

# THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ October 2014



*Let's talk about*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

*and why your vote will matter.*

## Upcoming Assignments

### General Election

**Tuesday, Nov. 4**

■ **What:** Nebraska's General Election. Citizens will cast ballots in local school board elections, for nearly two dozen state senators, state constitutional offices and governor.

■ **Details:** If you haven't yet registered to vote, do so: elected officials and policies affect all you do in the classroom. Be informed by reading about NSEA's candidate recommendations starting on Page 12.



### American Education Week

**Nov. 17-21**

■ **What:** It has been nearly 100 years since the National Education Association led the charge to recognize educators and school staff with AEW.

■ **Details:** Learn more under the 'Grands & Events' tab at:

[nea.org](http://nea.org)

### NSEA-Retired Fall Conference

**Oct. 28**

■ **What:** A top-notch conference for retired members this year will feature Chuck Hassebrook!

■ **Details:** Learn more on Page 22.

# Membership Card Goes Electronic

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Once online, you can search for savings opportunities by city, by ZIP code and by savings category. Be sure to follow each merchant's specific redemption instructions. If you need help saving, call Access at 1-888-313-6591.

You can also download NSEA's 'My Deal' mobile application, allowing you to use the money-saving Access program on your cell phone. For details, check the NSEA website at:

<http://bit.ly/NSEAMyDeals>

If at any time you need to print a replacement membership card, visit [www.nsea.org/mycard](http://www.nsea.org/mycard). Enter your ID number to print the card, or you can save your card to your smartphone to have with you at all times.

"We hope you enjoy and use this valuable member benefit," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "It's one more way we say 'thank you' for your membership and continued service to children and our public schools."



## Cover Story:

Grand Island kindergarten teachers Kristin Weaver, left, and Amber O'Hara see the difference pre-school makes in a child's life every day. Pre-school is an especially important issue in the Nov. 4 General Election. For details, turn to

# Page 12



Nebraska State Education Association  
605 S. 14th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508-2742 • [www.nsea.org](http://www.nsea.org)  
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### Great Public Schools For Every Child

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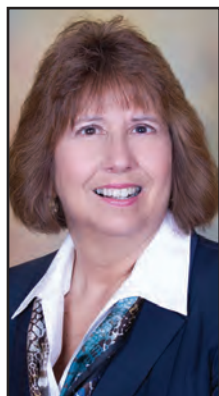
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# Offering Hope



**NSEA President Nancy Fulton**

“  
**Fairness and justice demand that income from any job provide enough income to meet basic human needs.**  
 ”

Imagine trying to support yourself or your family on \$290 a week. Over the course of a 40-hour work week, that is what Nebraska’s current \$7.25-an-hour minimum wage earner receives for his or her endeavors.

Imagine the struggle, the despair that comes with unexpected expenses, the hopelessness of the never-ending battle to make ends meet.

Nebraska’s five-year-old minimum wage rate is well below what can realistically support an individual or family in today’s economy. At \$7.25, one parent’s income falls far short of the federal poverty threshold of \$23,550 for a family of four. Two minimum wage incomes in a family, especially if there are children, won’t provide much more.

Sadly, many non-certificated school district employees, and many parents of the children we see in our classrooms every day, earn minimum wage. Fairness and justice demand that income from any job provide enough income to meet basic human needs.

That is why the NSEA Board of Directors, and, I believe, most NSEA members, support raising Nebraska’s minimum wage. Your NSEA board has recommended passage of Initiative 425 on Nov. 4. Passage will increase the state’s hourly minimum wage incrementally over two years to \$9 an hour.

### ‘Boxes of Hope’

Retired Omaha educator and NSEA member Susan Kalina taught most of her career in low-income areas of Omaha. She volunteered her time for the petition drive that put Initiative 425 on the ballot. Kalina spoke at the State Capitol news conference on July 2, where volunteers turned in boxes of petitions containing more than 130,000 signatures.

The dozens of boxes, she said, were “boxes of hope for children in poverty, and their families.”

Educators understand first-hand how raising the minimum wage will help students whose parents

struggle and scramble to support their families. The increase to \$9 will put an estimated \$2,800 extra in the pocket of a minimum wage earner at 40 hours or more a week. That extra income might give the parent the wherewithal to cut hours in an extra job, allowing more time working with a child on school-work or attending conferences or school activities.

A little extra spending cash will perhaps help parents have their children a little more prepared for school, perhaps better fed and clothed.

An increase in the minimum wage will help our fellow education employees – those paraprofessionals, cafeteria employees, custodians, we all rely on – who do not earn a living wage.

The increase will make a difference even in higher education, where colleges and universities underpay many adjunct and contingent faculty, despite their educational degrees and other experiences. Some earn less than a fast food worker or sales clerk, and often do not have

healthcare benefits.

The men and women who dedicate their lives to driving, nourishing, counseling or teaching our children should not be forced to live at or below the poverty line. Educators should not have to accept a vow of poverty as part of a life in public service.

### Failing to Keep Up

Since Nebraska’s minimum wage law passed in 1967, the state’s minimum wage rate has failed to keep up with the rising cost of living. Nearly 50 years later, the minimum wage set in 1967 would be the equivalent of nearly \$11 an hour today.

Economists report that raising the minimum wage will boost our growing economy and help to rebuild Nebraska’s middle class. It has the potential to benefit employers and our state’s economy.

Ultimately, passage of Initiative 425 provides hope: hope for those in or near poverty, hope for children, hope for our future. I hope you agree.



**Boxes of Hope: Retired Omaha teacher and NSEA member Susan Kalina said dozens of petition-filled boxes behind her are ‘boxes of hope’ for Nebraska children in poverty.**



## Finding Nebraska’s Great Public Schools (GPS)

NSEA locals from around the state appear or are mentioned in this issue. Look for:

Ashland-Greenwood .....Page 7	ESU No. 13 .....Page 23	Lincoln..... Page 12, 17, 18	Ralston .....Page 12, 18
Banner County .....Page 18	Elkhorn .....Page 12, 24	McCool Junction..... Page 23	Scottsbluff .....Page 23
Bellevue .....Page 10, 11	Fremont.....Page 18, 22	Millard.....Page 12	Westside Dist. 66 .....Page 7, 24
East Butler .....Page 18, 23	Gering.....Page 18	Minden.....Page 23	Wilber-Clatonia .....Page 7
	Grand Island .....Page 7, 12, 23	Norris.....Page 7	Wisner-Pilger .....Page 5
	Grand Island Northwest .....Page 18	Omaha .....Page 12, 23	
	Lexington .....Page 18	Papillion-LaVista .....Page 7, 12	



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# Drive Nets \$12K for Wisner-Pilger EA

## Pilger Middle School Was Destroyed by June Tornadoes

A drive by the Nebraska State Education Association to benefit teachers who lost classroom materials to the twin twisters that hit Pilger on June 16 raised more than \$12,000.

NSEA President Nancy Fulton presented a check for \$12,299 to Wisner-Pilger Education Association President Gregg Moeller in September, during an after-school meeting of WPEA members.

Fulton said the cash will help Wisner-Pilger teachers affected by the tornadoes replace personal teaching materials lost in the storm. She said the average teacher spends between \$400 and \$1,500 of their own money on teaching supplies and materials each year.

“Teachers are always digging into their own pocketbooks because they don’t want their students to be shortchanged,” said Fulton, a 34-year teacher. “They are constantly on the lookout for materials that will enhance learning for their students. I am sure that Wisner-Pilger teachers lost quite an investment in teaching materials. This helps them get back to the business of teaching.”

Fulton urged the WPEA members to use the money for other purposes, as well, that help the school recover from the storm damage. She commended the district for opening school on schedule after the tornadoes destroyed the middle school building at Pilger.

“What you’ve done to rebuild here is wonderful,” she said.

Donations came from across the country. Nebraska teachers attending the National Education Association’s annual Representative Assembly in Denver this summer spread the word to other state organizations, and many teachers at the convention gave cash. The remainder of



**Recovery aid:** NSEA President Nancy Fulton presented a check to Wisner-Pilger Education Association members and middle school teachers. From left are WPEA’s Kari Olson and Denna Soden, Fulton, and WPEA member Jackie Delmont.

donations came from NSEA members and from NSEA staff.

