-12 behavior skills teacher at the Learning Academy within Educational Service Unit 7 in Columbus.

During her presentation, “Creating Environments that Cultivate Positive Relationships,” Hemmer identified four areas of focus: attitude, environment, student relationships and family relationships.

Predictable Attitudes

Hemmer explained keeping a consistent and predictable attitude with her students gives them a sense of stability and predictability that lays

the foundation of trust.

“Every day when my students come into my classroom, they will find me outside my door and it doesn’t matter if that student called me every name in the book the day before, I always tell them, ‘Good morning, I’m so glad you’re here,’” she explained.

This stability also facilitates the development of trust that is essential for relationship-building with students who display behaviors in the classroom.

“I remind myself not to hold grudges against any of my students.

These kids are doing the best they can with the skills they have now,” she said. “We are the adults; we have been taught the skills to cope with some of these big feelings. Sometimes these students are still learning coping skills. I model for them what I want to see.” But teachers

have bad days, too, and when keeping a predictable attitude with a student feels untenable, the next best option is honesty.

“Be straightforward with students. Sometimes I say, ‘I’m having an awful day today, guys. I don’t mean to be snappy.’ I tell them, ‘it’s not your fault that I’m in a bad mood.’”

Caring Environments

Consistent rules provide clear expectations for behaviors, assignments, and social interactions for Hemmer’s students. It’s the reason the walls of her classroom

are essentially wallpapered with laminated signs.

“I call my classroom a community and together with my students we have created community guidelines. I made them into laminated signs. Our guidelines are rooted in restorative justice. We have



Brooke Hemmer and Brandy Rose at the Thriving Together Conference.

On the Cover

community circles and when the community guidelines are broken students have the space to say, 'Hey, when you did this, it made me feel like this' to one another.'" The community environment is an important part of relationship building.

Building Relationships

Hemmer was candid when describing her difficulty as a self-described "baby teacher" working with her students and their families. She encouraged attendees to give themselves the time and space necessary to build trust with parents and students, communicate regularly and always celebrate progress.

"The first thing that you will see when you come into my classroom are pictures of my kids and then all the little notes are what I call my 'I'm so proud' notes. I write things like 'good job for leveling up! You worked hard on that test.' Sometimes it's small like, 'I'm so proud you were walking [instead of running] in the hallways,'" Hemmer said. "Oftentimes, parents only receive negative notes from teachers. I always tell them when their kid got an 'I'm so proud' card."

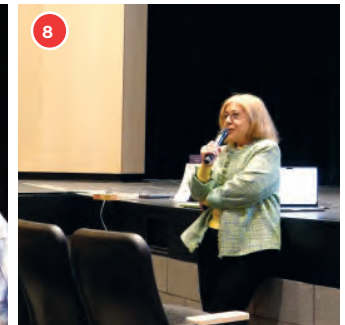
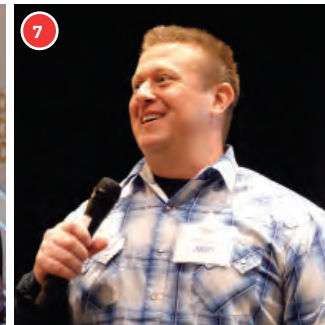
Hemmer explained that implementing these strategies is not necessary for every student, but applying some of these strategies can help create interventions for students who are causing disruptions in classrooms.

"You probably have that one kid that you came to the session for. He or she is your top tier kid. You probably only have a handful of these in your room," she explained. "Those are the students who need the extra areas of focus."

Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from school psychologist and behavior analyst Brandy Rose who offered strategies for understanding and working with student behaviors.

Trauma and Triumph

Tom Whisinnand has two decades of teaching experience at Millard Public Schools. He's a fifth-grade teacher whose students affectionately call, "Mr. Wiz." During the conference, Whisinnand presented on trauma and triumph and offered attendees ways they can help students find



Helping Students Thrive: 1. Paul Reynolds with students during an elementary school visit in Omaha. 2. NSEA President Jenni Benson helps a student at Forest Station Elementary School. 3. Reynolds shares a laugh with a conference attendee. 4. Jane Reynolds talks with students at Beals Elementary School. 5. Paul Reynolds presents his book to students. 6. Brooke Hemmer and Brandy Rose at the Spring Conference. 7. Tom Whisinnand presents "Trauma to Triumph." 8. Jane Reynolds speaks to NSEA members. 9. Paul Reynolds takes questions from students during his author visit.

paths for success.

Whisinnand began his presentation by proudly displaying photos of his wife and kids, then a picture of his pet chinchillas, and lastly, he shared a photo with his mom, dad and two siblings.

"I want to start with a story I've never shared before publicly," he explained. "This is my family. My dad, my mom,

my brother, my sister, and myself. I didn't know it at the time, but this was the last picture we ever took as a family."

Whisinnand was at a staff meeting when he first noticed the missed calls from his wife. Before he could return her calls, he spotted her in a school hallway, running towards him.

"My wife said, 'your mom needs you.'



Helping Students Thrive: 10. Paul Reynolds with students at Forest Station Elementary in Omaha. **11.** Renae Noble, Kathy Poehling and Edward Ventura pose with a photo frame prop. **12.** Pres. Benson helps with the Reynolds author visits in Omaha. **13.** Paul Reynolds poses with NSEA members in Omaha. **14.** NSEA Executive Team members with Paul and Jane Reynolds. **15.** Andrea Calvin, Vice President of Fable Vision Learning talks with NSEA members. **16.** Paul Reynolds signs a copy of his book. **17.** Paul Reynolds takes a photo with Skinner Magnet students during his author visit.

When I called my mom, she said to me, “Tom, your dad is dead.”

Whisinnand’s father had died in a traffic accident while on a business trip in Omaha. By sharing his story with members, Whisinnand was sharing a trauma narrative while getting to the heart of his presentation.

“When we talk about trauma narratives and sharing them, it’s not

to let the trauma sit or fester and not to give the trauma a place to dwell within us permanently,” he explained to attendees. Trauma narratives are a powerful tool that survivors can create to make sense of and communicate their experiences of trauma. Sharing or writing about traumatic experiences can be a way for students to process and express their emotions.

Whisinnand gave incredible examples of ways educators have empowered their students to explore the meaning and significance of their experiences.

“Trauma isn’t a one-size fits all thing. And teachers are not psychologists. We don’t need to be to help our students,” Whisinnand said. “But we can be informed, and we can be empowered to help those students make sense of their experiences by being present. Being present with another human is the biggest gift you can offer—to be there, to learn from them and to learn with them.”

