

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ February 2014



A Quick Trip Down the **RIGHT PATH**

Plainview Certification Election Done in Record Time.



**ARE YOU READY FOR
READ ACROSS AMERICA?**



**NOT ALL BULLIES
WEAR TENNIS SHOES!**

Upcoming Assignments

Serve Your Colleagues February 15

■ **What:** Can your colleagues and co-workers count on you to serve in a leadership position?

■ **Details:** Three dozen vacancies exist on NSEA regional and state boards. File for election to one of those boards on the NSEA website at:

nsea.org

Read Across America March 3

■ **What:** No one character has encouraged more reading than Dr. Seuss. NEA's Read Across America celebrates reading and all things Seuss!

■ **Details:** Plan your school's Read Across America celebration by starting at the official website at: readacrossamerica.org

NSEA Elections March 19

■ **What:** If you've filed for office (see Feb. 15, above), you know that ALL members in good standing are eligible to vote in this election. Online balloting opens on March 19 at 12:01 a.m. Voting ends at midnight on April 2.

■ **Details:** You will be notified via e-mail or postcard of balloting details.

Childrens' Fund: Good Deeds Since 1994

If There is a Child in Need, the NSEA Fund Can Help

In early December, metro-area news outlets reported on an elementary-aged child who missed his school bus and then walked the three miles to school. It was 9 degrees outside at the time, the boy had no winter coat, and he was treated for hypothermia once he arrived at school.

Every teacher knows a child facing the same dilemma: the child wants to learn, but cannot see the front of the room because of a lack of eye glasses; must walk to school without proper winter clothing; needs school supplies or other necessities.

That's where the NSEA Children's Fund works.

Teachers often use their own dollars to help, knowing they can't help every child. For that reason,

NSEA created the Children's Fund, and continues to work to raise money.

Since 1994, donations to the Children's Fund have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to help children

in need. In the past two years alone, the Children's Fund has provided nearly \$100,000 in aid.

Contributions to the Children's Fund come from teachers, businesses and fundraisers across — and it's important to note that every penny contributed goes to help children.

For funding to help a student, there is no red tape, no form to fill out. Simply contact the NSEA at 1-800-742-0047 and ask

Help the Fund



The NSEA Children's Fund is financed mainly through donations. The Papillion-LaVista Education Association's Jeans Day event that raised \$6,572 for the Children's Fund. Other notable recent gifts include the Bellevue Education Association's Jeans Day raised \$5,786.

- The Platte Valley Retired Education Association provided a \$1,000 gift.
 - The Wisner-Pilger Education Association gave \$200.
 - The Plainview Professional Educators Association jeans day netted \$225.
 - Educational Service Unit No. 1 (Wakefield) Association gave \$100.
 - The Umo^{ho} Nation staff gave \$850.
 - The NSEA staff drive netted \$945.
- Send tax deductible gifts to the NSEA Children's Fund, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742.

for Sally Bodtke. Or e-mail her at: sally.bodtke@nsea.org

Cover Story:

The Plainview Professional Education Association, along with 10 other local associations, have held certification elections recently. Learn about the benefits of certifications elections through Plainview's experience on

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Great Public Schools For Every Child

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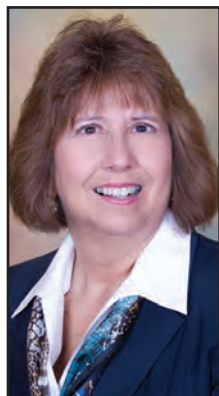
Payment of annual NSEA dues entitles Nebraska educators to receive The Voice. Cost of producing 10 issues of The Voice each year is \$3.41 per member.

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Cited for excellence each year by the State Education Editors, including these 2013 awards: Best Magazine, Best News Story, Best Feature Story, Best Photography and Best Editorial Design.



A Week was Never Enough!



**NEA President
Nancy Fulton**

“
I would
transform my
classroom into
a Seuss-themed
setting and
invite parents,
school officials,
dignitaries (and
anyone else I
could coerce!)
to come and
read to my
young charges.

”

*You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose...*

*Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So... get on your way.*

Sound familiar? Of course it does! Just about every adult knows these lines from the creative genius of Theodore Seuss Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss. These lines from *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* are often recited by commencement speakers, serving as sound advice to newly-minted graduates.

Like that crazy old Cat-in-the-Hat, these words never get old, do they?

Sometimes, rather than moving us into the future, a favored “Seussism” will pull us out of our fast-paced lifestyle and take us back to our memory of school. I favor these lines, from the same book:

*Will you succeed?
Yes, you will indeed!
Ninety-eight and three-quarters percent guaranteed.*

Laughs and Challenges

Dr. Seuss published his first children’s book in 1937. Generations have grown up reading *Green Eggs and Ham*, *The Cat in the Hat* or *Hop on Pop*.

Maybe you have read some of the other dozens of Dr. Seuss books to your children and grandchildren. Perhaps you use them in your classroom, as I did. Dr. Seuss easily catches the imagination of students through his wacky approach to writing.

“Children,” Dr. Seuss once explained, “want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.”

Dr. Seuss, though, was not afraid to face controversial issues. His books look at a variety of social and political issues such as the environment, racial equality, consumerism – even war. He also wrote about positive character traits like friendship and loyalty. Consider this from *Horton Hears a Who!*:

A person’s a person no matter how small.

*Or this thought from Horton Hatches the Egg:
I meant what I said, and I said what I meant.
An elephant’s faithful, one hundred percent.*

Seuss understood the problems of illiteracy. His lasting legacy is to encourage literacy.

A Week is Not Enough!

NEA also knows the problems of illiteracy, and first celebrated Read Across America 17 years ago. The event motivates children to read, and opens each year on, or near, the March 2 birthday of Dr. Seuss. Typically, parents, dignitaries, policymakers and other community members visit classrooms during the weeklong celebration, to demonstrate their love of reading and the importance of literacy.

That was never the case, however, in Mrs. Fulton’s third grade room. A week was never enough!

I’m a huge Seuss fan. I appreciated his writing and illustrations so much that my Read Across America observance often lasted through March. I would transform my classroom into a Seuss-themed setting and invite parents, school officials, dignitaries (and anyone else I could coerce!) to come and read to my young charges.

The children loved the visits and gained an appreciation for reading. From those adults who visited, they learned a valuable lesson:

*You’re never too old,
Too wacky, too wild;
To pick up a book,
And read to a child.*

NEA’s Read Across America is fast approaching (find details on Page 5). I challenge you to share your love of reading, to demonstrate the importance of literacy by reading a book to, or with, a child of any age throughout the coming weeks and months.

*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It’s not.*

Or, as I might suggest:
*So join someone in March,
In your own special way,
And make this your own
Read to Kids Day!*



Finding Nebraska’s Great Public Schools (GPS)

NEA members from around the state appear or are mentioned in this issue. Look for:

Allen	Page 7
Arlington	Page 7
Auburn	Page 16
Bloomfield	Page 7
Bellevue	Pages 2, 5, 10, 16
Columbus	Page 21

Emerson-Hubbard	Page 7
ESU No. 1 (Wakefield)	Page 2
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Ponca	Page 7
Raymond Central	Page 16
Umo’ho’ Nation	Page 2
Wilber-Clatonia	Page 10
Wisner-Pilger	Page 2

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**Mobile banking requires phone with internet capabilities. A fee may be charged by the mobile phone carrier for text messages or internet service.

¹ To receive the \$50 bonus, member must establish a direct deposit of their entire paycheck. The first direct deposit must be posted to the account by 2/28/2014. ² To receive the \$25 bonus, member must enroll in e-Statements through Online Banking, and still be enrolled, as of 2/28/2014. ³ To receive the \$25 bonus, member must request, receive and use a new First Nebraska Educators Debit Card for at least 10 point of sale purchases posted by 2/28/2014. ⁴ Overdraft Protection Line of Credit is subject to credit approval. Each earned bonus will be credited to the checking account by 3/15/2014. Limit of one combined bonus per mailing address. The total combined bonus will not exceed \$100. Checking accounts with a \$0 balance, overdrawn or closed as of 2/28/2014 are not eligible and will not be paid any bonus. Offers do not apply to second or multiple checking accounts.



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Have a Seussian Day!

Read Across America Observance Set for March 3

The 17th observance of NEA's Read Across America — celebrating reading on the birthday of Dr. Seuss! — is just around the corner. Are you ready to celebrate in style?

NEA's Read Across America is a reading motivation program that asks every child in every community to celebrate the love of reading. The program also supports NEA members, parents, caregivers, and children with the resources and activities they need to keep reading fun throughout the year.

The date for this year's event is Monday, March 3.

In many places, the Seussian event opens a full week of reading events and activities! In order to help your event be a grand success, the team at NEA has put together a package of items and ideas online to help you celebrate. For instance:

■ **Special discounts:** Check out the online Seuss store, offered through

SmileMakers. There you will find all you need for your celebration including more than 100 Dr. Seuss products, reading awards, pencils, decorations, and so much more! Use the promotion code NEAMB to get 20 percent OFF, no minimum order required. Also enjoy free shipping with your order of \$25 or more.

