

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ September 2013

John Moody, Seward

- Teacher
- Coach
- Association Leader

I BELONG ^{x2}

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Upcoming Assignments

Blue Cross Scholarships

Oct. 12

■ **What:** Working to improve your skills or gain additional endorsements? The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska scholarship program can help you defray the cost of the coursework.

■ **Details:** The deadline is Oct. 12. Learn more on Page 15.

NSEA Advocacy Conference

Oct. 18-19

■ **What:** This event is a must for negotiators and association leaders who hope to be up-to-date and holding the latest information when bargaining opens this fall for the 2014-15 contract year.

■ **Details:** At the Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island. For details, call your UniServ director at 1-800-742-0047, or check the story on Page 5.

NSEA-Retired Fall Conference

Oct. 23

■ **What:** The annual NSEA-Retired Fall Conference promises to be enjoyable and worthwhile, especially since it will be held once again at the Institute of Culinary Arts in Omaha.

■ **Details:** Learn more, and find out how to register for the conference on Page 22.

Oct. 15 Deadline for NEA Foundation Grant

Awards up to \$5,000 in Achievement or Leadership Categories

Each year, the NEA Foundation awards approximately 150 Student Achievement and Learning and Leadership grants to educators. Grants range from \$2,000 to \$5,000, and applications are taken three times each year. The next deadline is Oct. 15. The grant details:

■ Student Achievement Grants:

The Foundation provides grants to improve academic achievement in public schools and public higher education institutions in any subject. The work should engage students in critical thinking and problem solving that deepens their knowledge of subject matter. The work should also improve inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection.

■ Learning & Leadership Grants:

The Foundation's Learning & Leadership grants support public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in high-education for one of these purposes:

Grants to individuals fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research; or grants to groups fund collegial study, such as study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring for faculty.

Have an idea for a grant? The deadline to submit an application is Oct. 15. Apply for a \$2,000 or \$5,000 grant at:

neafoundation.org

Also Available

Educators have great ideas to help students, but often lack resources to bring ideas to life. To help, beginning Sept. 3, the NEA Foundation will match public donations made to NEA members' requests for materials on DonorsChoose.org.

When you post your project on DonorsChoose.org, for each dollar you receive from citizens, the NEA Foundation will give one, too! Visit the Foundation's website to discover how to post your requests or to help fund educators in your area at:

neafoundation.org/pages/donorschoose-org/

How to Apply

The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators three times a year. The next grant deadline is Oct. 15. Application forms and a video with step-by-step instructions on how to apply can be found in the Grants to Educators section at: www.neafoundation.org/pages/grants-to-educators/

Cover Story:

John Moody is more than a coach at Seward High School. He's also a teacher, a negotiator and a member of the Seward Education Association. And he says he wouldn't have it any other way. Find out why inside on

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How to Sustain ‘The Good Life’



**NSEA President
Nancy Fulton**

“
Clearly, any proposed tax code changes will have broad and deep implications for public schools, right down into your classroom.”

Nebraskans take great pride in the state of our state. We have great schools, safe streets, quality hospitals and strong communities.

We believe these characteristics are foundational blocks of what we in Nebraska call ‘The Good Life’ and are worth preserving. Thus, it is crucial for the education community to pay close attention as the work of the Legislature’s Tax Modernization Committee begins.

The 2013 Legislature created the committee, charging it to study the current state tax code and make recommendations to bring the state’s tax structure “up-to-date.” The committee has scheduled five public hearings across the state over the next two months, with a final report and recommendations due in December. Legislative action on those recommendations would be the first major overhaul of the state’s tax code in 45 years.

Clearly, any proposed tax code changes will have broad and deep implications for public schools, right down into your classroom. Naturally, NSEA will keep a close eye on proceedings. It would be wise for you to study and watch, as well.