Create Bravely with FableVision Learning

New York Times best-selling author, illustrator and founder of FableVision Learning, Peter Reynolds, his twin brother, Paul Reynolds and their sister Jane Reynolds have worked together to develop the FableVision brand as a social change agency. They hope to help move the world to a better place by creating “stories that matter, stories that move.”

Paul Reynolds and Jane Reynolds each gave addresses during the Thriving Together conference. Before the Saturday conference, many members hosted the Reynolds’ during visits to Omaha elementary schools. The brother and sister duo shared their books and encouraged students to create bravely. Many students were familiar with the book, “The Dot.” It’s the story of a young girl named Vashti who is challenged by her teacher to draw a dot which inspires a creative adventure. During his address to members, Paul encouraged educators to rekindle their own creativity to make the world a better place.

“As educators, we want our students to create bravely but we’re here today because we want to give you permission to think of yourself as an artist,” Paul said. “At the very least, don’t denigrate your own artwork. Kids hear this stuff; they encode it, and they believe it. We are well meaning, but sometimes adults say silly things because we gave up on our creativity along the way. I want you to have the courage to make your mark, to be brave enough to make your mark, even if it’s a tiny, little dot.”



LEGISLATURE

EDUCATION FUNDING: NSEA advocates for increased funding

INCREASE IN TEEOSA EXPECTED

Senators have given first round approval to the mid-biennium state budget bill (LB1412) which calls for a spending increase of 3.1%. The adjustments include an unexpected increase in state aid to K-12 schools. The Appropriations Committee's budget proposed a modest spending increase while leaving a significant surplus in the state's reserve funds.

The unexpected increase in state aid to K-12 schools is mainly due to higher actual spending reported by districts like Omaha Public Schools, which had to replace federal pandemic funds that are no longer available. In FY2024-25, \$65.3 million is attributed to an increase in state aid to schools (TEEOSA), and \$27.5 million is an increase in special education funding pursuant to the estimated 80%

of total reimbursable costs for school districts as required by LB243 (2023). Total TEEOSA funding will be \$1.028 billion in FY2023-24, and \$1.01 billion in FY2024-25, which is down overall due to higher local valuations.

The governor had proposed \$944.9 million in TEEOSA funding for FY2024-25, so the legislature's increase in funding is positive news.

The proposal adhered closely to the governor's original recommendation. A significant amount of \$904 million will be left in the state's cash reserve fund at the end of the two-year budget in June 2025, and the budget will have excess funds of roughly \$575 million; however, this excess will shrink to \$69 million at the end of the 2026-27 fiscal year, as the reduction in income tax revenue from last year's tax cut takes effect. This cut will put undue pressure on the state's ability to fund important services in upcoming years.

The budget includes specific allocations for foster care and increasing staff at the state-run psychiatric hospital. However, it excludes healthcare provider payment rate increases for the second year, which had been vetoed by the governor previously. Instead, there is a separate plan to leverage federal Medicaid funds. Senators have been given flexibility to adjust the budget with up to \$23 million per year for additional spending or tax reductions. This will likely be reflected in two revenue bills, still in committee but prioritized, expected to have additional tax cuts and revenue changes found in LB937 and LB1023.

\$100 MILLION PRIVATE SCHOOL APPROPRIATION UP SOON

NSEA is tracking the progress of LB1402, which appropriates \$25 million in state general fund dollars to the Treasurer's Office for the purpose of providing grants to scholarship-granting organizations to fund private schools.

Under LB1402, costs could escalate up to \$100 million. The money will be given to private school scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs) that will distribute it to pay



School Counselors: Lincoln Education Association President Deb Rasmussen opposed LB1065, which would authorize a school district to hire a chaplain to perform duties of a school counselor.



Family Engagement: NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte testified in support of LB1013 to create the Family Engagement Grant Program to provide grants for high-needs schools to improve family engagement.

for private school education. LB1402 and LB753 represent the erosion of public education funding and steps towards eliminating equal access to our Nebraska public education system.

Here are the top 5 reasons why publicly funding private schools will cause detrimental harm to Nebraska's education system:

- 1. Erosion of Public Education Funding:** Channeling public dollars into private schools will undoubtedly lead to a reduction in funding for public education. As resources are diverted, public schools, which serve 90% of students in Nebraska, will face budget cuts, resulting in larger class sizes, a de-professionalized workforce, and a decline in overall educational quality.
- 2. Exacerbating Inequality:** Public schools are required to accept all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, academic ability, or special needs. Private schools, on the other hand, have selective admissions processes, potentially leaving behind students who are unable to meet certain criteria. This can further entrench disparities in educational opportunities.

- 3. Lack of Accountability and Transparency:** Public schools are held accountable to the government, subject to regulations and oversight to ensure they provide quality education. Private schools, however, have more flexibility and autonomy, raising concerns about accountability. Public dollars going to private institutions does not guarantee the same level of transparency, making it difficult for taxpayers to assess the effectiveness of the money transfer.
- 4. Risk of Segregation:** Public funding of private schools will likely contribute to increased segregation in Nebraska, as has occurred in other states with such programs. If private schools predominantly attract students from certain socio-economic backgrounds, it will lead to a separation of students based on economic status, further perpetuating social divides.
- 5. Diversion of Public Resources for the Few:** Public funds should prioritize investments that benefit the entire community, such as improving infrastructure, healthcare, and social services. Diverting taxpayer money to private schools, which serve a limited number of students, is a misallocation of resources that would otherwise have broader societal benefits.



EMAC: Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC) Chair Nora Lenz testified support of LB1262 which creates the Native American Voting Rights Commission within the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs.

Legislature

LB1402 is this year's version of LB753 and is an attempt to usurp Nebraskans right to vote and decide the issue of using tax dollars to fund private schools. Last year, when lawmakers passed LB753's voucher plan to divert public dollars to pay for private schools, more than 117,000 Nebraskans signed a referendum petition to put the issue on this November's ballot to be decided by voters.

EDUCATION-RELATED PRIORITY BILLS:

In March, a successful filibuster of LB441 slowed debate of the full legislature. The bill sought to criminalize school librarians, educators, and public library workers for providing access to certain books and information. After a failed cloture vote, LB441 was set aside for the year.