■ **Get the latest info:** Go to the website to find a wide variety of information, including how to create a reading event, activity ideas, downloadable information for parents, as well as the pledge to participate this year! Items and materials are updated frequently, so please check back often.

■ **Find the poster!** Download and print the 2014 Read Across America Day Poster from the NEA Read Across America website.

For more details, visit the website at:

nea.org/readacross



NEA Has You Covered

Educator Liability Plan Purchased on Your Behalf

Every member of NSEA is covered by the Educator's Employment Liability (EEL) Insurance policy purchased by the National Education Association.

In general, the EEL policy provides coverage for members arising out of their educational employment activities. Those activities are generally defined as duties performed pursuant to the express or implied terms of their employment or at the express request of the member's supervisor acting within the supervisor's school employment.

In addition to defending civil matters, the EEL insurance provides reimbursement for bail bonds in employment-related criminal matters and reimbursement for personal property damages caused by an assault at school or while performing school duties.

Further, the EEL insurance provides reimbursement in criminal matters arising out of educational employment activities if the member is found not guilty.

The specific terms and coverage provided by the EEL insurance policy are governed by the insurance company.

For additional information, contact your NSEA Organizational Specialist, who will be happy to provide you with additional details. Reach your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

Who Might Win the 2013 Lyenko?

Education historian and policy analyst Diane Ravitch is well-known for her writings, her criticism of punitive accountability, and her service as an appointee of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

Today, her popular blog chronicles trends and events in education.

Recently, former NSEA President Phil Kaldahl (1974-75) wrote Ravitch suggesting she create an award for the person who best exemplifies the failed ideas of Trofim Lyenko, a Soviet biologist and agronomist whose ideas about agriculture were wrong, but made compulsory. Kaldahl wrote:

A challenge to readers of your blog:

Find an organization or a department or college of education that would develop the criteria for Lyenko Awards, that would investigate those worthy of the Lyenko Awards, and that would grant Lyenko Awards to deserving persons with proper ceremony and publicly. Recipients shall forever be known as Lyenkoites, the followers of Lyenkoism.

The awards will remind everyone of Soviet director of genetics for agriculture Trofim Lyenko's use of centralized political power to implement unscientific genetics using pseudoscience.

Lyenko rejected evidence about genes and plant hormones but accepted false theories of genetics which he required researchers and agriculture leaders to follow.

Lyenko put Soviet agriculture behind for a generation.

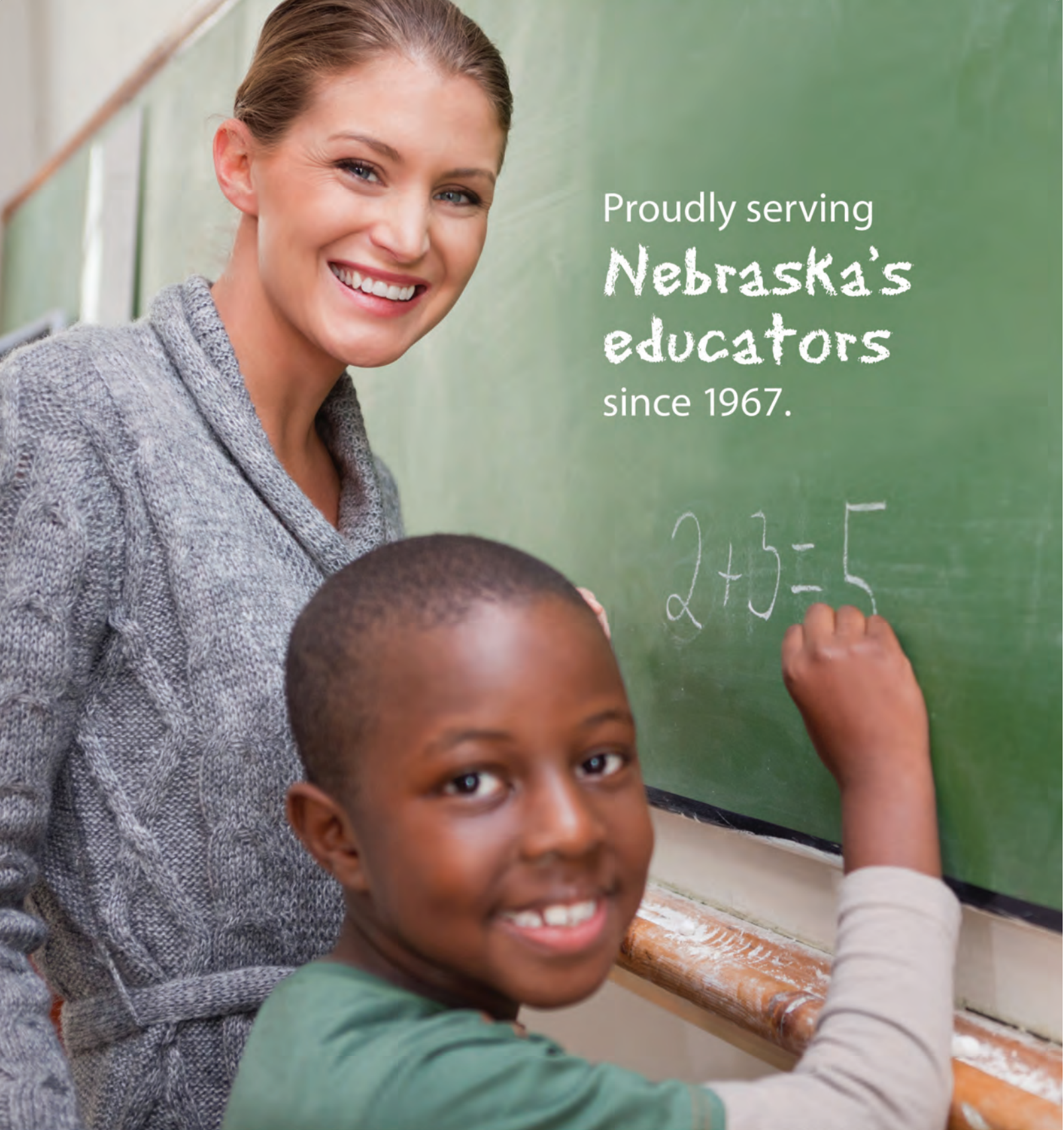
Centralized political power continues to implement No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, Common Core, and inBloom. Untested ideology with bribes and punishments requires mis-education in the name of pseudoscience.

More than one person should receive the Lyenko Awards. Arne Duncan's actions have mirrored those of Trofim Lyenko. After an Award Ceremony, he would be called Lyenkoite Arnie Duncan.

Lyenko Awards would help stop American education from regressing further. Do not let American education, like Soviet agriculture, be put behind for a generation.

*Phil Kaldahl, Retired Teacher
Bellevue, Nebraska*

The idea was posted to the Ravitch blog and drew dozens of nominees, from Michelle Rhee to Arne Duncan and Bill Gates. The Kansas State Board of Education was nominated, as were MSNBC and the Koch Brothers.



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Post-election visit: NSEA Organizational Specialist Duane Obermier, left, discusses the Plainview Professional Education Association's successful certification election with members Chad Schumacher, Michelle Bearinger and Kevin Janata.

Quick Trip on the Right Path

Plainview One of Nine Locals to Hold Successful Certification Elections

Letter of Recognition a Thing of the Past

It didn't take much to convince Chad Schumacher that a certification election was the right path for members of the Plainview Professional Education Association.

Once they heard the arguments at an early morning meeting, the more than two dozen members of the PPEA bargaining unit readily agreed with Schumacher, their association president, that a certification election made sense.

Seven weeks later – record time, according to NSEA officials – PPEA members had signed off on a certification election, held the election and had their votes tallied. Bargaining unit members voted 24-0 in favor of certification. The Nebraska Commission of Industrial Relations certified the election results on Nov. 26.

Certification means that, forever more, the PPEA will represent all district “teachers, librarians, counselors and technology facilitators” in the bargaining process.

The certification vote will also ease the start of negotiations each year. No longer will the PPEA need to submit a formal letter of request to the Board of Education seeking recognition as the association's official bargaining agent.

Certification grants the recognition in perpetuity.

“It is the best thing you can do as you prepare for negotiations. You don't have to ask for recognition again, ever,” Schumacher said.

It also helps out the Plainview Board of Education. The board will no longer see the PPEA request for recognition on its agenda.

Schumacher said certification also gives PPEA members stronger standing in the negotiations process.

“This sets us up as an equal; we don't have to feel like we're begging to be recognized,” said Schumacher.

10 More Wins!

These 10 local associations have conducted successful certification elections over the past nine months. A successful election forever removes the statutory requirement that a local association must request formal recognition from the Board of Education as the official bargaining agent for the district's educators:

Local Assn.	Vote Tally
Fort Calhoun	33-0
Bridgeport	32-2
Allen	13-0
Pierce	38-0
Hartington	25-0
Plainview	24-0
Bloomfield	17-0
Emerson-Hubbard	19-0
Ponca	24-0
Arlington.....	35-0

One of 10

Plainview was one of 10 NSEA-affiliated local associations to certify in the past nine months. Members at Fort Calhoun voted to certify in May 2013; nine other locals held elections last

fall and were certified by the end of 2013 (see chart).