“The education profession in Nebraska is like one big family,” said Fulton. “I know the Wisner-Pilger school district has worked to rebound quickly. We hope this gift speeds that healing process a little bit more.”

### Members in 30 Counties Eligible for NEA Resources

June was a destructive month in Nebraska. Two tornadoes, including a powerful EF4 twister, struck Pilger on June 16, and multiple tornadoes, hailstorms, windstorms and other nasty weather was reported.

By early July, 30 Nebraska counties had become eligible for the National Education Association’s Member Benefits (NEAMB) Disaster Relief Program.

Now eligible for relief are members in Cedar, Cumming, Dakota, Dixon, Franklin, Furnas, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps, Stanton, Thurston, Wayne, Burt, Butler, Cass, Hamilton, Holt, Nemaha, Pawnee, Polk, Rock, Thurston, Valley, Washington, Clay, Fillmore, Saline, Saunders, Seward and York counties.

This website provides details about resources and accommodations available:

[neamb.com/disaster-assistance](http://neamb.com/disaster-assistance)

# Food for Thought



**Educators:** Food for Thought is an entertaining animated video teaching fourth-graders about how Nebraska hog farms do business. Along the way, students learn about economics, marketing, science and conservation, helping you meet certain NDE standards. The **Food for Thought** package includes a complete lesson plan and a real-life video shot at a Nebraska pig farm.

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# Class Size, Testing & Mental Health

Those are Priorities for Teachers, Students, Fulton Tells Ed Committee

When it comes to setting priorities for public education in Nebraska, NSEA members have a clear and concise list of concerns and recommendations, President Nancy Fulton told state senators in September.

Nebraska teachers, she said, have deep concern about burgeoning class sizes; about the amount of time spent on standardized testing; and about the serious lack of student access to mental health services.

Those were the top items on Fulton's list as she spoke to members of the Legislature's Education Committee as senators sought input on educational priorities from key education stakeholders. The committee is developing a statewide vision for public education that will help current and future policymakers identify educational priorities.

Fulton told senators that NSEA recently conducted six focus groups across the state, interviewing 72 educators. Overwhelmingly, said Fulton, the top concern voiced by those teachers is a student-to-teacher ratio that is growing in nearly every Nebraska school district. Class size, Fulton reminded senators, affects student learning, especially those students who are English Language Learners.

"It affects everything a teacher does and everything a student does," she said. "Students are not getting the individualized attention they need to succeed."

She also said a reduction in class size would improve student achievement and lessen behavioral issues.

## 'Eats Away at Time'

Loss of time devoted to teaching to time spent on standardized testing is also a real concern, said Fulton.

Time spent on standardized testing "eats away at instructional time and, in



**Senator's summit:** Malcolm Sen. Ken Haar, left, met with several NSEA members in September as part of a legislative study to research ideas for replacing the Teacher Education Allowance in the state aid to schools formula. Haar is considering ways to include professional development in the formula. On hand, from left, were Haar; Deb Gnuse, Grand Island; Andy Isaacson, Papillion-LaVista; Angela Mosier, Westside District 66; NSEA President Nancy Fulton, Wilber Clatonia; and Mary Schlieder, Norris. Not pictured is Kristi Bundy, Ashland-Greenwood.

## Hearings in Omaha, Norfolk, Broken Bow

As the Legislature's Visioning Process for public education nears a close, Nebraskans have one last chance to offer input. The eight-member Education Committee will host three public hearings on the visioning, or strategic planning process, in October.

NSEA staff and members will be on hand at each location to ensure that the voice of experts – educators like yourself – is heard.

"Senators understand the importance of public education to our economy and our future," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "Even so, we want them to get this right. The voice of teachers must be heard."

Senators voted 43-0 in April to pass LBI 103, which provides for the Education Committee to embark on a strategic planning, or visioning process, for pre-school to post-secondary (P-16) education in Nebraska. Public hearings will take place at these sites:

- **Omaha:** Monday, Oct. 6, 1:30 p.m., Gallup, 1001 Gallup Dr.
- **Norfolk:** Wednesday, Oct. 15, 1:30 p.m., Suite E, Lifelong Learning Center, Northeast Community College.
- **Broken Bow:** Thursday, Oct. 16, 1:30 p.m., Broken Bow High School auditorium.

many cases, is neither productive nor helpful in providing the teacher with timely information that could be used to improve student learning," she told senators. "We need to give teachers time to teach, and children time to learn."

The issue that sparked the most discussion by senators was a lack of mental health services for students.

Fulton said one teacher told NSEA she had lost two middle school students in 12 months to suicide.

"Teachers see the needs of their students every day – up close and personal – and many times, they are unable to access the services needed to assist the students in need," said Fulton. "Participants in our focus groups said they see a growing number of students who need mental health services."

Clearly, said Fulton, there is need for mental health services for students. Fulton said the follow up discussion on

mental health services for students took up a considerable amount of time allotted for discussion.

## Time to Collaborate

Fulton also recommended that senators make high quality, early childhood education, with well-prepared teachers, available for all children. Doing so would improve cognitive and socio-emotional abilities and build a strong foundation for later learning.

Fulton reminded educators that research shows the most important factor determining whether a teacher is successful in school is the teacher.

New teachers need mentors, teachers need time to collaborate with each other, and teachers need support to continue to improve their skills and knowledge.

The Education Committee is expected to issue a report on education priorities later this year.

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**nea** Member Benefits



# Welcome to 'For All it's Worth'

## Campaign Will Keep You Informed About Membership, Benefits

We know you're busy. That's why NSEA's new For All it's Worth monthly series is conveniently designed to keep you informed on your association membership, its benefits and value.

Each monthly edition will provide you with easy-to-access information that directly relates to your membership. Throughout the school year you will receive these monthly membership emails, which fall under three key areas: Membership Benefits, Working Conditions and Action & Advocacy.

### Your Voice is Our Voice

It's an exciting time for everyone — the new school year is here and well under way. You've planned for a successful school year, prepared to support and enhance the educational development of students. It's true, back to school means back to business, which is why we're here.

You deserve the most from your membership. And just like your commitment to students, we're also committed.



ted. We're committed to being your support system and helping your voice be heard — because your voice is important.

As a member, you belong to a supportive network of educational professionals, backed by an organization that is an advocate for you, in the classroom and at the State Capitol. Your membership ensures your ideas are heard, and that you have a voice in what happens in public education.

With your voice, you have the power to:

- Help determine the future of your profession and your association.
- Organize and advocate on behalf of school employees, public education and the children you serve.
- Utilize voting privileges at the state, local and national levels.
- Hold elected office at the state, local and national levels.

Join in the conversation and take advantage of the benefits. It's time to experience your membership For All it's Worth.

Watch for news and updates from the For All it's Worth campaign in your email in-box, on Facebook and online at the NSEA website at:

[nsea.org](http://nsea.org)

## With Membership, You Have an Edge

### Only NSEA Offers Experienced Field Staff Ready to Serve You

Your NSEA membership comes with something that no other association can provide: a talented and knowledgeable set of 18 field staff members versed in every aspect of Nebraska education.

If you have a question about your employment rights, your evaluation, your teaching certificate, chances are that the field staff representative assigned to your school district has the answer.

If not, they certainly know where to find the answer. Consider this question as an example. It was submitted to a field staff member through NSEA's website:

*"Can school districts require employees to pay the employer's share of FICA/Medicare if the school district gives you a lump sum amount instead of insurance? Our current contract does state that we (teachers) are required to pay both contributions (employee/employer). Please have someone contact me in regards to this concern."*

NSEA's field staff includes former elementary, middle and high school teachers. Most are also experienced negotiators and local association leaders, who know their way around a contract and a school administrator's office.

*"Can any parent or patron observe in my classroom at any time or for an extended period of time? I have always welcomed parents, but would have difficulty teaching with a parent in the room all day. What are my rights?"*

You never know what kind of situation might arise in your classroom.