At the time of publication, the following bills are on **Final Reading**:



LB43, introduced by Sen. Sanders, would adopt the First Freedom Act and the Personal Privacy Protection Act. *NSEA Position: Support*



LB198, introduced by Sen. McDonnell, would change NPERS provisions relating to returning to work after termination. *NSEA Position: Support*

The following bills are on **Select File**:



LB287, introduced by Sen. Brewer, would make changes to petitions, conflicts of interest, voter registration and voting. *NSEA Position: Monitor*



LB1412, introduced by Sen. Arch, would provide appropriations for operation of government. *NSEA Position: Support*

The following bills are on **General File**:



LB71, introduced by Sen. Sanders, would changes to parental involvement/access to learning materials in schools. *NSEA Position: Support*



LB441, introduced by Sen. Albrecht, would change provisions relating to obscenity. *NSEA Position: Oppose*



LB1417: Tri-Valley President and Hastings Education Association (HEA) President Ben Welsch opposed LB1417 which would combine or outright repeal dozens of boards and commissions.



LB1027, introduced by Sen. Clements, would implement changes to schools not meeting accreditation / approval requirements. *NSEA Position: Monitor*



LB1284, introduced by Sen. Walz, would provide for a statewide computer science education expansion program. *NSEA Position: Support*



LB1306, introduced by Education Committee members, would eliminate the Professional Practices Commission. *NSEA Position: Support*



LB1329, introduced by Sen. Murman, would change provisions of the Career Scholarship Act. *NSEA Position: Support (Oppose section with LB1339)*



LB1402, introduced by Sen. Linehan, would appropriate funds for grants to private scholarship-granting organizations. *NSEA Position: Oppose*

NSEA LEGISLATIVE DINNER

The NSEA Legislative Dinner was held March 12 at the Champions Club in Lincoln. See page 13 for photos of members with the senators who attended the event.

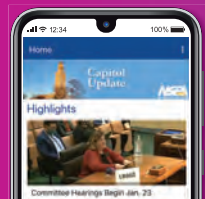
1. Left to right: Sen. Lynne Walz (Dist. 15), LEA member April Jorgensen and Sen. George Dungan (Dist. 26).
2. Omaha Education Association (OEA) President, Kathy Poehling with Sen. Justin Wayne (Dist. 13).
3. Left to right: Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC) Chair Nora Lenz, Sen. Barry DeKay (Dist. 40), OEA member Christina Ellison and Sen. Mike Jacobson (Dist. 42).
4. NEA Director Edward Ventura, NSEA President Jenni Benson and NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte.
5. Sen. Terrell McKinney (Dist. 11) with Columbus Education Association member Natalie Yosten.
6. NSEA members Matt Erb, Morgan Beach, Shari Anderson, Megan Simsic and Amy Broeker.
7. Left to right: Sen. Dave Murman (Dist. 38), Christina Ellison, Nora Lenz and Sen. Danielle Conrad (Dist. 46) and OEA Pres. Poehling.
8. Bellevue Education Association members Amber Nelson and Julie Adams with Sen. John Cavanaugh (Dist. 9).

NSEA supports you by advocating for the needs of students, promoting excellence in education and advancing policies and initiatives that support the success and well-being of educators, students, and communities across the state.

Download the NSEA Capitol Update App!



- Receive alerts and calls-to-action during the legislative session.
- Stay up-to-date on events and education news from the Nebraska Legislature.





CHADRON STATE

Master's Degrees in Education

Master of Education

The Master of Education degree is designed for individuals who have a teaching certificate at either the baccalaureate or master level. The Master of Education will prepare candidates to use current best practices that positively impact PK-12 student learning.

- Business, Marketing, Information Technology Education (Grades 6–12)
- Career & Technical Education (Secondary)
- General Education (Elementary)
- Language Arts (Elementary)
- Mathematics (Elementary & Secondary)
- Physical Education (Elementary & Secondary)
- Reading Specialist (PK–12)
- Social Science (Elementary & Secondary)
- Special Education (Grades K–12)
- Special Education: Early Childhood Special Education (Birth–Kindergarten)



STATE COLLEGE

Master of Arts in Education

The MAE program is tailored to meet the needs of students. Based upon the communication and service core of education, this professional degree program provides an integrated master's degree for students pursuing a variety of career choices. Areas of study include:

- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Educational Administration
- History
- Sciences and Mathematics
- School Counseling

All tracks except the Sciences focus are fully online.

Master of Arts in Teaching

The Master of Arts in Teaching degree is designed for individuals who have a bachelor's degree in a field other than education to complete the requirements for initial teacher certification without pursuing an additional bachelor's degree to complete certification requirements.

- Designed to be completed in two years
- Additional coursework in endorsement area may be required
- Online courses with a semester-long student teaching experience
- Continue to work while pursuing your degree



Succeed with CSC

With our reputation as an educational leader you'll have a solid foundation. As you plan your schedule and progress toward your goals, you will receive feedback and advice from caring faculty who want to see you succeed.



Affordability

We take pride in our affordability. We hear often from satisfied graduates who are amazed they were able to complete their degree at a fraction of the cost of other institutions.



Summer Courses Available

Scan the code to view our summer course offerings. Courses are offered in May, June, and July sessions.

Enroll Today at csc.edu

1-800-CHADRON

graduateadmissions@csc.edu

Chadron State College is an equal opportunity institution. CSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to: Human Resources, Chadron State College, 1000 Main St., Chadron, NE 69337, Telephone: 308-432-6224, Email: hr@csc.edu.

CSC has also designated an individual to coordinate the college's efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Inquiries regarding Title IX may be directed to: Title IX Coordinator, Chadron State College, 1000 Main St. Chadron, NE 69337, Telephone: 308-430-0980, Email: titleixcoordinator@csc.edu.



2024 Spring Delegate Assembly

TENTATIVE ORDER OF BUSINESS
NSEA President Jenni Benson, Lincoln, Presiding
 Regents B-F • Embassy Suites Hotel, Lincoln

All times listed are Central Time.

Friday, April 19: Registration, Vendors and Special Meetings (5 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.)