Two more local associations were conducting elections in late January, and another pair were beginning the certification process, said NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan.

Each of those locals have capable, knowledgeable leaders and negotiators in place, she said.

“I give a great deal of credit to these local associations for taking this effort into their own hands,” she said. “It’s really rewarding to see the work that they do.”

The 10 recent elections brought to 16 the number of local associations that have certified since the Legislature passed LB397 in 2011.

LB397 rewrote collective state bargaining statutes, but at one harrowing point in the lawmaking process, proposed amendments would have eliminated collective bargaining for Nebraska teachers. Facing pressure from NSEA and others, however, lawmakers stepped back. Rather than eliminate bargaining, lawmakers placed a rigid negotiations calendar into state statute. Included in that calendar was a provision that requires the local association to submit a written request to the school board, asking for recognition as the bargaining agent for educators.

“LB397 makes it clear that formal board action on these requests is required,” said NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan.

A Measure of Security

That formal request can be forever pre-empted, however, through the certification election process. A successful certification election guarantees that a local association will have no hurdles to clear before the Nov. 1 start date for bargaining set forth in LB397.

Because LB397’s calendar provides a very short, three-month window for bargaining, it is imperative that school board recognition of the bargaining unit is achieved before Nov. 1 each year.

“We cannot run the risk of coming up to Nov. 1, the start date for negotiations, with even a single local association without that recognition,” said Guinan.

Besides elimination of a burdensome requirement, the certification election provides a measure of security.

“There are countless issues that could disrupt the bargaining process,” she said.

Association leaders and negotiators at the local level come and go. Superintendents change. School board elections can move a board from friendly to not-so-friendly.

“There is no doubt that the NSEA-affiliated local association is going to do the bargaining. Superintendents understand that, if not the NSEA affiliate, who would they bargain with?” said Guinan. “The certification election just takes this cumbersome step in the bargaining process off the table.”

Never Faster

Schumacher was at an NSEA regional meeting before school opened last summer when NSEA Organizational Specialist Duane Obermier shared details about certifica-

An Appreciation of Good Work

NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan visits in person with members of local associations that seek to hold a certification election.

At her visits, she explains the process and the benefits of the process.

At a recent meeting, Guinan said she spent much of the discussion on LB397 and how close the Legislature came to eliminating collective bargaining in Nebraska.

The members at that local connected with her explanation, and recalled what they saw on the news when bargaining was taken away in Wisconsin a few years ago.

NSEA was instrumental in turning legislators away from elimination of bargaining.

“Two members came up and spoke to me after my presentation to thank me and to say that they really appreciate understanding what their dues are paying for,” she said.

tion elections. A local leader from a neighboring school told Schumacher that “certification is a no-brainer. It makes so much sense.”

Schumacher said he spoke with negotiator Dean Boyer and PPEA Treasurer Karen Foster. Both liked the idea, and they pitched the idea to members.

Soon, Guinan was in Plainview to provide a more detailed explanation of the process to all members. The process starts with all bargaining unit members given the opportunity to sign authorization forms. The forms are not an indication of support or opposition to certification, but rather support for the election process.

Schumacher said most of those present signed the forms the day Guinan was there. By the end of the week, every member of the bargaining unit, including those few who are not association members, had signed the forms. By October 1, NSEA had filed a request for election with the Commission of Industrial Relations, which oversees the certification process.

“That’s how quick they were to sign up, how willing they were to do it,” he said.

Different Challenges

The hardest part of the entire process, joked Schumacher, may have been “getting up for that early morning meeting.”

Said Guinan: “No one has done it faster than Chad and the leaders at Plainview. I was impressed that they turned in 100 percent of the bargaining unit, including members and the few non-members on staff.”

Obermier was pleased with the speed at which Plainview and other local associations dealt with the process.

“In each case, after meeting with Trish (Guinan), the local leaders took charge,” said Obermier. “That was followed with more work by Trish and the NSEA law office. The local leaders, Trish and the NSEA attorneys deserve all the credit.”

Schumacher realizes that larger schools may have different challenges than did Plainview.

“It may not be quite that easy in a larger school, but our members here know that the Association would not do anything to harm anyone else,” he said.

Schumacher and his members at Plainview know that the negotiations process will forever be a bit easier.

“We’ll just have to go in and say ‘we’re ready’ to negotiate. This is never-ending recognition,” he said.



Mother-daughter team: Grand Island teacher Rene Hinman, left, and her daughter, Lincoln teacher Jessica Hughes, attended Leadership Institute in 2013.

Leadership Institute Offered by NSEA

No Cost for Members to Attend

NSEA has grown and thrived over the past 147 years thanks, in large part, to a continued stream of strong leaders.

If you'd like to become a part of the Association's next generation of leaders, you can do no better than to be a part of NSEA's annual Leadership Institute.

The Institute should be of interest to members who are pursuing or interested in pursuing an Association leadership post at the local, regional or state level in the near future.

The Institute is June 16-19 at NSEA Headquarters in Lincoln. Open to NSEA members in good standing, expenses are paid; there is no fee to attend.

"Anyone who is new to an Association leadership position, or who is considering seeking a leadership position, should strongly consider attending,"

said Kristen Sedlacek, an NSEA organizational specialist and the Institute's director.

"Members will find the training useful, informal, fun and informational," she said.

Any K-12, Higher Education or Educational Support Professional member who is a local leader or has interest in becoming a local leader may attend. The program will develop a thorough knowledge of the Association, and will

provide training on member rights, organizing, membership and other aspects of the Association. Participants will also network with other local leaders.

Those interested should call Jan Anderson at 1-800-742-0047, or e-mail:

jan.anderson@nsea.org

Class size is limited. Apply soon!



Education Funds Cut Nationwide

Census: First Drop Since Tracking Began

Fiscal year 2011 marked the first decrease in per student public education spending since the U.S. Census Bureau began collecting data on an annual basis in 1977.

The 50 states and the District of Columbia spent \$10,560 per student in 2011, down 0.4 percent from 2010. The top spenders were New York (\$19,076), the District of Columbia (\$18,475), Alaska (\$16,674), New Jersey (\$15,968) and Vermont (\$15,925).

Nebraska ranked just ahead of the U.S. average in 2011, spending \$10,825 per student.

Total expenditures by public elementary and secondary school systems totaled \$595.1 billion in 2011, down 1.1 percent from 2010. This is the second consecutive year total expenditures have shown a year-to-year decrease.

The statistics provide figures on revenues, expenditures, debt and assets (cash and security holdings) of the nation's elementary and secondary public school systems for the 2011 fiscal year. The study includes detailed statistics on spending — such as instruction, student transportation, salaries and employee benefits — at the national, state and school district levels.



Re-Elect John Heineman NEA Board of Directors

Nominate Your Education Hero

California Casualty to Honor Educators

Who are the heroes of 2014?

California Casualty, provider of the NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program, will honor the champions of education, nursing, law enforcement and firefighting with the 2014 “Nominate a Hero” contest.

California Casualty is honored to serve educators — heroes that help make our communities better and give so much of themselves for the future of our children.

In an era where Hollywood stars and sports icons are looked up to as heroes, California Casualty is honored to help identify and award everyday heroes who give so much, every day.

What unsung hero of education do you know? Make sure to nominate them for California Casualty’s “Nominate a Hero” Contest.

California Casualty will continue taking names for the “Nominate a Hero” program each month in 2014. The public is invited to show the world that “good men and women” still exist. Monthly winners receive a \$250 gift card and qualify for the 2014, \$10,000 grand prize.

Nominations will be taken all year-long at:

www.nominatemyhero.com

Elect David Shrader



NSEA Board of Directors
Elkhorn District
Experienced, Dedicated



NSEA Sends Contingent to NEA West Leadership Summit

NSEA President Nancy Fulton led a delegation of more than 30 NSEA current and emerging leaders at the NEA West Leadership Summit in January, where they enhanced leadership skills and knowledge base. The summit brings together leaders from a 26 western and midwestern states each year.

Seated, from left, are: Amy Himes, Papillion-LaVista; Amy Burns, Kearney; Jose Hernandez, Norfolk; Paula Limbach, Lincoln; Katrina Jacobberger, Omaha; William West, Lincoln; and NSEA Vice President Leann Widhalm, Norfolk.

Standing, from left, are: Edward Ventura, Omaha; Ginger Rogers, Bellevue; Chris Proulx, Omaha; Sharon Bell, Lincoln; Dave Herbener, Papillion-LaVista; NEA Director Jenni Absalon, Lincoln; Craig Wiles, Omaha; Gwen Smith, Fremont; Gayle Jeffers, Millard; Josh Hennagir, Millard; Marsha Edquist, Millard; NEA Director John Heineman, Lincoln; M.L. Lehman, ESU No. 16, North Platte; Daniel Spatzierath, Mitchell; Shari Anderson, Lincoln; Chad Fickes, Lincoln; Claudette Wielechowski, North Platte; Kathryn Segrist, Lincoln; Paul Schulte, Millard; Wes Andre-Henn, North Platte; Christie Copper, North Platte; and NSEA President Nancy Fulton, Wilber-Clatonia.