*"A male student in my kindergarten class has exposed himself to two classmates on separate occasions. I am wondering if I could be blamed in any way. My principal is involved. I am concerned that families of my other students will hear of this and be irate."*

The dues you pay to NSEA and to NEA support the field staff program, and those field staff members, in turn, support your classroom work by supplying answers and support when you may be in need of both.

Have a question? Call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047. Or email your question to NSEA through the 'Contact Us!' link on the NSEA website at:

[nsea.org](http://nsea.org)

# Klone: STEM Academy 'Transformed' My Teaching

Application for '15 Event Ends Oct. 31

Last spring, NSEA member Bethany Klone was one of just 200 teachers nationwide to participate in the Phil Mickelson ExxonMobil Math and Science Academy in New Jersey.

Then, along with her third grade students, Klone joined an even more exclusive club: hers was one of just five classrooms nationwide to take part in a special outreach with ExxonMobile. A panel of ExxonMobile employees with jobs in STEM fields Skyped with her students, talked about their jobs and answered student questions about their jobs and qualifications.

At the academy, Klone had a chance to meet with Mickelson, the professional golfer who helps sponsor the Academy. That was a great way to cap the academy for Klone, a teacher at Bellevue's Two Springs Elementary School.

Klone said the academy works to increase student learning and appreciation of math and science. It stresses the importance of hands-on learning and critical thinking in the instruction of math and science. The academy strives for that goal by:

- Enhancing teachers' mathematics and science knowledge;
- Demonstrating the interrelationships between scientific inquiry and mathematical problem solving;
- Helping teachers use the tools of mathematics to build

understanding and connections to science concepts; and

- Modeling "best practices" in teaching and learning.

Klone recently completed the Primarily Math program through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The UNL program and Mickelson Academy have transformed her teaching, she said.

"Both emphasized the importance of teaching for understanding versus teaching rules and rote memorization," she said. "I allow the students much more time to explore and discuss new concepts before I give direct instruction. This allows students the opportunity to make their own discoveries which are often more meaningful."

Also attending the Academy with Klone was NSEA member Jill Christian of Papillion-LaVista.

The next five-day, expense paid Academy event has an application deadline of Friday, Oct. 31. Click on the 'Teachers Apply Here' button in the upper right corner of this website:

[www.sendmyteacher.com/](http://www.sendmyteacher.com/)



**A touch of fame:** Bellevue third grade teacher Bethany Klone had a chance to meet professional golfer Phil Mickelson.

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# Update on Repayment of Refunded Service

## Delayed Buyback Under Old Rules Was Costly to Retirement Plan

Bellevue West High School teacher Jan Elliott has good advice for educators thinking about buying back years of service they may have relinquished in the state's retirement plan.

Buy that service back sooner, rather than later. It's cheaper that way, said Elliott, who serves on the board of directors for both the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System and NSEA.

Elliott makes that point because rules governing the repurchase of service changed with LB1042, passed on a 48-0 vote by the Nebraska Legislature in April. The changes affect public school employees enrolled in the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System (NPERS) plan. Educators enrolled in the Omaha School Employees Retirement System plan (OSERS) have operated for years under provisions similar to those enacted by LB1042, said Mike Smith, OSERS executive director.

### Costly Proposition

Under LB1042, plan members who ceased employment in the Nebraska public school system and took a refund of their money from the state-managed retirement plan may be eligible to repay the plan and restore some of that lost service credit. Only members who return to plan membership in the public school system are eligible to repurchase service. LB1042, however, sets deadlines for the repurchase of service.

In recent years, plan members who have returned to public school employment tended to delay repurchase of service years until later in their careers. The delayed repayment has cost the overall plan in the form of lost investment years.

NPERS Director Phyllis Chambers estimates delayed repurchase of service has cost the retirement plan between \$60 and \$70 million over the past 10 years.

"The earlier people buy, the less it costs them, and the better it is for the system," said Chambers.

### Dates to Know

Educators who left public school employment, took a refund and returned to work and membership in the state retirement plan before the April 17 effective date of LB 1042, have until April 17, 2020, or 60 days before termination – whichever is sooner – to file a one-time

election to purchase refunded service and repay the retirement system.

Those who are hired or rehired and participating in the retirement plan after the April 17, 2014, date will have five years from the date of reemployment, or 60 days prior to termination – whichever is sooner – to file a one-time election to purchase refunded service and repay the retirement system.

There is no opportunity to purchase refunded service after the deadlines, per the membership dates above.

Elliott urged educators hoping to repurchase service to begin the process at the earliest possible moment. An earlier start to repurchase service means money saved, she said.

"They don't want to wait until their last year of eligibility – that's going to be an expensive proposition," said Elliott.

A school employee contributes 9.78 percent of his or her salary toward the retirement plan. The employing school district matches the employee contribution at 101 percent, and the state contributes 2 percent of salary.

If you have questions about your retirement or repurchasing service, call the NPERS office at 1-800-245-5712; the OSERS office at 402-557-2102; or your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047. Find details in the School Employees Member Handbook, under the Publications tab on the NPERS website at:

[npers.gov](http://npers.gov)



Chambers



Elliott

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"I like the fact that the items in the library are continuing to grow. Relevant, high quality videos without commercials are the hardest thing to find for my classes and I appreciate that the selection is growing. Thank you!"

Judy Montgomery, Assistant Director, Curriculum  
University of Nebraska High School, Lincoln

"The video clips have enhanced a number of learning experiences, providing students with opportunities not available in the classroom."

Peggy Tilgner, Science Education Consultant  
Daykin



Learning Services

[NET.pbslearningmedia.org](http://NET.pbslearningmedia.org)

# GOVERNOR



**The Right Stuff:** Candidate for governor Chuck Hassebrook, center, and running mate Jane Raybould, pose with NSEA members at a candidate function this summer. From left are Roger and Liz Rea, Omaha; Paula Limbach, William West and Jenni Benson, Lincoln; Paul Schulte, Millard; Hassebrook; Raybould; Andy Issacson, Papillion-LaVista; Becky Torrens, Elkhorn; Jane Leadabrand, Ralston; and Chris Proulx and Bridget Donovan, Omaha.

## Top Priority: Early Childhood Ed

### Hassebrook Stand on Education Provides Clear Edge

Grand Island teachers Amber O'Hara and Kristin Weaver know firsthand the importance of early childhood education.

That pre-school experience – or lack thereof – sets the tone for their kindergarten classrooms at Wasmer Elementary School each year. It is typical that less than half of their students have had any pre-school experience, a statistic reflected in school readiness. Interviewed in mid-September, they were still working to instill classroom routines.

"We've spent 25 days on routine and structure, the basics," said Weaver. "We're just now starting on curriculum."

The "basics" include learning correct hand-washing skills; proper bathroom use; how to open a milk carton; and why it is important to stay in the schoolyard.

"You would be surprised at the number of kids who have never used scissors or crayons," said O'Hara.

While some preschoolers arrive with nearly complete recognition of numbers and the alphabet, some arrive with virtually no such skills at all. Sadly, some of those children will remain behind their peers.

"They start behind and we have to catch them up," said Weaver. "Some never catch up."

More children will have a chance to succeed through early childhood education in the future, however, if Nebraskans elect Chuck Hassebrook as governor in November. Hassebrook has made early childhood education his No. 1 priority if elected.

A bipartisan team of 14 NSEA members – a balanced mix of Republicans, Democrats and Independents from across the

state – met and interviewed Hassebrook and foe Pete Ricketts. The team also reviewed each candidate's written answers to questions on education issues.

The choice was clear: Hassebrook, on issues affecting public education, was the obvious choice as governor.

#### Early Childhood Education

"My Number One priority as governor will be to expand preschool and other early childhood education programs," Hassebrook said. "I believe it is the best long term investment we can make in the future of our state.

"We can make our state stronger by investing in children, families, and economic development. In recent years we have short-changed those investments, which has reduced productivity and led to increased long-term costs for foster care, public assistance, and prisons."

Ricketts declined to prioritize specific goals, but broadly mentioned "our educational systems" among "top budget priorities."

#### State Aid

As a whole, Nebraska public schools receive about 35 percent of funding from the state, one of the very lowest rates of state investment in public schools in the nation. Nearly 60 percent of school funding in Nebraska comes from property taxes.