Safeguard the Legacy

We can all agree that the state’s well-being rests on an investment in education that provides for advanced curriculum; cutting-edge technology and instruction; a focus on reading, math, science, social studies, art and music; as well as facilities and other infrastructure. Such investment ensures our kids get what they need to become global leaders.

The Tax Modernization Committee has the opportunity to make recommendations that will safeguard this sustained investment in the Good Life. The committee also has a rare opportunity to ensure a fair and just tax code.

The committee recommendations and ensuing legislative action, might, on the other hand, harm those foundational blocks. After all, there are those who read the committee’s charge and see the words “tax cuts” or “corporate tax relief” ahead of tax fairness and revenue sustainability. Their overarching goal is to attract and benefit business and industry, even though: Nebraska ranks No. 2 among all states on the Corporate Top 10 Pro-Business States for 2013; No. 4 among all states in a CNBC poll of

most business-friendly states; and No. 1 in Site Selection magazine’s 2012 New Firm Tax Index.

While laudable, a more pragmatic approach is to offer a world-class education to our children; provide an educated citizenry with a strong work ethic; and use *that* resource to attract business investment. After all, Nebraska already stands tall in those pro-business, tax incentive-gauging-kind-of-rankings.

Speaking of rankings, Nebraska sits very poorly in one list.

A Not-So-Hot Ranking

The recent recession caused fiscal decisions that eroded financial support for some of our foundational blocks. Policymakers cut support to education and health care. They pushed property taxes up by slashing state aid to cities, counties and schools.

Historically, property taxes have financed public education in America. Over time, federal, state and local governments have all come to share the cost. Yet Nebraska ranks 49th in state aid to public schools. The non-profit Tax Foundation says Nebraskans pay the fifth highest level of property taxes, as a percent of home values. The correlation is obvious.

As the Tax Modernization work proceeds, NSEA will work to promote a fair and balanced tax code that provides continued, sound investment in Nebraska. You’ll want to keep tabs on the process; it will affect you. Together, we can encourage policymakers to rebuild and sustain The Good Life.

Follow the Tax Modernization Hearings Near You

Scottsbluff: Monday, Sept. 23, 4-7 p.m. (MST), Harms Advanced Technology Center, Western Nebraska Community College.

North Platte: Tuesday, Sept. 24, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Mid-Plains Community College.

Norfolk: Thursday, Sept. 26, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Northeast Nebraska Community College, Lifelong Learning Center.

Omaha: Thursday, Oct. 17, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Metro Community College, S. Omaha Campus.

Lincoln: Friday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., State Capitol, Room 1113.



Finding Nebraska’s Great Public Schools (GPS)

NSEA members from around the state appear or are mentioned in this issue. Look for details on colleagues from:

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- Bellevue Page 10
- Chase County Page 7
- Columbus Page 14

- Crete Page 5
- Dundy Co.-Stratton Page 10
- Fort Calhoun Page 5
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- Palmyra-Bennet Page 5
- Ralston Page 10
- Seward Page 6
- Sidney Page 5
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- Twin River Page 7
- Winnebago Page 11

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2 The first payment due date may be extended up to 90 days from the date of funding. Interest accrues from the date of funding. 90 Days No Payment offer is valid for new auto loans only and is not available on refinances of existing First Nebraska Educators Credit Union auto loans. Election of 90-day first payment due date may increase finance charges.



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You Have the 'UniServ Edge'

NSEA's 18 UniServ Directors Work to Assist You

Perhaps the most valued aspect of your NSEA membership is the extensive knowledge and expertise that stands behind you through the NSEA UniServ program, the member rights program and legal services.



for another year. The administration said that they don't need a paper contract, and that it is an assumption that I accepted a continuous contract if I did not tell them by April 15 of my

intention to not return to the district. What are my rights?"

"I plan to retire on December 31 and am presently a member of NSEA and have joined for the 2013-14 school year.

"I don't want to lose my membership status because I plan to continue BCBS insurance after retirement (currently on BCBS). What needs to be done?"