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. — EMAC, NSEA-Retired, Higher Ed, ESP, and New Delegates Sessions

6:15 p.m. — Audit Committee

7 p.m. — Call to Order

- Pledge of Allegiance
- National Anthem: Kinsey Knorr, NSEA-Aspiring Educators President
- Report of Credentials Committee
- Adoption of Standing/Procedural Rules
- Adoption of Order of Business
- State of the Association Annual Report: Trish Guinan, Executive Director
- Keynote: Mary Kusler, Senior Director, NEA Center for Advocacy and Political Action
- President's Report: Jenni Benson, NSEA President
- Adjournment
- Reception: Regents A

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

6:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. — Breakfast: Embassy Suites Atrium

7:30 a.m. — Elections Committee

8:30 a.m. — Call to Order

- Legislative Update
- REPEAL LB753 Rally at the Nebraska Capitol
- Credentials Committee Report
- Candidates' Remarks (President, Higher Ed At-Large)
- Report and Debate on Proposed Bylaws Amendments
- Voting on Candidates and Bylaws
- Keynote-Scott Phillips, 2024 Nebraska Teacher of the Year
- Horace Mann Awards Luncheon
- Report of the Auditing Review Committee
- Budget Presentation for 2024-2025
- Elections Committee Report (when available)
- Report and Actions on Resolutions
- Committee Reports to the Assembly
- Action on New Business Items
- Action on the Dues Proposal for 2024-2025
- Adjournment

Parliamentarian: Ryan Foor

2024-25 Dues Recommendation

NSEA Active, Certificated Full-Time Staff Dues Summary

The NSEA Budget Committee has recommended a \$5 dues increase for 2024-25. NSEA dues and assessments for the current year and the proposal for next year are summarized below:

	2023-24	2024-25	Change	%
General Fund Dues	\$407	\$412	\$5	1.22%
Ballot Contingency Fund	\$10	\$10	\$0	0%
State PAC	\$15	\$15	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$432	\$437	\$5	1.16%

Dues for Educational Support Professionals

The 2001 Delegate Assembly approved a separate dues structure for Educational Support Professionals (ESP). The ESP dues structure is motivated by an effort to establish equity between the wide range of ESP salaries, while taking into consideration the fact that beginning teachers or teachers in lower-paid school districts pay full NSEA dues. In this model, the ESP member's total base salary, regardless of the hours or number of days worked, establishes the state dues for that member. The percentages are based on the lowest starting teacher salary in the state, which was \$35,200 in 2023-24. The NSEA Board of Directors voted to not increase ESP dues for 2024-25. ESP dues are summarized below:

ESP Dues Tier	NSEA Dues	% of teacher dues
Active ESP (Salary of \$35,200+)	\$432.00	98.9%
Active ESP (\$28,160 to \$35,199)	\$388.80	90%
Active ESP (\$21,120 to \$28,159)	\$302.40	70%
Active ESP (\$14,080 to \$21,119)	\$216.00	50%
Active ESP (\$7,040 to \$14,079)	\$129.60	30%
Active ESP (\$7,039 or less)	\$43.20	10%

State Dues

All amounts listed are for state dues only. NEA dues for 2024-25 have been proposed at no more than \$213, a \$5 increase.

As noted, the 2024-25 dues amount for full-time, active members of NSEA includes a voluntary contribution of \$15 to NSEA's Political Action Fund and \$7.50 for half-time active members and active substitute members. This contribution is refundable upon receipt of a written, individually composed request. A reminder of the opportunity to seek a refund is published in the January issue of the NSEA *Voice*.

NSEA Dues History

Budget Year	Dues	Increase
2024-25	\$437	1.16%
2023-24	\$432	1.41%
2022-23	\$426	1.19%
2021-22	\$421	1.20%
2020-21	\$416	0.73%
2019-20	\$413	1.47%
2018-19	\$407	0.25%
2017-18	\$406	1.75%
2016-17	\$399	3.10%
2015-16	\$387	0.78%
2014-15	\$384	1.05%
2013-14	\$380	1.06%
2012-13	\$376	1.08%

Vote: ✓ **RENAE NOBLE** NSEA PRESIDENT

✓ READY TO SERVE WITH EXPERIENCE, DEDICATION, LEADERSHIP & KNOWLEDGE.

*"Wait.... didn't she just get elected NEA Director?"
Yes! and Thank you for your support! However,
due to circumstances beyond Nebraska's control,
one NEA director position will be eliminated.*

I am still ready and excited to serve our members! I want to work with all members of the NSEA for the best teaching environment. I am ready to take on the fight for the future of public schools in our state. I will serve you, the members of the NSEA!

- ✓ 33 year Teacher & Member of NSEA.
- ✓ NEA Director & Executive Board Member for NSEA
- ✓ NSEA Board of Director for 6 years
- ✓ Panhandle District Board President & Officer positions for 15 years.
- ✓ Local President & Local Leader for over 20 yrs.



Dues for Certificated Staff

The NSEA Board of Directors has recommended the following annual fee structure for Association membership by certificated staff. Delegates to the NSEA Delegate Assembly on April 20 will consider and act on this proposal. For the 2024-25 Association year, the NSEA Board of Directors recommends the dues for certificated classes of NSEA membership as outlined below:

Certificated Class	Dues
Active	\$437.00
Half-Time Active	\$218.50
Active Substitute	\$218.50
Non-Active Sub	\$109.25

2024-25 Proposed Bylaws Revisions

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1

■ Article II: Officers

SECTION 1. The officers of NSEA shall be President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and NEA Director(s) and all NEA Directors for Nebraska and shall constitute the Executive Committee. No person shall hold more than one of these offices simultaneously.

SECTION 2. The term of office of the President, and the Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer shall be three years; provided, however, for the 2024-25 Association year only, the office of Secretary/Treasurer shall be appointed by the NSEA Board of Directors. Such appointment shall not be considered a term of office for purpose of the term limitations provided for herein. The term of office for all such officers shall commence September 1 and no such officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office, and no person shall be elected to the office of the President or Vice President for more than two consecutive terms; provided, however, the term of the office of the President for the term commencing the 2020 2021 NSEA year shall be a four-year term. The term of office of each such officer shall commence on September 1.

SECTION 3. The NSEA year shall be September 1 to August 31.

SECTION 4. Any Active member is eligible to hold NSEA office of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer or NEA Director. No fewer than 90 days prior to the regular Delegate Assembly at which elections shall occur, NSEA shall notify Active members of vacancies to be filled by publishing a notice in NSEA's magazine, The Voice.

Nominations for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and NEA Director must be filed in writing with the NSEA Executive Director no later than February 15 of the year in which the election is to take place. All candidates who file during the nominations window will be provided with the NSEA Elections Guidelines. Any candidate who wishes to have campaign information included in the Delegate Assembly digital packet must submit the information to the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director no fewer than 45 days prior to Delegate Assembly. To have their name placed on the ballot, the candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, or NEA Director must be nominated by February 15.

If a vacancy occurs after February 15, candidates for General Officer positions must be nominated from the floor during the Delegate Assembly to have their names placed on the ballot.

The number of votes cast for each nominee for each office shall be announced to the Delegate Assembly by the Chair of the Elections Committee, and the candidate receiving a majority of votes cast shall be elected. Should no candidate receive a majority vote in the first ballot, a run-off election shall be held immediately between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes.