Ricketts told NSEA "I believe the state is meeting that responsibility" to fund public schools.

Hassebrook has a different view.



**They know:** Grand Island kindergarten teachers Kristin Weaver and Amber O'Hara understand the difference early childhood education can make for a child.

“State aid to education needs to be adjusted on an annual basis for the increased costs of goods and services, through the annual appropriations process,” he said. “Without that, schools are forced to reduce investments in quality education or increase the property tax, Nebraska’s most burdensome tax.”

### **Charter/Corporate schools**

Ricketts is a longtime proponent and financier of corporate schools, and has in the past served on the board of an Omaha area voucher organization. NSEA asked candidates whether they support a charter/corporate school law.

Said Ricketts: “I believe a charter school law is appropriate. I believe charter schools should be allowed to operate upon mutually agreed on contracts.”

Hassebrook was more precise.

“I oppose charter schools because they drain funds from public schools and overall have not been demonstrated to improve educational attainment. Furthermore, they tend to cherry pick students, leaving public schools with a greater concentration of the most disadvantaged students. That makes it harder for public schools and their students to succeed.”

### **Higher Education**

Ricketts is founder, past president and benefactor of the Platte Institute, which has called for cuts in state funding of

## **AN ELECTION PRIMER**

### **The Candidates: You Decide**

NSEA makes recommendations based on each candidate’s stance on public education. And every candidate on these pages will make decisions that will affect your job, your students and your school district.

**In each case, candidates listed here completed education-specific questionnaires and were then interviewed face-to-face by local, bipartisan teams of NSEA members.**

**Those teams then selected the candidate that best exemplified a pro-public education stance.** The recommended candidates are presented here to allow you to read remarks from the recommendation committees, and then make your decision.

To find your legislative district, go to: [legislature.gov/about/leg\\_map](http://legislature.gov/about/leg_map)  
Whatever your decision, please vote!



higher education, freely admitting it would raise tuition costs.

Hassebrook has spent 18 years as a member of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, including two years as chair. He led efforts to secure \$11 million in tuition aid for students from moderate and low-income families.

### **Experience**

Hassebrook, 59, has spent his entire adult life working for the Center for Rural Affairs. He spent the past 18 years as the Center’s executive director. During that time, the Center provided loans, training and business-planning aid to more than 10,000 small businesses.

He was crucial in securing passage of state and federal policy reforms to strengthen the middle class, including the nation’s first Microenterprise Tax Credit.

He is a Platte Center native, where his family has farmed for more than 100 years. Hassebrook knows small business, agriculture and education.

Ricketts’ Platte Institute has called for vouchers; corporate charter schools; sales tax on food and prescriptions; and tax cuts for the wealthy. Ricketts claims

education as a priority, yet education is barely mentioned on his website.

## **NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE**

### **Legislative Dist. 2: Ron Nolte**

**Where: Cass County, southwest Sarpy County.**

Nolte has years of experience as a Cass County Commissioner and a Murray City Councilman. He supports early childhood education programs and increasing state aid to schools. He believes in the ideal of every child having access to a quality public education.

### **Leg. Dist. 3: Carol Blood, Sen. Tommy Garrett**

**Where: Sarpy County, bordered by the Douglas County line on the north and S. 25th St. on the east, including parts of Bellevue and Papillion.**

The interview team said both candidates expressed an interest in working with NSEA in order to be better informed about education issues. A recommendation of both candidates “is a strong and right decision,” wrote the interview team, because of their strong support of schools, teachers, collective bargaining and the current retirement system.”

Garrett was appointed to replace Sen. Scott Price, who resigned.

### **Legislative Dist. 4: Dr. Bob Hilkemann**

**Where: Omaha, bounded roughly by Maple and Pacific streets, 132nd and 180th streets.**

Hilkemann was a podiatrist who started as a teacher in Table

Rock more than 40 years ago. The interview team felt Hilkemann would “have his door open to us, unlike our current senator.”

### **Leg. Dist. 6: John Stalnaker**

**Where: Omaha, bounded roughly by 72nd, 132nd, Pacific and Maple and Blondo streets to the north.**

Stalnaker is knowledgeable on policy issues and is eager to see education issues from a teacher’s perspective. He is seeking office in order to be a voice for others, and is excited to meet voters.

### **Legislative Dist. 8: Sen. Burke Harr**

**Where: East central Omaha, bounded by 41st on the east, Pratt St. to the north and 83rd St. to the west.**

Sen. Harr has proven to be an advocate for public education and has introduced and supported several bills of importance to educators and has worked to defeat proposals harmful to education.

### **Legislative Dist. 10: Sen. Bob Krist**

**Where: Northwest Omaha and north central Douglas County, including Bennington.**

Sen. Krist is a proven advocate for children and education in

the Legislature and has been supportive of legislation benefitting education, including adequate funding for public schools. We are confident that Sen. Krist will continue to serve the interests of public education.

### **Legislative Dist. 12: Merv Riepe, Greg Hosch**

**Where: Omaha, bounded roughly by Sarpy Co. to the south; 72nd St.; UP Railroad and Q St. north; and 156th.**

Hosch believes public education forms the backbone of our society. He supports funding early childhood education, and knows that school funding helps teachers and students alike. He supports collective bargaining as a way to ensure fair treatment of teachers.

A former hospital administrator, Riepe has experience working with budgetary and public policy issues. He values public education and believes that school funding should be more predictable than it is now, and that education must be a top priority in the state budget.

### **Legislative Dist. 16: Sen. Lydia Brasch**

**Where: Burt, Cuming, Washington counties.**

Sen. Brasch is experienced and understands the legislative process quite well. The interview team also noted that she is quite willing to listen to and visit with constituents.

### **Legislative Dist. 18: Mike Tesar**

**Where: West Central Omaha, bounded roughly by I-680 on the east, Highway 64 to the south Military Road/Ida St. on the north and 168th to the west.**

Tesar values his community and is eager to serve his district. He supports public education and believes teachers should be involved in the decision-making process. He understands the importance of collective bargaining and due process rights for public school employees and supports the defined benefit retirement plan for teachers.

### **Legislative Dist. 20: Matt Lathrop**

**Where: South central Omaha, bounded by Pacific St., 144th, 72nd Q St. and the Union Pacific line.**

Lathrop understands issues facing teachers and students. He has a strong background in labor relations, and recognizes the importance of collective bargaining and due process rights. He believes education must be a top priority for the state.

### **Legislative Dist. 24: Mark Kolterman**

**Where: Seward, York, Polk counties**

After two terms on the Seward School Board, Kolterman is well-versed in education issues. He supports collective bargaining, due process and retirement, and has experience in all those areas.

### **Legislative Dist. 26: Matt Hansen**

**Where: Northeast Lincoln, bounded by 112th St., O St., the Murdock trail and N. 35th, 44th and 48th.**

Hansen is a gifted mentor for math and social studies and is a member of NSEA and the Lincoln Education Association. He supports due process and collective bargaining rights for educators, and of the defined benefit retirement system. He supports efforts of local school districts to continue to expand early childhood education. He favors a system of "dependable and consistent state aid."

### **Legislative Dist. 28: Patty Pansing Brooks**

**Where: Lincoln, bounded by O St. to the north, S. 14th, S. 70th and Calvert, South Sts. and Normal Blvd.**

Through her work on LPS bond issues, Pansing Brooks has proven that she is committed to public education. She has developed strong connections with school and community leaders and knows that these connections are important to building a strong coalition to support school funding now and into the future.

### **Legislative Dist. 30: Roy Baker**

**Where: Gage County, southeast Lancaster Co., including Hickman, Firth and Bennett, and southwest Lincoln.**

As a former school superintendent, Baker understands the diverse issues teachers face in the classroom. He also knows that strong school funding can have a positive impact on education. He is a friend to both students and teachers, and supports collective bargaining rights.

### **Legislative Dist. 32: Phil Hardenburger**

**Where: Saline, Fillmore, Thayer and Jefferson counties, southwest Lancaster County.**

Hardenburger has devoted a great deal of time researching issues. He is a supporter of public education and will continue to support the interests of teachers and students in the legislature. He supports due process rights and the retirement plan for teachers.