Not pictured are Susan Loney and Michelle Settlemeyer, both of Omaha.



GreenSchools ENERGIZE. INVESTIGATE. INNOVATE.

FREE Workshop

Workshop will provide hands-on activities and field trips to help teachers implement the GreenSchools program with students. Guest speakers include professionals from Nebraska Forest Service, Keep Nebraska Beautiful, NE Department of Education, NE Department of Environmental Quality, and NPPD.

When: March 24-25, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: NPPD Norfolk Operations Center
1200 S Chestnut Street, Norfolk
Meals will be provided. Lodging may be available.

Registration deadline is one week prior to workshop.

Sponsored by
Nebraska Public Power District
Supported by ESU 8 and 1

To register, visit esu8.org. Contact Jennifer Swerczek, NPPD Energy Education Specialist, at jlswerc@nppd.com with workshop questions.

2014 DA Theme: 'Stand Strong'

Elections, Millennials, on Tap at Kearney

Delegates: Prepare for action! The 2014 edition of NSEA's Delegate Assembly promises to offer a full schedule of activities.

The 300-plus NSEA members expected to attend will elect an association president, vice president and a member to represent them on the National Education Association Board of Directors.

They will also debate and vote on new Bylaws proposals and updates to the Association's Resolutions, which act as the organization's guiding principles.

Delegates will also learn about reaching out to those in the Millennial Generation, courtesy of nationally known expert Jeff Kallay.



Kallay

Stronger Together

The theme for the 2014 Assembly is 'Standing Strong Together' and signifies the strength that comes from Association unity.

"There is an African proverb that says 'if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,'" said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "Association membership means we will all go farther, we will all be stronger, if we stand together."

This year's event will be held at the Younes Convention Center along Interstate 80 at the Kearney exit. Registration opens at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 11.

Understanding Millennials

Kallay is co-founder and CEO for Render Experiences, an Atlanta-based company that works with colleges and universities to develop and enhance campus visit experiences for prospective students. He is a nationally respected authority on the emerging "experience economy" and the all-important campus visit experience.

In his work, he has helped colleges and other institutions understand generational differences and to learn how to best connect with each unique peer

Delegate Assembly: The Details

NSEA's 153rd Delegate Assembly will meet at Kearney on Friday evening and Saturday, April 11-12, 2014.

It is there that difficult policy decisions will be debated; budget and dues will be set; and openings on NSEA's Executive Committee will be filled. Because NSEA is your Association, you, as a dues-paying member of NSEA, are eligible to become a delegate. There are 450 delegate slots, and it is easy to attain delegate status.

Your local association president will soon receive details regarding delegate eligibility. Talk to your local president or building rep about attending, or call your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047. Here are other details:

Who: Any NSEA member in good standing may apply for election as a delegate. More than 300 NSEA members typically attend. Talk to your building rep or local president if you would like to serve.

What: DA is where member voices are heard in a democratically-run forum.

Why: Delegates set Association goals and dues, and update Bylaws and Resolutions (NSEA's guiding principles).

Other Details: Each local association is entitled to representation, based on one delegate per 50 members, or greater fraction thereof. Thus, any local with 26 members is eligible to select one or more delegates, based on membership. Locals with fewer than 50 members work together in 'clusters' to select delegates.

Cost: NSEA covers half a Friday night shared hotel room for each delegate, a Saturday box lunch, and mileage.

Interested? Contact your local association president or your NSEA field staff member at 1-800-742-0047.

**STAND
STRONG TOGETHER**

NSEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY 2014 | KEARNEY

group. He has presented to various national and affiliate organizations within both the NEA and AFT.

Bringing different generations together for a common purpose, such as Association membership, will be a focus of his keynote during the Saturday morning session of Delegate Assembly.

Election of Leaders

Delegates will also elect a president, vice president and a representative to the NEA Board of Directors; recognize a slate of outstanding educators and contributors to education (see sidebar); and give the Association guidance on a number of issues for the coming year.

Any NSEA member in good standing is eligible to file. To have a candidate's name placed on the ballot, the candidate must be nominated from the floor during the Assembly's opening session on Friday evening, April 11, 2014.

Any candidate who wishes to seek election, and who wishes to have campaign material included in a mail-

ing to all delegates in advance of Delegate Assembly, must submit that information to NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen not less than 45 days prior to April 11. The actual deadline is 11:59 p.m. CST on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2014.

Questions? Contact NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Vote for Pat Etherton



NSEA-R Capitol Dist. Director
NSEA-R Rep. Assembly
NSEA-R Delegate Assembly

Taxes, Tornadoes, Tuition

Senators Consider Proposals That Will Affect You, Your Classroom

Although this session of the Nebraska Legislature is a short 60 days, scores of bills have been introduced that, if passed, will affect you, your students and your classroom.

Those bills deal with tax-deductible costs for graduate school, tornado drills and suicide prevention training, and more.

Fortunately, NSEA is monitoring all 175 or so education-related bills on your behalf. Your Association representatives will work to make certain that the outcome of each bill is to the best benefit of teachers and students in Nebraska.

Funding will be the key issue. Spurred by campaign-year tax reform fever, senators and the governor will wrangle over the details of more than a dozen bills that exempt, eliminate or reduce taxes.

Tax-cut fever evolved from the work of the Legislature's 14-member Tax Modernization Committee, which toured the state last year to take input on modernizing the state's tax collection system. The vast majority of citizen complaints lamented the state's high property taxes.

Committee Chair Galen Hadley (and some news outlets — see opposite page) urged a deliberate approach. "I think this takes more long-term work to make sure we handle this correctly," he told the Omaha World-Herald. "You have to do it right so you don't end up worse off than you were before."

State Aid

Gov. Dave Heineman has led the tax cut bandwagon. In his State of the State address, he projected that a cut of \$370 million to \$500 million is plausible, if \$220 million of the state's \$700 million rainy day fund is used. Heineman would also reduce ag land valuation from 75 percent of its actual value to 65 percent of value and would reduce the top individual income tax rate from 6.84 to less than 6 percent.

But one news organization reported that Heineman's plans did not include a blueprint to continue the tax relief in three years, after the transfers from the cash reserve dry up.

"Whoever's the governor and the Legislature will have to deal with it," Heineman reportedly said.

Omaha Sen. Jeremy Nordquist, for one, criticized the plan as a \$500 million giveaway to the top 1 percent that would require cuts to education, would raise property taxes and tuition.

Any revenue cuts would threaten the state's investment in public schools; and a reduction in ag valuations would cut an

estimated \$35 million or more from public school budgets.

"As this issue moves through the Legislature, we will advocate that no harm befall public school programs, students or teachers," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton.

State Aid

Lawmakers last year set state aid at \$906 million for 2013-14 — an increase of \$54.5 million — but still less than what was appropriated in 2009-10 (\$993 million).

At NSEA's urging, lawmakers in 2013 retained the Teacher Education Allowance, while adding teacher education aid for non-equalized districts. These mechanisms offer incentives for districts to increase salary steps for teachers receiving advanced degrees. The combination of those two formula factors represents about \$32 million.

The Teacher Education Allowance, however, is at risk. NSEA supports a

transition program in LB967 that would move the Allowance funding to state aid funding for peer mentoring and master teacher programs.

Suicide Prevention Training

LB923 (Sen. Amanda McGill) orders teachers, administrators, school nurses, counselors and other staff to take an hour of training in suicide awareness and prevention each year.

Charter Schools

LB972 (Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh) authorizes creation of "independent" schools — charter schools — in Nebraska. Charters are often cited as giving parents a "choice," but are unnecessary in Nebraska because of the few restrictions on student transfers.

Working to Improve Nebraska Schools

LB952 (Lautenbaugh) proposes to allow school districts to retain a student in grade level for a reading deficiency, among other items, with the intent that every public school child be able to read at or above grade level by grade three. It requires school districts to offer an accelerated reading intervention program to each K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency.

Education Trust Fund

NSEA has long sought stable funding for state aid, and a



Education Chair: Sen. Kate Sullivan, left, chair of the Legislature's Education Committee, spoke to the NSEA Board of Directors in January. NSEA President Nancy Fulton, center, and Vice President Leann Widhalm, listen.

pair of Education Trust Fund bills by Sen. Kate Bolz may be a step forward. LB1025 would allocate Internet sales tax revenue to schools. LB1026 would kick-start the fund with \$90 million from the state's cash reserve.

Wellness in Nebraska Act

Through Sen. Kathy Campbell's LB887, Medicaid would expand in Nebraska to cover an additional 55,000 Nebraskans with incomes below 10 percent of the federal poverty level. They are stuck in a coverage gap and cannot afford coverage. The result would inject about \$750,000 into the state's economy each day; would bolster rural hospitals; would generate an estimated \$700 million in economic activity; and support up to 10,000 jobs.