SECTION 5. The President shall preside at all general meetings of NSEA and the Delegate Assembly and shall serve as Chair of the Board of Directors. The President shall perform the duties which usually devolve upon the chief officer of NSEA and the duties which are prescribed by these Bylaws and the policies of the NSEA Board of Directors. The President shall serve as the first Alternate NEA Director for Nebraska and be an ex officio member of all committees of NSEA.

SECTION 6. The Vice President shall serve as presiding officer in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall serve as the second Alternate NEA Director for Nebraska and be an ex officio member of all committees of NSEA. In the absence of both the President and Vice President, the senior NEA Director shall serve as Chair pro tempore.

SECTION 7. The Secretary/Treasurer shall serve as the Chair of the NSEA Budget Committee. The Secretary/Treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member of all committees of NSEA. In the absence of both the President and Vice President, the Secretary/Treasurer shall serve as Chair pro-tempore.

SECTION 7.8. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall become President and shall assume the duties and authority of that office for the remainder of that term. If a vacancy in the office of Vice President occurs during the first or second year of a term, such vacancy shall be filled by the NSEA Board of Directors, which shall elect a successor to serve until the next meeting of the Delegate Assembly. The Delegate Assembly shall then elect a successor for the remainder of the term. In the event a vacancy occurs during the third year of a term, the NSEA Board of Directors shall elect a successor for the remainder of the term. If a vacancy in the office of Secretary/Treasurer occurs during the first or second year of a term, such vacancy shall be filled by the NSEA Board of Directors, which shall elect a successor to serve until the next meeting of the Delegate Assembly. The Delegate Assembly shall then elect a successor for the remainder of the term. In the event a vacancy occurs during the third year of a term, the NSEA Board of Directors shall elect a successor for the remainder of the term. If a vacancy in the office of NEA Director occurs during the first or second year of a term, the NSEA Board of Directors shall recommend the appointment of an interim NEA Director to the NEA Board of Directors. Such interim Director shall assume the duties until a new NEA Director to complete the unexpired term is elected at the next Delegate Assembly. In the event a vacancy occurs during the third year of a term, the NSEA Board of Directors shall recommend the appointment of an interim Director to the NEA Board of Directors to assume the duties for the remainder of the term.

2024-25 Proposed Bylaws Revisions

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1 Continued

■ Article III: Board of Directors

SECTION 1 The NSEA Board of Directors shall consist of the President; the Vice President; the Secretary/Treasurer; the NEA Director(s) for Nebraska; the at-large representatives of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), the Higher Education Academy, and Education Support Professionals (ESPs); elected representatives of NSEA-Retired and the NSEA Aspiring Educators; and elected representatives of each NSEA district association. The Board shall be apportioned on the basis of one person-one vote. Each NSEA district association shall be entitled to at least one member on the NSEA Board of Directors. Each district association member of the Board must represent the same number of constituents (with variation not to exceed plus or minus 10 percent). The representation ratio of NSEA Board of Directors members to constituents shall be determined by the NSEA Board of Directors.

Remaining text in Article III remains the same.

■ Article VIII: National Education Association

SECTION 2. The NEA Directors for Nebraska shall be elected consistent with the provisions set forth in Article II, Section 4.

Remaining text in Article VIII remains the same.

Proposed Bylaw Rationale

Rationale: Due to over ten years of declining membership, NEA has decided to reduce the number of Director positions for the state of Nebraska to a singular position. The proposed bylaw changes outlined are submitted on behalf of the NSEA Board of Directors to fill the gap that will occur once the NEA Junior Director position is eliminated in September 2024. A previously submitted Governance NBI (#4) at Delegate Assembly 2022 proposed a feasibility study to evaluate the current structure of officers and proposed “[c] hanging the officer structure to a President, Vice President, and Treasurer.” Due to NEA’s elimination of a Director position, now is the perfect time and opportunity to revise the structure of officers and create the Secretary/Treasurer position as proposed at the 2022 Delegate Assembly and studied in the 2023 association year.

Find Article II and Article III on pages 4 and 5 in the **2023-24 Bylaws & Resolutions** booklet or scan the QR code below:



ROYERS FOR NSEA PRESIDENT



“WE ARE LIVING THROUGH A CRITICAL TIME IN OUR PROFESSION. I PROMISE TO BE A STRONG VOICE NOT JUST FOR OUR MEMBERS, BUT FOR THE KIDS IN OUR STATE WHO ARE COUNTING ON US EACH AND EVERY DAY.”

My goals as President:

- Expand opportunities for member involvement and input at the state level.
- Focus on consistently delivering results that will address member needs and improve working conditions and compensation across the state.
- Reverse our membership decline and ensure we remain a strong association for years to come!



Graduate degrees at a

PRICE YOU CAN AFFORD

Wayne State College offers several online programs for additional certification, as well as professional development options for continuing education. Wayne State's education master's degrees are nationally ranked and continually recognized for incredible value, successful graduates, and innovative learning.

The endorsements below can be incorporated into a master's degree.

- **High Ability Education K-12** (endorsement only)
(new cohort starts June 3, 2024)
- **Early Childhood Education PK-3**
(must be Elementary Education certified)
- **English as a Second Language (ESL) PK-12**
- **Information Technology PK-12**
- **Reading Specialist PK-12**
- **School Administration PK-8, 7-12, PK-12**
- **Special Education K-6, 7-12, K-12**
- **Special Education Supervisor**
(must be SPD certified)



No. 3 in the U.S.

Most Affordable Online Master's Programs, 2023



No. 4 in the U.S.

Best Master's in Education Administration, 2023



A Top 50 School in the U.S.

A Top 50 School in the U.S. for a Curriculum & Instruction Master's Degree, 2023

Apply today!



Visit www.wsc.edu/mse to learn more about our MSE programs.

402-375-7389

jemorga1@wsc.edu

For professional development options, visit www.wsc.edu/continuing-education

A proud member of the Nebraska State College System • Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) since 1917, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE).

One degree can make a difference.



Our programs are affordable, convenient, and accredited.

ONLINE CLASSES START SUMMER AND FALL 2024

Master of Science in Education: School Administration (Online)

The online master's degree in school administration is designed to prepare you for a career in an administrative position, such as principal, director, department head, or supervisor, and may include an extra focus area in Athletic Administration or Special Education Supervision. If you already have an MSE, you may be eligible to add this as an endorsement to your existing degree.