### **Legislative Dist. 34: Curt Friesen**

**Where: Nance, Merrick, Hamilton counties, and part of Grand Island and Hall County.**

A fifth-generation Henderson-area farmer, Friesen has served on a Natural Resources Board and the Nebraska Corn Board. He places high value on good education and is articulate and fair-minded.

### **Leg. Dist. 36: Luis Sotelo & Matt Williams**

**Where: Custer and Dawson counties, northern Buffalo County.**

Both candidates favor public education and educators, and both are articulate and knowledgeable on education issues.

Sotelo believes teachers have a voice through collective bargaining, and believes in investing in public schools to keep them strong.

Williams believes the CIR is working, believes funding for education is inadequate, and favors local control of schools.

### **Legislative Dist. 42: Roric Paulman**

**Where: Lincoln County, including North Platte.**

When completing the NSEA questionnaire, Paulman took time to research questions and fully understand the many issues facing teachers today. He supports collective bargaining and due process rights.

### **Legislative Dist. 46: Adam Morfeld**

**Where: North central Lincoln, bounded by I-80, N. 84th St., and mostly along the N. 2th St. corridor.**

The founder and director of Nebraskans for Civic Reform, Morfeld has developed working relationships with many senators. His interests align with those of the education community, and believes the opinions that matter most are those of classroom teachers. He is articulate, organized and knowledgeable, and will serve education well.



# STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## **Dist. 5: Pat Timm**

**Where: Southeast Nebraska from David City and Clay Center east and south, except for a portion of Lancaster Co.**

Timm is a 10-year member and a past president of the state board and a former kindergarten and art teacher who spent nearly 20 years on the Beatrice Board of Education. She is a strong advocate for early childhood education and has been supportive of NSEA positions.

## **Dist. 6: Maureen Nickels**

**Where: The counties of Boyd, Holt, Garfield, Wheeler, Antelope, Boone, Greeley, Valley, Nance, Sherman, Howard, Merrick, Polk, York, Hamilton, Hall, Buffalo, Kearney, Adams, Franklin and Webster.**

A longtime educator at Grand Island, Nickels is well-versed on education and the needs for quality public school instruction. Nickels is a strong believer in quality early childhood education, in local control and in adequate funding for public schools.

## **Dist. 7: Molly O'Holleran**

**Where: 38 counties west of a north-south line through Kearney, but not including Buffalo County.**

Seeking her second term, O'Holleran is a former English teacher at Westside Community Schools and also taught at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte. She is a former president of the North Platte Board of Education and has served on the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education.

## **Dist. 8: Bob Meyers**

**Where: A swath of central Omaha and most of rural Douglas County including Valley, Waterloo and Bennington.**

A former longtime educator in the Grand Island Public Schools, and a retired administrator from Ralston and Raymond Central, Meyers brings a unique view to the State Board. He wholeheartedly supports public education, is articulate and thoughtful and takes a "What's the problem?" and "Let's solve it!" approach.

# FEDERAL OFFICES

## **Congress, Second Dist: State Sen. Brad Ashford**

Sen. Brad Ashford has served 16 years in the Nebraska Legislature, and is a skilled and articulate spokesman on the issues, particularly justice. He is especially favorable on education issues. His opponent, Rep. Lee Terry, has repeatedly declined to participate in NSEA's interview process. Early on Terry promised voters he would serve only three terms, but is now seeking a ninth, and he is seen as particularly vulnerable this election year.

Ashford opposes cuts to federal health benefits. He opposes taxing employer-sponsored health care insurance. He opposes voucher programs, and reminds members of his 16-year legislative career spent fighting for educational equity in Nebraska.

"We need to help ensure that all students have equal opportunities and access" to quality education, he said.

"I will listen to teachers in my district, first and foremost, and take their ideas and suggestions back to Washington to help craft legislation," said Ashford. "We need to do this so federal policy reflects the needs of the district."

## **U.S. Senate: Dave Domina**

Domina is a prominent Omaha attorney in his first run for public office. His opponent, Ben Sasse, did not respond to requests to participate in the interview process.

Domina opposes teacher evaluation models that are based on standardized test scores. He favors an increase in Title I funds, and full funding of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which has not been fully funded in the more than 40-year history of the act. Domina is an ardent opponent of vouchers and taxation of employer-sponsored health care insurance.

Domina's education policy statement calls for "more and better resources for classroom teachers, and policies to attract the most capable high school graduates to careers in teaching; pre-k educational investment through federal formula based funding; and a national infrastructure to translate high-quality educational research into effective educational practice."

**BINGO!**

**Educators:** This new two-in-one BINGO! card game teaches second- through fifth-graders in a fun way about the many useful items made from pig and soybean by-products – wasting virtually nothing. The "Pork" game is on one side of the card, the "Soy" game on the other. The BINGO! kit includes game tokens, worksheets, call-out cards, and a classroom poster.

Quantities are limited so order yours today! Go to [www.nebraskaporkbingo.com](http://www.nebraskaporkbingo.com)

Provided FREE to Nebraska educators by the Nebraska Pork Producers Association and the Nebraska Soybean Board.

# 26\*

**\*The number of GRADUATE degree programs for educators that are available at Chadron, Peru and Wayne State Colleges. Fifteen are offered entirely ONLINE. Check them out at [www.csc.edu](http://www.csc.edu) or [www.peru.edu](http://www.peru.edu) or [www.wsc.edu](http://www.wsc.edu).**



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The Nebraska State Colleges are equal opportunity institutions and do not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. Each College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to the following Compliance Coordinator: Kristin Petersen, General Counsel/Vice Chancellor for Employee Relations, Nebraska State College System Office, PO Box 94605, Lincoln, NE 68509, 402-471-2505



## 'Rethinking Dyslexia' to Show in Lincoln

Because October is Dyslexia Awareness Month, the Nebraska Dyslexia Association will host a showing of the documentary film "The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia" on Thursday, Oct. 16.

Then, on Saturday, Nov. 1, the association's fall celebration will feature a keynote address by Dr. Dennis Molfese, director of the University of Nebraska's Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior.

The documentary film works to clear up misunderstandings about dyslexia and related reading, spelling and writing difficulties. The film will be shown at the NSEA Headquarters, 605 S. 14th St., beginning at 7 p.m. There is no admission charge.

Molfese's keynote is entitled "Research to Reality: A View from the Brain." He will discuss research surrounding dyslexia and the hopes to eradicate it. In addition, individuals will share their personal "journeys" with dyslexia. Community leaders will be recognized for their efforts to increase the awareness of dyslexia and to promote educational efforts. To reserve a space, call 402-421-2217, or email to:

[ifuelberth@aol.com](mailto:ifuelberth@aol.com)

The event is open to the public and will start at 9 a.m. in the Upper Fellowship Hall at St. Mark's Methodist Church, 84th and Pioneers Blvd.

The NDA website is:

[www.ne-da.org](http://www.ne-da.org)

## Northern Italy Tour Open to NSEA Members

Educators and others interested in seeing Northern Italy will want to consider this 12-day tour to that region in June 2015.

Organized and led by NSEA members Kevin and Jan Carper, the tour fee includes all breakfasts and dinners, round-trip airfare, lodging, in-country transportation, entry fees to itinerary events, tour director services, guided sightseeing and a tour diary.

Highlights of the tour will include Rome and all the sights at the Vatican; Florence, and Palazzo Vecchio, the



**Bowling Quartet:** These four teachers, new to the profession, enjoyed time on the lanes at the Lincoln Education Association's bowling event for new teachers. From left are Avery Pella, Chelsey Igo, Stephanie Shunkwiler and Allison Yardley.

Gates of Paradise, Giotto's Bell Tower and more; the Italian Riviera; Cinque Terre; San Giulio Island Monastery; the Dolomites; Venice; and more.

"Our vision was to plan a truly unique trip. Travelers will see many traditional, magnificent sights as well as have time off the beaten path to experience some of the best of Italian culture, history, food, wine and people," said Jan Carper.

The tour cost is approximately \$4,600 and begins with departure from Omaha on June 15. Travelers will return to Omaha on June 26.