Tuition Reimbursement

In LB842, Sen. Al Davis would allocate an additional \$200,000 to the Excellence in Teaching program. This NSEA-proposed bill provides tuition reimbursement for teachers and teachers-to-be, and has been highly successful. The program was placed on a two-year moratorium in 2011 as the Lottery dollars used to fund it were diverted to replace state general funds for other education programs. The \$1 million in funding was reinstated in 2013, but the share going to active teachers was quickly used up, demonstrating a need for more funding.

Income Tax Deduction

LB787 (Sen. Paul Schumacher) would

Don't Ignore the Long View:

In a Jan. 19 editorial, the *Omaha World-Herald* warned that reduction of ag-land valuation could end up as a tax shift, not a cut. And it noted that Nebraska has the country's third-lowest unemployment rate and weathered the Great Recession quite well.

"While sustainable tax cuts are welcome, there is no shame in standing pat if the alternative is adopting changes that would be jettisoned in the next downturn."

Deliberate Speed

The *Lincoln Journal Star*, on Dec. 11, noted that the last time the Legislature shifted more burden to local governments, it cost the city of Lincoln almost \$2 million. The editorial reminded senators about the chorus of complaints last year about high property taxes.

"It's important that senators do not forget what they learned as they listened to ordinary folk from one end of the state to the other."

credit a deduction off state income taxes for the principal paid on loans used to obtain graduate degrees.

Reporting Abuse

Under LB730, (Sen. Rick Kolowski) teachers and school employees would continue to be required to report cases of suspected sexual abuse. It would expand those reporting options, however. At it now stands, suspected abuse must be reported to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Education. LB730 would also allow that report to a school administrator or chief administrative officer.

Jason Hayes, NSEA's director of Public Policy and Legislative Research, told the Legislature's Judiciary Committee that LB730 would help to protect school employees who report abuse from exposure to liability from an alleged abuser.

"The law should be changed to permit those who make reports to school officials of child abuse to be safe from retaliation and costly time-consuming litigation," he said.

Tornado Drills

LB741 (Sen. John Murante) would require districts to hold three tornado drills each year, up from the current two. It would also dictate "exactly what to do when a tornado alarm sounds" and would provide provisions for "safe and orderly movement of children and staff to the shelter area," as well as provisions for assigning staff responsible for removing students from the playground."

NSEA's 2014 Legislative Agenda

STRONG SCHOOLS STRONG COMMUNITIES STRONG ECONOMY

NSEA's legislative goals for the 2014 session of the Nebraska Legislature include increasing the state's investment in P-16 public education and ensuring any changes made to the state tax structure do not reduce funding used to support strong schools, strong communities and a strong economy. It is essential that the state has the resources necessary to continue the wise tradition of investing in safe communities, excellent public schools, world-class colleges and universities and other infrastructure that boosts our economy and creates a high quality of life.

NSEA will work to:

- Provide state and local funding that supports quality public education for every student with the focus of stabilizing state aid;
- Promote and protect public education programs that benefit Nebraska students, teachers, higher education faculty and education support professionals.
- Ensure public school students and staff have respectful, safe and secure learning and working environments;
- Ensure the protection of collective bargaining rights; and
- Maintain prudent management and funding of the state school employees' retirement plan.

NSEA believes that any changes to the state's tax system must be revenue neutral or provide for additional funding for education.

Education funding cuts hurt students, staff, schools, colleges and our economy. Stability and predictability in state and local funding for schools is crucial. It is in the best interest of all Nebraskans to keep schools fully staffed.

Maintaining a broad and deep curriculum and appropriate class size will help raise student achievement and ensure our state's educational and economic competitiveness.

Keep Tabs on the Legislature

It's so very easy to be in the know! Here's how:

■ **Read *The Voice*:** NSEA's monthly magazine keeps members on top of the latest legislative happenings.

■ **E-Updates:** Add your name to NSEA's e-mail list to receive regular legislative updates. You can also become one of NSEA's cyberlobbyists by completing the form at:

www.nsea.org/cyberlobbyist

■ **NSEA text message alerts:** To sign up for the text messaging service, provide the requested information at this website:

www.nsea.org/text

■ **On the Web:** Follow the progress of bills on the Nebraska Legislature's site at:

www.leg.ne.gov

World Food Prize: Knowledge, Skills

Youth Institute Offers Scholarship Opportunities for High Schoolers

Six Will be Chosen for World Food Prize Conference

What is involved in feeding a growing world, a population predicted to be more than 9 billion people by 2050? What is at stake now and in the future?

High school teachers can help their students gain knowledge and develop skills to learn about these and other issues through the World Food Prize Nebraska Youth Institute (WFPNYI). Plus, students earn a \$500 University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) scholarship.

In the program, teachers mentor their students to research, write and submit an essay on a key global issue concerning food security and agriculture. Students must be in high

school now and in September 2014 to apply.

In selecting their paper topic, students choose from 20 factors and nearly 100 countries. Student papers are due June 1 or before, and notice of intent to participate is requested by April 1. Students submitting papers will participate in a Sept. 19 event at the Nebraska East Union in Lincoln. It is sponsored by CASNR along with the World Food Prize and the Malaika Foundation.

During the event, students present their paper findings, hear and discuss the findings of others, and interact in various activities with CASNR faculty, staff and students. Mentors accompany students to Lincoln to take part in the day.

Based on their papers and presentations, six students will be selected to attend the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute in Des Moines

Oct. 16-18, along with their mentors or another responsible adult. There, students and mentors have the opportunity to hear and interact with Nobel and World Food Prize Laureates, as well as the world leaders in agriculture and food security. Food and lodging in Des Moines are provided, and CASNR provides round-trip van travel from Lincoln to Des Moines for the six Nebraska students and their mentors. Students who attend the Des Moines event then are eligible to apply for a Borlaug-Ruan international internship, or a USDA Wallace-Carver fellowship.

Find World Food Prize Nebraska Youth Institute on facebook to view pictures of last year's events. For details, contact Laura Snell at 402-472-9782, or via e-mail at:

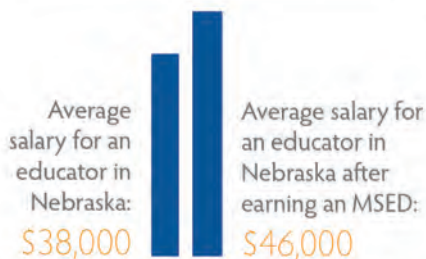
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Details may also be found at: casnr.unl.edu/worldfoodprize

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Boxley Scholarships, covering full tuition, books and fees, are available for students applying for the MSED online cohort that begins this summer.

Applications are due by April 15.



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*Tuition is subject to change.

Not All Bullies Wear Tennis Shoes

Dealing With a Pushy Principal? That's Where NSEA Works for You

In some cases, the bully may not be a fourth grader.

Once in a while, he may wear a tie and sports coat, or she may wear a pantsuit. Consider this plea for assistance that was delivered to NSEA from a member in need recently:

"I am a second year teacher and a first year teacher in my school district. I am concerned that I am being mistreated and bullied by my principal and need some advice and support from someone in our organization."

Sadly, this was not the first teacher to face such a situation. Fortunately, NSEA has 18 organizational specialists on the ground across the state. All are well-versed in working with teachers to solve and resolve a wide range of problems and issues, ranging from poor evaluations to confrontations with administrators, to problems with parents.

NSEA's organizational specialists – collectively known as field staff – also understand the state's certification process, and can answer questions such as this one, which also came via the NSEA website:

"I believe my certificate is now expired and I cannot renew it even by just taking classes. Can you please let me know whether/if I can get a substitute license? If I can, do I need

continuing education, or can I just pay dues?"

Sometimes, a member runs into a meeting with an administrator that just does not go well:

"I would like to speak to a representative about some meetings I have had with my principal that I feel are negative."

Members frequently have questions about assignments outside the classroom:

"I have a teacher in my district who has a student teacher this semester.

"That student teacher's college/university provides a stipend to the cooperating teacher. Can the teacher keep that stipend or does she need to report it to our school district and give them the stipend?"

NSEA's field staff have copies of contracts from across the state, understand contract language, and can help you to decipher your obligations.

Your membership gives you the NSEA Edge.

NSEA field staff are located from Omaha to Scottsbluff. In the case immediate, urgent assistance is needed, contact NSEA Headquarters at 1-800-742-0047, where a field staff member is always on duty. In Omaha, call 402-731-0800. In Lincoln, call 402-489-7500.

Or, use the 'Contact Us' link on the NSEA website at:

www.nsea.org



ServeNebraska Seeks Volunteerism Nominees

ServeNebraska is accepting nominations to honor volunteerism and service in Nebraska with the annual First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards. The awards includes four that are specific to schools. They are:

■ **Outstanding Community Partnership in Education (Group Award):** Recognizes partnership among community organizations, schools, government agencies, or others – potentially including national service – that demonstrate how cooperation and combining resources bring advantages to education.

■ **Outstanding Business Support for Education:** Recognizes a business that demonstrates involvement by encouraging employee volunteerism and active participation in a school/district.