Master of Science in Education: Special Education (Online)

The master's degree in special education is designed to help professionals and districts meet the needs of students with exceptionalities and their families. This program also offers options for those with a bachelor's degree to earn certification or add an endorsement to their existing degree.

Other Online MSE Options:

We offer several fully online emphasis areas in our Curriculum and Instruction-Instructional Leadership program. They include Business Education, Elementary Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Skilled and Technical Sciences Education, Mathematics Education, Music Education, and Social Science Education.

MSE Community of Learning (hybrid, one Saturday per month and online)

Take your teaching to the next level through this unique, community-focused program. Spend five Saturdays per semester collaborating and learning with others while driving your own professional development to directly impact your students.

Two-year cohorts begin this fall in South Sioux City, Norfolk, and Fremont. For information: www.wsc.edu/community.

We offer a variety of graduate, content-specific courses that will qualify you to teach dual credit. Please contact us for more information.

Apply today!



Visit www.wsc.edu/mse to learn more about our MSE programs.



402-375-7389



jemorga1@wsc.edu



Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development



Cultivating Excellence: Nebraska's Vision for Elevating Educator Effectiveness

Imagine a future where every classroom in Nebraska is a place of reflection and growth, where educators are not just teachers but leaders of potential in students and themselves. This is the vision that the SEED (Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development) team is planting across the state, aiming to nurture the educational landscape so every Nebraska student can flourish under the guidance of highly effective educators.

The SEED work in Nebraska focuses on building a foundation for educator effectiveness, promoting growth and development systems from the classroom to leadership, and ensuring coherence with other initiatives in the state. The SEED team has specific objectives to achieve this mission.

The first objective is establishing a statewide expectation of beliefs and values for educator effectiveness, as defined within the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS). This includes building awareness and understanding of the standards, calibrating individual and organizational beliefs about student achievement, and ensuring that goals are aligned with educator effectiveness standards.

The second objective is to advance and sustain purposeful educator support and development across Nebraska by promoting collaboration, leveraging best practices, and

maximizing educator effectiveness data for decision-making. This involves promoting a cooperative, inquiry-driven method, involving key stakeholders, and integrating proven best practices aligned with the standards of effective educators within districts.

The third objective is to champion statewide coherence and educator support by ensuring that critical elements of educator effectiveness are embedded in organizational decision-making, improvement processes, and policy development. This includes incorporating educator effectiveness data into decision-making, fostering connections and collaboration in leadership development, and launching a comprehensive statewide framework for support and development.

The SEED team's efforts aim to create a supportive environment for educators, foster collaboration, and ultimately ensure that Nebraska students benefit from effective educators in their classrooms. The emphasis on partnerships, collaboration, and the importance of effective teachers reflects a hopeful tone for elevating the educators' voice in the state.



Resources

- You can find a link to the Educator Effectiveness site at www.education.ne.gov/educatoreffectiveness
- The standards can be found at www.bit.ly/NDE-TPPS



About the authors: This article was coauthored by Dr. Julie Downing and Ryan Ricenbaw. Dr. Downing is an Educator Effectiveness Specialist with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). Ricenbaw is a Leadership and Learning Network Specialist with NDE.

School Retirement Planning Seminars

If you are nearing retirement age, it makes good sense to start considering your retirement benefit options.

To learn about those options, staff from the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems office will offer seminars throughout the spring.

Educators can choose to attend an in-person seminar at one of nine locations across the state or join a virtual webinar.

The seminars are for school plan members and their spouses, age 50 and over. Each eligible employee is entitled to receive leave with pay to attend up to two retirement planning programs (one per fiscal year). The seminars are scheduled at locations across the state. Members must enroll in advance to attend at npers.ne.gov.



1/2 Day Webinars

April 4
April 5
April 25
April 26
May 25
June 6
June 7

In-Person Seminars (Location/Dates)
LA VISTA: April 12, April 13, May 23, May 24
LINCOLN: May 17, May 18
O'NEILL: April 18
NORFOLK: April 19
GRAND ISLAND: May 9



Apply today for a Summer Food Service Grant

Children need good food all year long, even when they are not in school. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides healthy meals to children, ages one to 18, free of charge.

Schools, tribal and local governments, community organizations and private nonprofits can apply to be sponsors to operate meal sites in low-income areas, or in locations that serve a group of mostly low-income children or operate a summer camp with a high proportion of low-income participants.

SFSP sites are needed statewide, especially in underserved communities located in higher-need areas of the following counties: Brown, Franklin, Grant, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Logan, McPherson, Red Willow, Rock, Sheridan, and Sioux.

NDE has grant funds available to assist new and existing SFSP sponsors with expenses for expanding and/or initiating SFSP services. Each applicant may apply for a maximum of \$15,000 per year. The deadline to apply for a grant is March 29, 2024.

To verify your eligibility, contact the NDE at 402-471-2488 (Lincoln) or 1-800-731-2233 (outside of Lincoln).

Access the online grant application at www.education.ne.gov/ns/sfsp/news/ or scan the QR Code in the sandwich above.

Nominations Now Open for 2025 Teacher of the Year

If you are open to challenges—and the rewards that come with those challenges—consider applying to become Nebraska's next Teacher of the Year.

The 2025 recipient will become a spokesperson for education and the teaching profession, will travel the state and country, and be continually recognized for excellence. Since 1972, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year program has recognized outstanding Nebraska certified teachers who work in a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 classroom setting, and who plan to continue in an active teacher status in a state-approved or accredited school.

Application forms for the 2025 Nebraska Teacher of the Year are now available through your school administration or at www.education.ne.gov/toy. Teachers may nominate a colleague for the honor or self-nominate.

The application seeks information on educational background and

personal development, community involvement, philosophy of teaching and learning, and commentary on the teaching profession. A panel will review applications, and up to five finalists will be selected for interviews. Once selected, the 2025 Teacher of the Year will maintain a regular teaching schedule while also participating in a year of professional learning through the National Teacher of the Year Program.

The NSEA, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska Association of School Boards, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, Data Recognition Corporation, and the State Board of Education present cash awards or grants to the Teacher of the Year and other finalists.

Questions should be directed to NDE Office of Public Information and Communications Administrator David Jespersen at (402) 471-4537 or david.jespersen@nebraska.gov.



Choose Your Own Adventure

Classes all summer long starting in May.



QUESTIONS?
enrollment@doane.edu
READY? SCAN THE QR



DOANE
UNIVERSITY



TRISH GUINAN

Message from the Executive Director

Fremont has a long-term vision for its future. In 2021, the community passed a \$123 million bond to rebuild three elementary schools, update the high school and build a brand-new Career Technical Center for dual credit technical training. The bond has funded a total of nine projects, many of which are on track to be completed before the start of the 2024-25 school year.