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](mailto:jcarper1@live.com)

[kcarper2010@live.com](mailto:kcarper2010@live.com)

## Free Teaching Aids Promote Ag in Nebraska

The Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA) and the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB) will offer again this school year two entertainment-based educational packages free to elementary school teachers.

The teaching aids, featuring a video and a Bingo card game, were introduced two years ago and have been well received by teachers. Limited quantities remain, and teachers are

urged to place their orders quickly.

Food for Thought is a 22-minute animation that teaches students how hog farming is practiced in Nebraska. Because learning about the economy is an important fourth-grade curriculum objective, the video tells the story of a suburban fourth-grader who knows nothing about hog farming or the economics and entrepreneurship that goes into running a successful business. He comes to appreciate what is involved in a successful hog farming business after he tours a working farm.

The package includes a complete lesson plan and a short video filmed on a real life Nebraska hog farm to show real day-to-day farm life.

Bingo is a two-in-one card game featuring "Pork Bingo" on one side and "Soy Bingo" on the other. Aimed at second-through-fifth grade, it is a way for students to learn facts about the science that is pork production and soybean farming. Accompanying worksheets feature an 18-word crossword puzzle and a matching game that teaches students about the variety of helpful products made from pigs and soybeans.

Teachers report the tools useful and able to hold the interest of their students.

To order the Food For Thought video, visit:

[NebraskaFoodforThought.com](http://NebraskaFoodforThought.com)

To order the bingo game, visit:

[NebraskaPorkBingo.com](http://NebraskaPorkBingo.com)

# Members 'Wowed' by Leadership Institute

## Thirty Grads Give Institute High Marks

When it came time to evaluate the 2014 edition of NSEA's Leadership Institute, the 30 graduates were of one mind: the Institute dazzled them!

When asked about the highlight of the event, one grad's evaluation said "Finding out all of the great things that NSEA does. I really had no idea how much goes on here and how many services are available to locals."

Participants spent parts of four days at NSEA Headquarters immersed in everything NSEA. The days were filled with a story telling session, a discussion on NSEA organizational structure, a Myers Briggs personality test, roles and responsibilities of leadership, conflict



**New Friends:** Giselle deKoning, left, of Banner County, and Shelly Revelle, Gering, pause for a snapshot during the first day of NSEA Leadership Institute.

management, relational organizing, and a presentation by NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan on "Member Realities: Advocacy," among other things.

Evenings were spent getting acquainted and networking with other leaders from across the state.

Another evaluation said the highlight was "Meeting amazing people from across the state and getting to know them, as well as 'filling my bank' and getting new and refreshing ideas!"

Participants also had time for a quick tour and scavenger hunt for important highlights at the State Capitol building.

The Institute develops a knowledge of NSEA, and provides training on member rights, organizing, membership and other aspects of the Association. It is open to any K-12, Higher Education or Education Support Professional who is a local leader or is interested in leadership. The Institute also offers an opportunity to network with other leaders.

**Secret Door:** This team found the State Capitol Law Library's secret door. Clockwise, from top left: Cassidy Pitkin, East Butler; Ashley Dvorak, GI Northwest; Tyler Barna, Ralston; Joel Kerkman, Fremont; Kelly Olesen, GI Northwest.



**A Laughing Matter:** Enjoying a light moment during a discussion on member rights are, from left, LeAnne Bennett, Lexington; Kim Anthony, Lincoln; and Dené Oglesby, Ralston.



## The 2014 Grads

- Banner County:** Giselle deKoning
- Chadron State College:** Joyce Hardy
- Douglas County West:** Peggy Cooper
- East Butler:** Cassidy Pitkin
- ESU No. 10:** Kelly DeVorss
- Fremont:** Joel Kerkman
- Gering:** Shelly Revelle
- Gordon-Rushville:** Shannon Shuck
- Gothenburg:** Kimberley Graff, Ann Foster
- Grand Island:** Gina Ambroz, John LeCompte
- Grand Island Northwest:** Ashley Dvorak, Kelly Olesen
- Holdrege:** Dennis Woodruff
- Imperial:** Lindsey Tomaso
- Lexington:** Anita Bachmann, LeAnne Bennett
- Lincoln:** Kim Anthony, Jacqelle Lane, Celeste Lempke
- Millard:** Sabine Flesher
- Mitchell:** Dan Spatzierath
- Neligh-Oakdale:** Megan Jacob
- North Platte:** Samantha Stoetzel
- Omaha:** Bridget Donovan, Rachel Howe, Lori Krebs, Craig Wiles
- Ralston:** Tyler Barna, Dené Oglesby

## Save With Dave!

This month, we'll review some of the more popular of the NEA Member Benefits discount programs.

NEA Click & Save is the most popular discount plan for members and their families. This exclusive shopping service offers savings on brand name merchandise from hundreds of top retailers, online stores and local merchants. Members who use the plan receive 'WoW' points to redeem as credit toward purchases.



**Glenn**

Members will find savings on clothing, electronics, restaurants, movie tickets, cell phones, cruises and more, with new offers added nearly every day.

The Click & Save program allows you to set e-mail reminders to notify you of discounts and sales from favorite merchants. Learn more at:

**[neamb.com/shopping](http://neamb.com/shopping)**

Save like a VIP on name-brand appliances through the Whirlpool Corporation VIPLINK program.

As a member, you receive substantial savings, along with special promotions, using the VIPLINK program.

The program allows you to choose from hundreds of consumer products for your home, such as KitchenAid, Maytag, Amana, Whirlpool and more. The program also offers convenient shopping on a secure website. Members can purchase up to 12 products per year for themselves or family members.

The NEA Auto Buying Program offers guaranteed low, upfront prices, without haggling. It makes the auto buying process quick, easy and hassle free.

Members save an average of \$3,078 off the manufacturers' suggested retail price. The program allows you to design and specify the car with the features you want, online. Dealers are carefully selected to be a part of our nationwide network. Learn more at:

**[neamb.com/shopping](http://neamb.com/shopping)**

The mission of NEA Member Benefits is clear: offer quality, low, member-only rates. Learn more at:

**[neamb.com](http://neamb.com)**

*David Glenn is Nebraska's NEA Member Benefits representative*

# Credit Repair Scams: How to Avoid Them

Visit Legitimate Sites for Free Credit Reports

By **Lisa Gerstner**

Checking your credit report for suspicious activity is essential to combat identity theft. But if you go to the wrong site, your personal information could end up in the wrong hands. Just one website, [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com), provides free yearly credit reports as part of a federally required program.

To get the reports, you must enter sensitive information, including your Social Security number and birth date. And that's why there are so many phishing sites with similar URLs. Some other sites tout free credit reports, but they aren't part of the federal program and may charge you for credit monitoring after a trial membership.

Be sure to enter the URL directly into your Web browser's address bar and check that you typed the address correctly. If you transpose, add or omit any letters, you could end up on a knockoff page. Avoid using a search engine, such as Google, to look up the site – you could choose an incorrect

page from the list of results.

When you arrive on the home page, you'll see the AnnualCreditReport.com logo at the top, plus a statement that it's the only source of free credit reports authorized by federal law. At the lower right, look for the phrase "Brought to you by" followed by the logos of the three major credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

You can get all three of your reports at once. Or, if you'd rather keep tabs on your credit throughout the year, request one report every four months. AnnualCreditReport.com does not provide free credit scores, although you may be able to purchase a score when you get your free report. For more on free credit reports, go to the Federal Trade Commission's site.

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**Kiplinger**

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## Get Innovative Lesson Plans!

Save 20 Percent Through Lesson Planet

Churning out lesson plans can be stressful and time-consuming, but now, through a partnership with NEA Member Benefits, Lesson Planet offers a convenient way for educators to discover and share innovative lesson-planning resources at a discounted rate.

For more than a decade, the Lesson Planet solution has helped teachers find lesson resources, correlate them to standards, and organize curricula in a time-efficient way to inspire teaching with fresh ideas. Now, NEA members can utilize a 10-day, full-access free trial from Lesson Planet. The free trial includes:

- More than 400,000 online lesson-planning resources reviewed and rated by a team of credentialed teachers.
- Great standards-correlated lesson plans, worksheets, presentations, videos, and more – all available within seconds.
- Ability to organize curricula with

Lesson Planet's online planning tools anytime, anywhere.