■ **Outstanding School Volunteer:** Honors a school or district that demonstrates community involvement by encouraging and supporting student volunteerism through service clubs, service-learning, civic engagement initiatives and other activities.

■ **Outstanding Student Leader:** Honors a student volunteer for leadership roles in student organizations, councils or service clubs that has demonstrated exemplary leadership skills

The nomination period ends on Feb. 15. Honorees will be recognized on April 11, at the University of Nebraska Omaha campus. For details, go to:

serve.nebraska.gov/

A portrait of Nancy Fulton, NSEA President, smiling. She has short brown hair and is wearing a dark blue blazer over a white collared shirt and a patterned scarf. The background is a light blue gradient.

RE-ELECT
NANCY FULTON
NSEA PRESIDENT

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nfulton@hotmail.com



Louisville and Plattsburgh: Taking training in early December were, from left, David Nielsen, Louisville; and Plattsburgh's Dennis Beckmann, Larry Kress and Dee Franks.

Comp Study Update:

Now Trained: Bellevue, Papillion-LaVista, Friend, Louisville, Plattsburgh, Auburn, Raymond Central

As the new state-mandated timeline for contract negotiations kicked in, local association bargaining teams from across the state turned to NSEA for expertise and guidance in conducting the comparability studies.

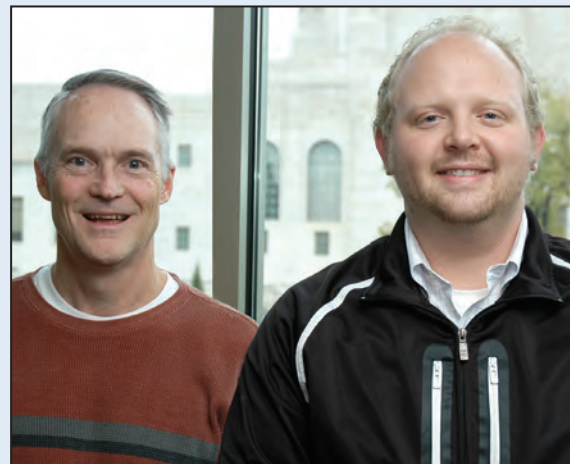
The "comp studies" as they are commonly called, compare a school district's total compensation with as similar-sized school districts. The studies are made easier using the NSEA-owned Navigator software.

NSEA's Kathy Hutchinson trained members in the comp studies, the results of which will be used at the bargaining table.

For details, contact your NSEA field staff rep at 1-800-742-0047.



Bellevue: Angela Daughtrey and Jan Elliott took comp study training in mid-December.



Papillion-LaVista: Dave Herbener and Andy Isaacson of the PLEA trained in November.



Auburn, Friend, Raymond Central: These NSEA members went through training together in November. From left are Pat McDonald and Kandi Rohrs, Auburn; Ruth Ziegler and Margo Houlden, Friend; and Mike Henderson, Raymond Central.

More Education, Better Retirement

Study: Retirees' Health, Wealth Fare Better

The more education you have the better off you're likely to be during retirement, according to a study from the National Center for Policy Analysis.

"For those over age 65 who wish to continue working, each year of education beyond high school is associated with a 1 percent increase in the likelihood that they will be employed, controlling for age," said NCPA Senior Fellow Pamela Villarreal. "A senior with an associate's degree is 5 percent more likely to work than a senior with only an 8th grade education, and a college graduate is 4.3 percent more likely to be working than a senior with a high school diploma."

The study found that college graduates, on average, receive \$8,482 in annual retirement income other than Social Security, or about \$6,500 more per year than high school graduates.

In addition, the more educated elderly are less likely to experience disabilities during their retirement years. A college graduate is 6.2 percent less likely to have difficulties with independent living

than a high school graduate, and 21.8 percent less likely than someone with only an 8th grade education.

Noting that education matters in ways beyond what many people realize, Lewis Warne, a research associate with the National Center for Policy Analysis, detailed ways in which education has long-term impacts through retirement.

"More education increases retirement savings, decreases dependence on government, improves health and increases employment at both a state and individual level," said Warne.

The Survey of Consumer Finances confirms that those with more education or income have more saved in retirement accounts and more financial assets than their less educated counterparts. Individual retirement income increases the standard of living for the elderly and decreases the reliance on other government programs like Medicaid.

Analysis also shows that each additional year of education reduces the likelihood of having no retirement income other than Social Security by 3 percent.

You Can Plan for Richer Retirement!

Whether you're starting your career, near retirement or already retired, you'll find custom solutions at the new Online Retirement Planning Center, compliments of NEA Member Benefits. Create a plan for maximizing your income, managing investments, and stretching retirement savings.

With the Online Retirement Planning Center, you'll use these educator-specific benefits:

- Timely tips and articles geared toward your life/career stage.

- A free subscription to the Kiplinger's Retirement Reports — a \$40 value!

- The NEA Retirement Income Calculator, which helps you project what you need to meet retirement goals. The calculator has Nebraska's pension plan data built-in!

Learn more about the Online Retirement Planning Center at:

neamb.com/retirement-center



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Wilderness Leadership Offers Hands-On Course

There are two opportunities available to educators through the Nebraska Safari Club.

The American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) will be held at Jackson, WY, in 2014. The program was established in 1976 and provides teachers with a hands-on experience that they can bring home to their classrooms. The program is repeated six times over the course of the summer.

A similar program operates at Springbrook Conservation Education Center northwest of Des Moines on July 8-12.

The leadership program will ignite enthusiasm for teaching, and will provide information on conservation and outdoor education. Professional development hours are available, and funding will be available for selected participants through Sables and the Nebraska Safari Club.

For details, check out these sites:

www.safariclubfoundation.org/
www.safariclubfoundation.org/education/awlsiowa

For the Nebraska chapter application, go to this website:

www.nebraskasafariclub.org/

Send completed applications to John Niemoth, 314 West Whittingham St., Valley, NE 68064, or email:

jniemoth@gmail.com

Mastering Money Basics Promotes Financial Ed

A competition designed to get students, teachers and parents into discussions about the importance of managing personal finances in a formal educational setting is now open to Nebraska students.

Access, a 501©3 nonprofit focuses on credit and personal financial education, has opened the ‘Why is it Important to Save Your Money?’ writing contest.

“Most young adults will tell you that they have learned their financial management skills from their parents,” said Access Board member Deb Wright. “Yet, a recent survey of college students showed that 54 percent of college students had overdrawn their bank

See Peru, Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands

Educators and others interested in Incan history or the Galápagos Islands will want to consider a 13-day tour to Peru, Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands in June.

Organized and led by NSEA members Kevin and Jan Carper, the tour fee will include all meals; round-trip airfare from Omaha; lodging with private bathrooms; internal flights; entry fees; boat fees; tour director services; guided sightseeing; and a tour diary.

The highlights of the tour will include the Galápagos Islands, Machu Picchu, the Uros (Straw) Islands, the Ecuadorian capitol city of Quito, and more.

“Our goal is to learn, explore and have intrepid adventures, all while making friends and life-long memories,” said Jan Carper.

The tour begins with departure from Omaha on June 12. Travelers will return to Omaha on June 24. Cost for the tour is \$5,771 for travelers 22 and younger; or \$6,216 for those 23 and older.

For details, contact Jan Carper at 402-469-6579, or Kevin Carper at 402-463-2234. They may also be reached via e-mail at:

jcarper1@live.com
kcarper2010@live.com

Registration deadline is Thursday, Feb. 27.

accounts and 41 percent had missed payments on their bills. Clearly, more early education is needed.”

The contest is open to Nebraska students in grades kindergarten through 5. Participating students who win the contest, or who receive honorable mentions, will receive medallions and certificates for their efforts. Classrooms with winning students will be awarded cash prizes up to \$1,000 to spend on anything the teacher deems appropriate.

Contest entries are due by Feb. 28, 2014. Winners will be named on April 15.

For details and an entry form, go to:

www.MasteringMoneyBasics.org

Study the Holocaust on Two Continents

Secondary and pre-service educators may take part in a two-continent summer Holocaust study program in 2014.

The July 1-19 itinerary includes a visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and a trip to more than 20 sites in central and eastern Europe.

The program is to advance education in U.S. secondary schools about the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance and to deepen teachers’ knowledge and strengthen their ability to implement Holocaust studies in their classrooms.

The cost is \$3,000, and includes round-trip travel from Washington, D.C., plus trips to Holocaust-related sites in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Poland; outstanding accommodations (2 to a room); and 2 meals daily.

Applications are due Friday, March 14, and must be submitted electronically. The application is found online at:

www.hajrtp.org

The program is sponsored by the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Travel the World with Global Classrooms

Middle and High School teachers: Would you like to globalize your classroom? Consider Teachers for Global Classrooms, a professional development program funded by the U.S. Department of State that includes:

- An online Global Education course;
- A Global Education Symposium in Washington, D.C.;
- A two to three-week international travel fellowship;
- Grant opportunities for alumni.

Applications are due March 11. To learn more, or to apply, visit:

www.irex.org/tgc

Save With Dave!