When members of a community invest in their public schools, they are investing in the future of their community. It also signifies support for the dedicated educators who work within them. It means that voters recognize the importance of investing in its children, its infrastructure, and its long-term economic prosperity.

The Heart Of Our Communities

Any school bond initiative involves collaboration and consensus-building within the community. It requires residents to come together, regardless of their differences, to support a common cause—education.

When it came time to raise community support for the bond initiative in my community of Fremont, members of the Fremont Education Association (FEA), school district officials, community leaders and parents alike all banded together to get the vote out.

Fremont Public Schools truly are the heart of our community, so it was no surprise to hear that FEA Treasurer/Membership Chair Becky Turner will be featured in an upcoming NSEA campaign called the “Heart of Our Communities.”

The ads—featuring educators like Becky—will hit the airwaves this spring highlighting the ways our public schools contribute to the social, cultural, economic and vitality of “the good life.”

The Good Life

Strong public schools are a cornerstone of “the good life” by attracting and retaining young families in the state. This is especially true of our rural communities. Public schools in rural Nebraska are a source of generational pride and play a role in preserving local culture and values.

In some rural areas, public schools serve as important hubs for health and social services including mental health services, nutritional programs and early child education services that are essential for the well-being of students and their families.

Regardless of zip code, public schools ensure that all children, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status, have access to quality education and the opportunity for success.

Local Control

In this legislative session, local control has been attacked in many forms. LB1316, introduced by Sen. Linehan, eliminates base growth percentage for school districts under the School District Property Tax Limitation Act. Imposing revenue caps on public schools limits the ability of public school districts to invest in crucial resources, including qualified teachers and important student programs.

LB878, introduced by Sen. Murman, would limit schools seeking voter approval for bonds only during statewide general elections in even-numbered years. This would needlessly delay voters the right to invest in their public schools as need arises.

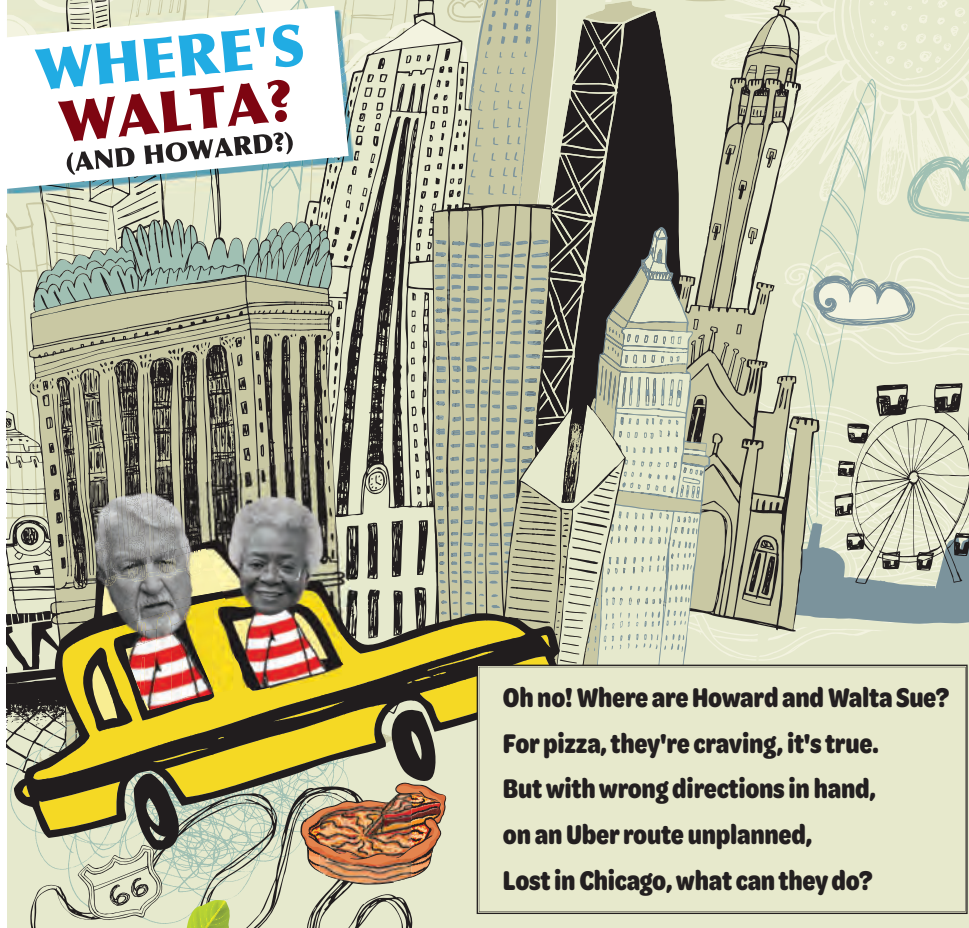
Undermining local control is disrespectful to voters and denies Nebraskans the right to shape the policies and priorities that directly impact their lives and communities.

NSEA will continue to fight to protect local control and to ensure strong public schools for every child because Nebraska public schools truly are the heart of our communities.

“
When members of a community invest in their public schools, they are investing in the future of their community. It also signifies support for the dedicated educators who work within them.

”

Chicago Style Deep Dish Detour



In March, seven NSEA-Retired members traveled to Chicago for the 2024 NEA-Retired Conference.

The conference provided a platform for NSEA-Retired members to engage in professional learning, networking, and skill development aimed at enhancing their leadership capacities.

Given the political challenges of private school vouchers playing out in Nebraska, attendees embraced the opportunity to exchange ideas, strategies, and experiences that could strengthen their role in the fight to keep public dollars for public schools. Retirees, equipped with decades of experience and a passion for education, are a necessary and key element in shaping the future of public education.

Deep Dish Detour

Given that Chicago played host to the NSEA retirees, Chicago-style deep dish pizza was also on the agenda. One problem: NSEA President John Heineman unknowingly sent attendees Walta Sue Dodd and Howard Gaffney in a cab across the city to the wrong pizza joint. Sitting around a table at Giordano's sans two members, someone had to ask the question: Where's Walta? Not to worry, the hour plus long detour around Chicago was not in vain. Howard and Walta Sue arrived just as the piping hot deep dish pizza arrived to the table.



Last chance to register to attend the SPRING CONFERENCE

Register today to attend the NSEA-Retired Spring Conference on April 18! This year NSEA-Retired members will gather at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park, located near Ashland.