- Ability to personalize learning and differentiate instruction.
- Sharing of teaching strategies, ideas, resources with fellow educators.

NEA members also receive a 20 percent discount from Lesson Planet.

As the leading online curriculum search solution for PreK-12 educators, Lesson Planet offers more than 400,000 teacher-reviewed curriculum resources within an online, professional community. In seconds, teachers can invigorate their curricula and save valuable planning time by using the search engine to narrow search criteria by subject, grade, "21st Century Skills," "Common Core State Standards," and more.

For details, a quick tutorial and testimonials, visit:

**[neamb.com/professional-resources](http://neamb.com/professional-resources)**

[online.nebraska.edu/teachers](http://online.nebraska.edu/teachers)

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**CAREER  
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## We Stand in the Way



**Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen**

“  
*Unions are the last organized barrier to an outright fire sale of America to support ‘supply-side’ tax benefits for the wealthy. We stand in the way.*  
”

In 2011, public employees and unions across the country were under attack. For weeks, thousands of public employees had filled Wisconsin’s state capitol building and grounds, decrying the Wisconsin governor’s effort to eliminate collective bargaining in that state.

Nebraska is not immune to anti-union sentiment. We saw a serious assault on collective bargaining that year in the Legislature. The Commission on Industrial Relations – Nebraska’s rarely used but orderly process to mediate contract disputes between public employees and their managers – was under siege.

NSEA worked long and hard to protect collective bargaining and reach a compromise with state lawmakers intent on CIR modifications, but Gov. Heineman criticized the compromise and urged that the CIR be relegated to an advisory capacity, with school boards given final contract authority. Such legislation would have effectively voided the contract negotiations process and neutered the ability of you, as a professional educator, to bargain a fair and reasonable contract.

I bring that recent history to the forefront for two reasons. First, the war on unions is not over. Second, an important date in that on-going battle is near.

### **The Great Fire Sale**

The Legislature’s sparring over the CIR was not about efficiency or cost containment. The Wisconsin governor’s action was not about escalating costs or good government. It was about destroying the only major institution that stands in the way of the wealthy grabbing more of America for personal profit: the teachers’ union.

Unions are the last organized barrier to an outright fire sale of America to support “supply-side” tax benefits for the wealthy. We stand in the way.

We are in the midst of The Great Fire Sale. Every public institution is in danger if it stands in the way of the economic interests of the very wealthy, or in the way of those who have been duped into a belief that what this country needs is to abandon the working middle class and serve the self-interests of big business.

There are three main battlefields in this war. First is the effort by the wealthy to capture profit from the functions of government. The top target: education, a \$900 billion-a-year enterprise – more than half the size of Australia’s Gross

Domestic Product. Why else would the ultra-rich donate great chunks of cash to think tanks (Pete Rickett’s Platte Institute, anyone?), reform efforts and “front” organizations related to the “reform” of government and education.

When the prize is capturing 60 percent of the value of the Australian economy right in their backyard, is the self-interest of big business really to have public education succeed? No wonder public schools, teachers and unions are marginalized, demonized – and demoralized.

### **You Are a Target**

The second battle is the effective tax rate. In 2006, 20 Nebraska millionaires paid no Nebraska income tax. By 2009, there were 46 Nebraskans in that category.

The ironic, indisputable fact is that the richest people in this state are not paying their fair share toward the state’s current fiscal problems. If you have \$1 in your pocket right now, you have more than the Nebraska tax liability of 46 millionaires.

The third front is every benefit of unionization: your collective bargaining rights; your salary schedules and pensions; and dispute resolution mechanisms. Thus, you have the battle over the CIR, the war in Wisconsin, and the attacks wherever public sector unions stand strong.

The only thing standing in the way of these interests winning these battles is the collective action of strong unions. Teachers will always know what is most important to us. There are too many children depending on us to ever forget that.

### **The Great Equalizer**

We can say ‘no’ to selling our schools to the profiteers; we can say ‘no’ to selling out the middle class with huge tax breaks for the super-rich. We can do this by voting on Tuesday, Nov. 4. Under the rule of one person, one vote, the ballot box is a great equalizer. Within these pages are the recommendations of candidates for election to governor, legislature and other key institutions. Politically balanced teams of your colleagues interviewed and vetted candidates, then made recommendations based on candidate answers to education-related questions.

Be an informed voter. Review the recommendations made by your colleagues. Then, whether you agree with the recommendations or not, please vote on Nov. 4.

## Health Care Seminar Dates Set

### Medicare Seminars Hit Omaha, Lincoln, Columbus, Kearney

The schedule of Medicare seminars will be mailed to all NSEA members age 62 and older, all NSEA-Retired members between the ages of 62 and 75, and all individuals enrolled in NSEA-Retired Blue Senior Classic.

Medicare seminars will be from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at each of the locations listed below. EHA pre-65 coverage information sessions will be at the same locations, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. So far, seminars will be at:

■ **Omaha:** Tuesday, Oct. 21, the Westside Community Conference Center, 3534 S. 108th St.

■ **Columbus:** Wednesday, Oct. 22, The Evans House, 2204 14th St.

■ **Lincoln:** Thursday, Oct. 23, the Center for People in Need, 3901 N. 27th St., Unit 1.

■ **Kearney:** Friday, Oct. 24, the Holiday Inn, 110 S. Second Ave.

### Be Sure Your Vote Will Count

The 2014 U.S. Midterm election is set for Tuesday, Nov. 4, and as always, your vote is crucial. Consider applying for an early voter ballot, in order to insure your vote is counted.

Any voter may apply for an early ballot. All Early Voting ballots, whether personally delivered, delivered by agent, delivered by mail or other carriers, must arrive by the poll closing time on Election Day (8 p.m. Central/7 p.m. Mountain).

To see NSEA's recommended candidates, turn to Page 11. To complete a form to request an early voting ballot, go to:

[www.sos.ne.gov/elec/pdf/earlyvote\\_app.pdf](http://www.sos.ne.gov/elec/pdf/earlyvote_app.pdf)

### Local Contacts for 2014-15

Each year, we publish contacts for the NSEA-Retired local affiliates. This month, we start with Omaha and Bellevue.

#### Omaha Education Association-Retired

The OEA-R president is Cheryl Richardson. Reach her at:

[cheryl.richardson@cox.net](mailto:cheryl.richardson@cox.net)

Other officers are Walta Sue Dodd, vice president ([wsdodd@aol.com](mailto:wsdodd@aol.com)); Secretary-Treasurer Dee Rankin ([51631INS@cox.net](mailto:51631INS@cox.net)); and bookkeeper Roger Rea ([roger.omaha@gmail.com](mailto:roger.omaha@gmail.com)). At-large directors are Richard Hood, Sharon Hayenga, Ruby



**All smiles! Fremont Education Association member Gwen Smith was the surprised winner of the quilt given away by NSEA-Retired this past summer. The raffle for the quilt, made by retired Lincoln teacher Lorene Behrends, raised more \$1,500 for the NSEA Children's Fund.**

Davis and Scott McGinty.

The OEA-R has 819 members, and annual dues of \$10. Lifetime dues are \$100. Meetings are at the Omaha Education Association, 4202 S. 57th St., at 9:30 a.m. Experts in their field will speak and answer questions following the OEA-R business meetings. Meetings are on these dates:

■ Oct. 17, with a presentation on Retirement by Mike Smith, executive director of the Omaha Public Employees Retirement System.

■ Dec. 4, with a discussion on taxes, led by Pat O'Malley.

■ March 19, 2015, with a visit by Omaha Public Schools Superintendent Mark Evans.

■ May 14, 2015, with a discussion on travel.

Other concerns for OEA-R members are taxes, Social Security, corporate schools, insurance and needs of today's teachers.

#### Bellevue Education Association-Retired

President of the Bellevue Education Association-Retired is Steven Lebedz ([slebedz@yahoo.com](mailto:slebedz@yahoo.com)). Other officers are Milt Butcher, vice president; Marilyn Larson Lebedz, secretary ([larsonmas@aol.com](mailto:larsonmas@aol.com)); and Sylvia Pelzer, treasurer ([SylviaPelzer@netzero.net](mailto:SylviaPelzer@netzero.net)).