Your acquired wealth, no matter how little or how much, is worth protecting.

NEA Member Benefits programs can assist you, whether via a long term care plan, identity theft protection or a retirement plan. All are designed to be of assistance, all are at great rates for members, and all are easy to access.

The NEA Long Term Care Program provides members and their families free educational materials and information on all available options for long-term healthcare needs.

For most, financial security, health and independence are top retirement priorities. Find out more about long-term care education and insurance by visiting the Long-Term Care Resource Center at the NEA Member Benefits website at:

neamb.com

The NEA Identity Theft Protection plan offers valuable and affordable identity protection for NEA members.

Provided by Identity Fraud, Inc., the program offers plans starting at \$19.95 per year, and you can protect your entire family for as little as \$39.95 per year.

Benefits and options include unlimited fraud resolution services for simple or complex cases; \$25,000 Identity Insurance; single or triple bureau credit monitoring and alerts; fraud alert and credit freeze options; discounts on fraud prevention tools and credit reports.

Retirement Planning Center

At the NEA Member Benefits' Retirement Planning Center, you'll learn about investing basics, long-term planning strategies and how to make the most of retirement. For instance, you can learn about the challenges and opportunities you may face at the four stages of life: starting out, building your nest egg, approaching retirement, and enjoying retirement.

You'll also be able to use the NEA Retirement Calculator to find out how well prepared you are for retirement.

In addition, you can sign up for the monthly Retirement E-newsletter. Learn more at:

neamb.com
David Glenn is Nebraska's
NEA Member Benefits representative



Glenn

How to Care for Yourself While You Care for Others

Caregiver Role Stressful as Well as Rewarding; Remember to Care for Yourself

Are you helping to care for a parent or other loved one? That can be one of life's most stressful but also rewarding experiences. Here are a few tips for ensuring that the caregiver is cared for, too:

- Accept help. Make a list of things you need help with, and let others choose what they would like to do.

- Focus on what you *can* do. No one is a "perfect" caregiver. Your house doesn't have to be perfect. Don't be guilty about what you can't do.

- Get connected. Look into classes on caregiving offered by organizations like the Red Cross and Alzheimer's Association.

- Set personal health goals. Find time to exercise. Plan to get a good night's sleep. Make sure to eat a

healthy diet.

- Seek social support. Stay connected with family and friends. Set time aside each week for socializing, even if it's just a walk with a friend.

What if You Needed Care?

It's also important to have a plan in place if the time comes when you may need care yourself. The **NEA Long-Term Care Insurance Program** offers long-term care insurance to NEA members and their families at preferred rates. This is the only type of insurance that helps pay for assistance with tasks of everyday living for an extended period of time.

For a no-obligation consult about your NEA Long-Term Care options, call 1-855-632-4582, or go to:

www.getltci.com/nea

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Use your NEA Cash Rewards Card everywhere you shop and earn cash back on every dollar you spend. Just make your first purchase and start earning cash rewards:

- 1 percent cash back everywhere, every time.
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Grocery store and gas bonus rewards apply to the first \$1,500 in combined purchases in these categories each quarter.

Rewards are earned automatically and don't expire.

Plus, for a limited time receive a \$100 Target GiftCard Bonus if you make at least \$500 in purchases within the first 90 days (students not eligible.)

Members have already earned more than \$2.9 million cash back! Join them now at:

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Enter the School Lounge Makeover Contest

Does your school lounge need sprucing up? Can you afford it? California Casualty, provider of the NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program, may have the answer.

Entries are now being taken for the next \$7,500 California Casualty School Lounge Makeover. The deadline to enter is March 7, 2014. Details, rules and entry forms can be found at:

schoolloungemakeover.com

A contestant must be an active employee of a K-12 public school or school administrator and a member of NEA. All members at the school may also enter, thus increasing their school's chances of winning.

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Why Your Association Matters

Columbus Education Association Cites Reasons for Membership

Late Night host David Letterman doesn't have a lock on his famous 'Top Ten' listing. Members of the Columbus Education Association recently developed a 'Top 10 Reasons Why CEA Matters.' The list was shared at the initial meeting of Columbus educators at the beginning of the school year, and CEA President Lori Focher shared the list with NSEA:

Top 10 Reasons Why CEA Matters

No. 1: CEA is the Professional Organization for Educators

The CEA a professional organization built by and for educators. When I think about all the different organizations I am active in, it just makes sense to belong to one that is a community of educators – about 3 million across the United States – who all believe in providing a great public education for every student.

No. 2: Liability Insurance

Being a member comes with a \$1 million liability insurance policy. Just like I wouldn't go without insurance for my car, house, or health, I won't go without insurance for my profession; a profession I have devoted four-plus years of schooling to achieve. While I don't ever plan to make a claim, I feel better knowing it's there if I need it – just like all my other insurance policies.

No. 3: Employment Support

If I ever have a question or concern about something happening with my job, I know help is just a phone call or email away. I can call my NSEA representative at any time and know that he is there for me, working to protect my rights, assist with grievances, and answer any question I may have.

No. 4: Legal Support

Even though this is something I never plan to use, I know that should a situation arise where legal help is needed I have access to attorneys that specialize in educational law and my legal costs are covered.

No. 5: The Negotiations Team

What would we do without them?

Because I receive the benefits of the work this team does each year for my salary and other fringe benefits, I feel joining my professional Association is the right thing to do. But just think, what would it be like if we didn't have the association and the negotiations team? What would our contract look like? As a member, the team asks for my input on what should

be negotiated each year and I get to vote on the acceptance of that agreement. I can even be a part of that essential team.

No. 6: A Voice

CEA gives me the opportunity to work with my colleagues to cause changes and improvements in working conditions. If there is an issue, we can approach it collectively.

No. 7: NSEA Children's Fund

Did you know that the NSEA Children's fund can be used by any CEA member to assist students in need of things like clothing, glasses, dental work or medicine. All it takes is a phone call to get approval, then the member pays for what is needed and sends in the receipt, and within 48 hours the member is reimbursed.

No. 8: Political Support

NSEA and NEA provide a watchful eye in the Legislature and work to protect the rights of educators. For example, just this spring NSEA fought for the passage of LB553 which protects our employee retirement plan and ensures its solvency for years to come. I appreciate that kind of support – what would have happened had NSEA not been there? NSEA and NEA are committed to informing me on candidates running for office. While I may not always agree with the candidates that NSEA and NEA choose to endorse, I know that my dues dollars are never used to support candidates.

No. 9: The Giving Heart of CEA

CEA has a long history of giving back with scholarships for CHS graduates going into the field of education and gifts for the Top 10 percent of the graduating class. CEA has supported the needs of the community and in recent years, CEA has made donations to the Holiday Spirit Co-op, the CMS bond issue, and the CPS Foundation. CEA also made a large donation to the American Red Cross following Hurricane Sandy and most recently to the Oklahoma Education Association's Tornado Relief fund for teachers to reestablish their classrooms.

No. 10: Legacy

For four decades, the members of the Columbus Education Association have worked to ensure great working conditions and a fair contract.

If you are a member, please take an active role in making this the best association it can be. If you are currently not a member, please consider joining your professional association. It is our turn to build this association, not just for us, but for the future teachers of our district, who together with us provide a quality public education for our Columbus students.



Register Now to Swing into Spring!

There's only one way to get into the swing of spring: attend the annual Spring Conference of the NSEA-Retired affiliate!

The 2014 edition of the conference will be held Thursday, April 10, at the Younes Convention Center in Kearney. Reserve the date now – look for online registration soon!

The conference will feature a keynote speaker, several breakout sessions and an afternoon business meeting. Details on a keynote speaker have not yet been finalized, but tentative breakout sessions will include the topics of Zumba, Tai Chi, scrapbooking, sleep disorders, retirement communities and choices, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska updates.

A dessert reception, wrap up, evaluation and door prizes will close out the day.

NSEA-Retired has arranged a special rate of \$99.95 for rooms through the Hampton Inn, Kearney. Contact the Inn for reservations at 1-308-234-3400 to reserve a room, and be sure to ask for the NSEA-Retired conference rate.

The conference will be held in the Younes Convention Center, which is connected by a walkway to the Hampton Inn. Registration and an agenda will be online soon at:

nsea.org/retired

Conference, not room, registration will be open soon! For questions contact Rebecca Smith at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

March Elections: A Call for Nominations

Active members of NSEA-Retired who wish to be considered as candidates for any of the open positions or offices must complete the nomination form on the NSEA-Retired website no later than Friday, Feb. 7. That website is at:

www.nsea.org/retired

Candidates seeking election as a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly, as well as candidates for NSEA-Retired office, also required to submit a biography of no more than 50 words as part of their nomination. Names of candidates filing for election will be posted on the NSEA-Retired web page and updated each Friday until the filing deadline.

There are guidelines for campaigning for any of the open positions. Those guidelines include:

Distribution of materials at NSEA-Retired meetings must take place before the NSEA Retired meeting begins, or during the break for lunch.

Biographies submitted with nominations will be inserted into the ballot mailing, for the election, and will also be posted on the NSEA-Retired website.