The park is set along the Platte River and provides stunning views of the surrounding landscape. The park will host members and invited guest speakers. See a tentative agenda for the conference below.

The event is free for all members and \$10 for guests.

Register at nsea.org/retired under Calendars, Events & Registrations.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Morning

- 8:30: Registration, Coffee & Rolls, Silent Auction
- 9:00: Welcome & Keynote Speaker Sara Skretta, UNL
- 10:15: Breakout Session # 1
- 11:15: Breakout Session # 2

Afternoon

- 12:15: Lunch
- 1:15: Business Meeting & Legislative Update
- 2:15: Spotlight on Nebraska

Member Benefits



Turn to the NSEA Children's Fund

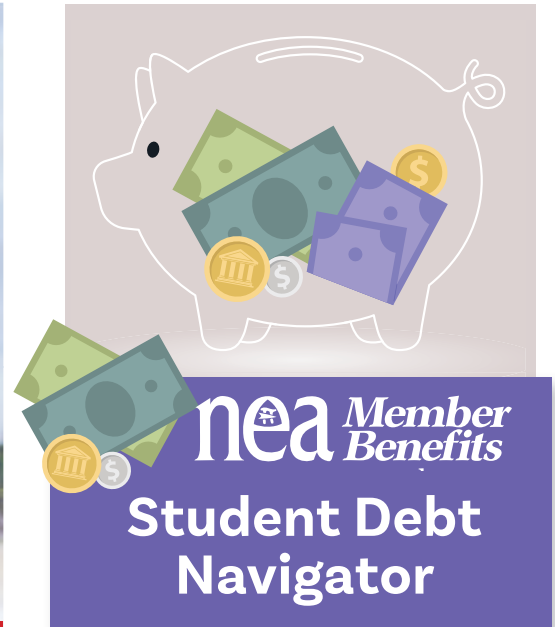
Every NSEA member knows of children in heartbreaking conditions. Whether the child is in need of season-appropriate clothing, new eyeglasses or a good meal, the Children's Fund is here to help. Educators often give of their own cash to help, knowing that they can't help every child. That's why NSEA created the Children's Fund in 1994. As an NSEA member, you can use the Children's Fund, and you'll find it quite simple: just call NSEA. No red tape, no forms needed.

Contributions are tax deductible — and it's important to note that

every penny contributed goes to help children. NSEA picks up the administrative expenses.

The generosity of Children's Fund donors has helped to pay for glasses, warm clothing, medical and dental needs of children; provide assistance to a family whose home and belongings were destroyed by fire; and more.

Rain or shine, turn to the NSEA Children's Fund for help. A call to Karen Hunt at the NSEA (800-742-0047) is usually all that is needed. For more information, visit nsea.org/childrensfund.



In partnership with



1. NEA-vetted student loan forgiveness tool for teachers provides trusted sources that give you legitimate options.
2. Calculate how much money you can save through this tool that's easy to use on your desktop or mobile device.
3. As an NEA member, you can run your numbers at no cost to see if you qualify for student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.
4. If you need additional help, you can access student loan forgiveness experts via telephone or chat.
5. Receive a complete list of relevant debt-relief programs based on your situation.
6. Prevent errors and improve your odds of qualifying for student loan forgiveness programs by e-filing your paperwork.

To learn more about NEA Student Debt Navigator visit www.neamb.com.

**MORE FACE TIME.
LESS WAIT TIME.**

Your EHA health benefits give you access to virtual visits with doctors and specialists.

So you can get the care you need — wherever you are, whenever you need it.

Visit NebraskaBlue.com/EHAPop to connect with a coach and schedule a screening today.

BlueCross BlueShield Nebraska

Health benefits for EHA are provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

In Memory

We recognize these members whom we've lost recently.

James W. Eisenhardt, 75, Omaha

Mary I. O'Shea, 95, Lincoln

Verneal J. Dodge, 91, Beatrice

Carol J. Lundberg, 75, Omaha

Mailed By: **The Nebraska State Education Association**
605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742



Ag Sack Lunch Program



The 14th Annual Ag Sack Lunch program, designed to increase awareness of the importance of agriculture in Nebraska to fourth-grade students and their families, heads into the spring semester offering both in-person and virtual presentations to schools across the state.

The in-person version of the program is offered to classes visiting the State Capitol Building in Lincoln as part of their curriculum. Virtual presentations are available for schools which, for a variety of reasons including distance from Lincoln, makes in-person State Capitol visits unfeasible.

"The in-person version of the program is currently full, but we are excited to continue to offer the presentation virtually," said Ginger Jelinek, program coordinator. "The virtual presentations offer a fun, educational and interactive presentation about Nebraska Agriculture. The students will also receive a deck of cards that contain agriculture facts and can be used to play fun card games like "Crazy Soybeans" and "Old Corn Maid," Jelinek said.

Teachers can request a virtual presentation or ask to be placed on the waiting list for the in-person presentations, by emailing Jelinek at ginger@gap-consulting.org.

All sessions are led by Ag Ambassadors, who are students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Ag Sciences and Natural Resources.

Teachers who have had their classes participate in the program, both in-person and virtual, say the presentations are very informative, and their students learned a great deal about the importance of agriculture in the state.

The Ag Sack Lunch Program is sponsored by the Nebraska Corn Board; the Nebraska Soybean Board; the Nebraska Pork Producers Association; Nebraska Beef Council; Midwest Dairy; Nebraska Poultry Industries; and Nebraska Wheat Board. For more information, call Jelinek at (402) 525-0663.

What to Do if You Receive a RIF Notice: Call NSEA.

Notification Deadline: April 15

APRIL

15

It happens every year: Some K-12 Nebraska teachers receive Reduction in Force (RIF) notices informing them that their teaching contract may not be renewed

for the coming year. The statutory deadline for school districts to hand out RIF notices is April 15.

The best way to deal with a RIF notice is to be prepared. The moment you receive a RIF notice, a countdown begins. To preserve your rights when facing a RIF you must always request a hearing. The hearing must be requested within seven days of receiving the RIF notice (five days for community college faculty). While your situation may never reach an actual hearing, immediately calling NSEA will give you and NSEA's Advocacy department time to determine what steps are in your best interest.

Email a copy of the notice to your NSEA Organizational Specialist. Once a copy of the RIF notice is received at NSEA headquarters, members will be encouraged to request a hearing to preserve their rights.

If you have questions concerning the RIF process, contact your NSEA Organizational Specialist or Isau Metes by calling 1-800-742-0047.