The BEA-R has 50 members, and dues are \$5 annually. They meet the first Thursday of each month September through May, except January, at 9:45 a.m. at the Bellevue Public Schools Welcome Center. Planned activities include a fourth grade bus tour of Bellevue historical sites; and a Christmas party.

— *Rena Kelly, Editor*  
[renaerkelly@gmail.com](mailto:renaerkelly@gmail.com)

## Hassebrook Will Keynote NSEA-Retired Fall Conference

The NSEA-Retired Fall Conference is a month away, and registration has just opened on the website.

Nebraska gubernatorial candidate Chuck Hassebrook will headline and will present the keynote address at the conference on Tuesday morning, Oct. 28.

Hasting historian Walt Miller will

present the "Spotlight on Nebraska" talk on Tuesday afternoon. Miller recently published, "U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot," a book detailing the operation of the World War II Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) just east of Hastings. NAD was the largest of the Navy's inland munitions depots during World War II, with 207 miles of roads

and 2,200 buildings, including hundreds of igloo-shaped explosives storage magazines.

The conference will be held at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney on Tuesday, October 28, 2014.

Find complete conference details and register to attend at:

[www.nsea.org/retired](http://www.nsea.org/retired)

## Former NSEA-Retired President Giles was 86

Longtime Omaha educator and NSEA member Lorraine Giles, 86, died in Denver Aug. 16.

Giles began her 44-year career as an educator in 1948, and by age 24 became the youngest principal in the Omaha Public Schools. She served as principal at 14 schools over more than 40 years, including 15 years at Gilder/Giles.

After her retirement, Giles became involved in NSEA-Retired, and served as president from 1998-2000. She originated the idea of the NSEA-Retired scholarship program that today awards four \$1,000 grants to college seniors during their student teaching semester.

NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen marveled at her lengthy career as a principal, and said she was a true champion for classroom teachers.

"She always put her teachers first," said Christiansen.

Tom Black served as NSEA-Retired vice president under Giles. He recalled that Giles was at NSEA Delegate Assembly shortly after a knee replacement surgery.

"She was walking down the hall and when she saw me, she started skipping and smiling like a happy teenager," said Black. "She was a wonderful woman who cared so much for our members."

John Jensen and Roger Rea are retired Omaha teachers who

served NSEA-Retired with Giles.

"Lorraine's admonition to both me and Roger, with her great smile on her face as she said this, and a sparkle in her eyes, was to 'take care of my retirement dollars,'" said Jensen. "We, of course did. She was a wonderful friend."

A native of South Omaha where her parents owned a florist shop, Giles graduated from Omaha South High and is a member of the school's Hall of Fame. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Omaha.

She was past chair of the Omaha Safety Council, served on the board of the National Safety Council, received the School Bell Award from the Omaha Education Association, served on the OEA Board of Directors, and was a member of Dundee Presbyterian Church for 50 years.

Her husband of 42 years, Owen, preceded her in death. Daughters Janet and Carol, and their families, both of Denver, survive.

Memorial donations should go to the 2014 Denver Walk to End Alzheimer's at:

[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)



Giles

## Hartman-Bradley Appointed as NEA Caucus Secretary

If you are Native American or have Native students and families, please share: the Affordable Care Act allows Native Americans who can prove lineage to forgo a co-pay for their health care services. You will need to provide a tribal card or a history to your physician in order to get that discount.



Hartman-Bradley

**Tracy Hartman-Bradley** (Alutiiq, Aleut), Native American Specialist/Teacher for **Omaha Public Schools** and former NSEA EMAC chair (2010-13) was elected as NEA American Indian/Alaskan Native Caucus secretary during NEA Representative Assembly in Denver in July.

There are four ethnic caucuses: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Black and Hispanic. Each of these groups come together to meet with the NEA Executive Board to identify issues that our ethnic teachers, students and families face.

The NEA's long history of advancing the concerns of ethnic minorities is reflected in its Ethnic Minority Caucuses and their participation in the NEA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee. The caucuses serve to represent the interests and issues of their communities within the NEA and the community.

At the state level, **Scottsbluff Education Association** member **Micheal Macias** has accepted the position of Hispanic Representative for NSEA EMAC. Per the Bylaws, NSEA President Nancy Fulton appointed Macias for a one-

year term. He will represent the Panhandle Governance District on the EMAC Board of Directors.

## In the News: Minden, Grand Island, McCool Junction, ESU 13, E. Butler

The Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture recognized two members of the **East Butler Education Association**.

**Kathy Bohac** teaches fifth grade and **Patti Romshek** teaches fifth and sixth grade at Brainard. They led students to dive into agriculture with six units covering soil, soybeans, corn, pork, beef and nutrition. One field trip in particular increased awareness of the use of ag by-products.

"Some students cringed at the butcher shop as they saw the hearts and tongues of the pork, only to realize that nothing went to waste," said Bohac.

Both received an expense-paid trip to the 2014 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Hershey, PA.

Three NSEA members have been honored by the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association.

The 2014 Outstanding Elementary Teacher honor went to **Lori Nickels**, a teacher for the **McCool Junction Public Schools**.

The 2014 award for Outstanding Secondary Teacher was presented to **Joe Green**, a teacher at **Minden High School**.

The award for 2014 Outstanding Educational Service Unit Staff Member went to **Julie Downing**, of **ESU No. 13 at Scottsbluff**.

Retired **Grand Island** music teacher **Christa Speed** received the Gary Thomas Distinguished Music Alumna Award from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Speed is a 1978 graduate of UNK.

# Chemical Cleanout Plan is Under Way

## Schools Asked to Manage Chemicals

The Nebraska School Chemical Cleanout Campaign (NESC3) continues to bring improved chemical management to Nebraska Schools. The NESC3 was organized and implemented in 2007 and supported by Legislative Resolution, which encourages Nebraska schools to adopt and perform responsible chemical management for the protection of students and school staff.

To date, 79 percent of Nebraska high schools have participated in the campaign. Cleanouts have helped schools rid schools of hazardous waste such as:

- Unpredictable and potentially explosive chemicals.
- Radioactive materials.
- Mercury, mercury compounds and mercury thermometers.
- Unknown and expired chemicals.
- Chemical waste that must be destroyed by State Patrol Bomb Squad.

Through the NESC3, 85 percent of costs are grant funded. Staff completes an annual inventory and properly manages chemical storage. Schools become more compliant with hazardous waste regulations. Keep Nebraska Beautiful's Allen Grell manages the campaign.

To participate, or if your school has previously participated and there is a need for additional chemical removal, call Grell at 1-800-486-4562.

## Speaking of Teaching

"Education is not the answer to the question. Education is the means to the answer of all questions."

— William Allin,  
Author, *Designer*, 1936 —

## 'Awesome' Noise Control

From Deborah Allen, a teacher at Valmead Elementary School, Lenoir, N.C.

"I used to have difficulty getting the class quiet. Nothing short of screaming 'shut up!' seemed to make any difference. Then I wrote the word 'awesome' on the board. When I had to speak to the entire class, I erased a letter beginning with the final letter. If the class made it to lunch time with the word intact, they sat where they liked. If not, they had assigned seats. If they lost the en-



tire word by the end of the day, the following day they had silent lunch. If the entire word was intact at the end of the day, they were rewarded with 15 extra minutes of PE the next day. The first two days the class was at 'awe' by lunch time and they had an 'a' left at the end of the day. Each day they improved. This past week they had the word intact at lunch two days out of five. It worked for me when all else failed."

Sign up for Works4Me at this link:  
[www.nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html](http://www.nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html)

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



**First Pitch:** NSEA members Judith Stucky, left, Westside District 66; and Kristen Demuth, right, Elkhorn, were honored guests and among those who threw out the first pitch for the Omaha Storm Chasers baseball team in late July. They both threw strikes to the catcher on a night that featured an event by the Omaha and Millard education associations. Stucky is NSEA's reigning Teaching Excellence Award winner, and Demuth received NSEA's Rookie of the Year Award in April.