China Tour Deadline Near

Tourists go to China to see the Great Wall, the Terra Cotta Warriors near Xian, and many sites that date back to the Silk Road era from China to Europe. Among its "claims to fame" are the inventions of paper, gunpowder, and the compass.

Dr. Robert Meyers, a retired teacher/administrator, is organizing a tour of China exclusively for NSEA-Retired members, family and friends. The \$2,834 cost includes international airfare from Seattle and a fully escorted 10-day tour of China.

The tour includes airfare from Seattle to Beijing, domestic airfare within China, tour buses, guides, accommodations at 4- and 5-star hotels, and most meals and entry to attractions. The



Beautiful work: NSEA-Retired member Lorene Behrends, Lincoln, has donated another of her handmade quilts to raffle as a fund-raiser for the NSEA Children's Fund.

Behrends' Quilt Benefits Kids

There are two chances to be a winner in the NSEA-Retired quilt raffle this year!

Each year for the past dozen or so years, retired Lincoln teacher Lorene Behrends has been kind enough to donate one of her hand made quilts for a raffle to benefit the NSEA Children's Fund. Her work has raised thousands upon thousands of dollars to benefit Nebraska children over the years, and last year's donation raised nearly \$1,100.

Like last year, there will also be a cute, hand-embroidered baby blanket completed and donated by Gloria Boham, sister of Ruby Davis, a former member of the board of directors of both the NSEA and the NSEA-Retired. Also on the raffle will be another of Behrends' beautiful queen-sized quilts. Raffle tickets are being sold up until the July 25 meeting of the NSEA Board of Directors.

Tickets are \$1 each, or \$5 for six. For details, contact an NSEA-Retired officer or call NSEA's Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047.

tour includes The Great Wall, Tienanmen Square, the Forbidden City, Ancient Beijing, the Terra-Cotta Warriors and more.

Tour dates are May 22-31, 2014. See reservation details and a daily itinerary on a link on the NSEA-Retired website at:

nsea.org/retired

Reservation deadline is Saturday, Feb. 15. The minimum number of travelers for this tour is 20; the maximum number is 60. Make your reservation early to ensure a place on the tour.

NSEA-Retired members who have an email address have received notice of this tour. Find more detail on the NSEA-Retired website, or call Meyers at 402-592-8991.

NSEA-Retired is not responsible for tour details.

— Renae Kelly, Editor
renaekelly@gmail.com

'F'

'Advocacy' Outfit Flunks Nebraska K-12 System

That's the grade given to Nebraska's K-12 system by StudentsFirst, an advocacy group that bills itself as "a movement to transform education."

The grade came as part of the organization's State policy Report Card that gave the nation as a whole a 'D+' and an 'F' to Iowa and Wyoming, as well. The group looks at "whether each state's laws prioritize the interests of students and families."

But there is more to the story.

John Jensen, a retired Omaha teacher and vice president of the NEA-Retired, was not to be fooled. He noted that StudentsFirst is led by ousted Washington, D.C., superintendent Michelle Rhee, who "spends millions to defeat good friends of education and good friends to unions."

Among other items, Jensen said Rhee would like to see Nebraska and other states earn a better grade by:

- Dropping defined benefit pension plans in favor of defined contribution schemes that pay lower benefits.
- Approval of a 'parent trigger' that could close a school and fire teachers.
- Evaluating teachers based on how students test scores.
- Eliminating tenure.

The lesson is obvious, said Jensen:

Be wary of those who want to 'reform' education.



The receipts are collected: Grand Island Education Association members helping with receipt collection and tallying included Rene Hinman, left, who helped tally receipt totals; and Renee Ekhoft and Michelle Carter, right, who assisted with collection of receipts.

Grand Island Receipt Project a Success

More than \$30,000 in just seven days.

That's a small share of how much Grand Island Education Association members spent at Grand Island businesses during a week in November, based on receipts turned in during a drive by the GIEA.

The project was part of the GIEA's participation in NSEA's 'Strong Schools. Strong Communities. Strong Economy.' campaign, and clearly illustrates the effect public schools have on a local economy.

GIEA President Deb Gnuse, who also serves on the NSEA Board of Directors, said the approach to the campaign was low key.

"We basically just publicized it through our local organization and used our building reps, posters and e-mail to get the word out," said Gnuse.

There were prizes given to encourage participation. Six lucky GIEA participants were chosen at random to receive \$50 local gift cards.

"We kept it to just a one-week drive to try and keep it short and sweet,"

Gnuse said GIEA is developing a working relationship with the local business community. She's worked with the local chamber of commerce president to pass promotions on to GIEA members, and has also made contact with the local small business association, as well.

In the News: Peru State College, Kearney, Papillion-LaVista

Peru Student Education Association (PSEA) President **Amanda Volksten**, a junior early childhood and elementary education major from Fort Calhoun, has been honored by the National Education Association (NEA) with the Jeffrey "J.D." Miller Outstanding Underclassman Award at the organization's National Student Leadership Conference.

Volksten had earlier received the same from the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN).

"I have a real passion for educating children and I can't wait to put what I am learning at Peru State to use in the classroom," said Volksten.

PSEA Newsletter Editor **Megan Brown**, a senior special education and early childhood education major from Syracuse, won the 2012-2013 Outstanding Local Newsletter Award at the NEA conference. She was the recipient of the NEA's Outstanding Underclassman Award in 2011.



Volksten

Two NSEA members have been honored with Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. **Kimberly Humphrey, Kearney**, and **Alysia Augustus, Papillion-LaVista**, were revealed as recipients in December. Humphrey teaches K-6 science; Augustus teaches K-6 math.

The awards are the nation's highest honors for teachers of mathematics and science (including computer science). The award recognizes those teachers who develop and implement a high-quality instructional program that is informed by content knowledge and enhances student learning. Since the program's inception, more than 4,200 teachers have been recognized.

Each awardee receives a certificate signed by the President of the United States and a \$10,000 award from NSF. Awardees and their guests are honored during events in Washington, D.C.

Retiring This Year?

NPERS Seminars Will Help You Prepare

Are you planning to retire this year, or are you thinking about retirement in the next few years?

If so, you may want to attend one of the School Retirement Planning Seminars hosted by the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems office.

The Spring 2014 seminars are for those age 50 and over, and registration is required at least one week prior to the seminar of your choice.

By law, each eligible employee is allowed leave with pay to attend up to two seminars (limited to one seminar per year). Here is the schedule and location of seminars for Spring 2014:

- March 5: Lincoln.
- March 6: Lincoln.
- March 7: Lincoln.
- March 12: LaVista.
- March 13: LaVista.
- March 19: Grand Island.
- March 20: Kearney.
- March 25: LaVista.
- March 26: Columbus.
- April 2: Valentine.
- April 3: North Platte.
- April 9: LaVista.
- April 10: Norfolk.
- April 16: Scottsbluff.
- April 17: Scottsbluff.
- April 22: LaVista.
- April 23: Lincoln.
- May 8: Lincoln.
- May 28: Kearney.
- May 29: North Platte.
- June 5: Lincoln.
- June 11: Lincoln.
- June 12: LaVista.
- June 18: LaVista.
- June 19: Norfolk.
- June 25: Grand Island.
- June 26: Lincoln.

For details, go to the website at:
npers.ne.gov

Speaking of Teaching

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

— *Nelson Mandela (1918-2013),
Politician, Activist, Lawyer,
Philanthropist*

Mailed By: The Nebraska State Education Association
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Family of Teachers



Nationwide! Jayne Estelle of Omaha is rightly proud of her Wrispus family of teachers, and had a photo taken during a reunion in Atlanta last summer.

Seated, from left: Rosalyn Shepherd, an 18-year art teacher in Sandusky, OH; George Walker, a retired Chula Vista, CA, elementary teacher; and Arleen Barry, who taught fifth through seventh grades for 30 years in Texas and Mississippi.

Standing, from left: Stephen Walker, sixth grade science teacher at Montgomery, AL; his father, Stephen, a 33-year art teacher at Lawson State Community College, Birmingham, AL; Jayne Estelle, a K-6 technology instructor at Omaha; and Darlene Jordan-Waverly, phys ed teacher at Columbus, GA.

The inset is C.J. Littlejohn, an academic coordinator at Corinthian College, Santa Ana, CA.

If you have a family of teachers, snap a photo and send it to Family of Teachers, c/o NSEA, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508.

Einstein!

Lou Birenbaum, a first grade teacher at Willow Brook School in St. Louis, MO:

“Monthly bulletin boards can be time-consuming. Last September, I hung a poster of Albert Einstein and his quote ‘Imagination is more important than knowledge.’ Each following month, I altered the poster to match a holiday or another event — October had Albert attired in a witch’s outfit; in November he was a pilgrim, etc. This year, since the kindergartners thought it was a poster of me, I added a poster-sized blown up photo of me in a pose similar to Albert’s. For October, I captioned the board ‘Dynamic Duo’ and I am attired as Batman and Albert as Robin.”

Sign up for Works4Me at this link:
www.nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html