Whether it's a question about your job, your employment or related issues, your UniServ director is the place to start.

For example, these questions came through the NSEA website and were addressed by NSEA UniServ directors:

"Are teachers supposed to sign a new contract every year? I was hired in January for the 2012-2013 school year, but nothing beyond that was provided for me to sign for the next school year.

"When I turned in a letter of resignation, I was told by the administration that I still have a contract with the district. I did not sign a contract

To get answers to these and other questions, contact your UniServ director at 1-800-742-0047 (402-475-7611 in Lincoln), or through the 'Contact Us' link on the website at:

www.nsea.org

57,000

According to Education Votes, 57,000 American children will lose access to Head Start services beginning in September, thanks to the budget sequester that kicked in when Congress failed to adopt a budget earlier this year.

The sequester caused billions to be cut from federal education budgets, and will also result in 1.3 million school days cut from the calendar, said Head Start officials.

Congressional inaction will also hamper the economic recovery: About 18,000 Head Start employees will lose jobs or see hours reduced.

NSEA Board OKs Bond Issue Support

The NSEA Board of Directors has approved funding to help four local associations support bond issues in their districts. The board approved grants for these bond issues:

- The **Sidney Education Association** requested a \$500 direct grant to assist with promotion of a bond issue for a new K-4 building.

- The **Crete Education Association** requested \$500 to help passage of a \$33 million bond for new high school, plus renovation of the current high school and work on the elementary building.

- The **Kearney Education Association** sought \$566 in matching funds for bond to finance a new high school and middle school work.

- The **Palmyra-Bennet Education Association** sought \$500 to promote a bond to renovate the existing facility for performing arts, classrooms, athletics and vocational tech education.

- The **Fort Calhoun Education Association** sought \$500 to assist a bond issue to update the existing high school to meet safety, Americans with Disabilities Act and energy codes. The bond will also update heating, air conditioning and technology systems, and move music, industrial tech and weight training into the main building.

Advocacy Conference is Near

Learn How Affordable Care Act Will Affect Your Contract

Do you know how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will affect your contract in 2014-15? Has your local bargained under LB397 and its bargaining calendar and resolution officer provisions? If not, don't finalize the contract with your school district until you've talked to your UniServ director, or until you have attended one of two NSEA Advocacy Conferences.

How the ACA (more familiarly known as Obamacare) will affect school district contracts will be a focus of the NSEA Advocacy Conferences, set for Grand Island and Scottsbluff (see sidebar, below).



Also, many locals will bargain for the first time this year under the new calendar.

The NSEA Advocacy Conference will be held at the Grand Island Holiday Inn on

Friday evening and Saturday, Oct. 18-19.

"For a lot of reasons, this is a very important conference for negotiators to attend," said NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan.

To register for the conference at either site, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047, or go to the website at:

www.nsea.org

For details, reach your NSEA UniServ director at the number above.

Panhandle Conference is Nov. 8-9 @ Scottsbluff

The Panhandle District Advocacy Conference will be Friday evening, Nov. 8, and Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Hampton Inn Convention Center in Scottsbluff.

On the agenda: details on the Affordable Care Act's effect on contracts; and an 'Introduction to the NSEA' for Education Support Professionals, both Friday and Saturday.

Watch the October edition of *The Voice* for more details.

Seward's John Moody is

Green & Growing

in Association Role



A Busy Man: Between his duties as a teacher, coach, basketball referee and more, Seward's John Moody is an ardent believer in Association membership. He is vice president of the Seward Education Association and a member of the Association's negotiating team.

Moody Sets Example as Teacher, Coach, Association Leader

John Moody is a busy man, always on the move. He has a name for his very active lifestyle: green and growing.

A full-time social studies, psychology and American history teacher at Seward High School, Moody also coaches softball; is president of the Seward Softball Association; referees high school basketball; chairs his church administrative council; and teaches at Concordia University.

"I had a college professor who said 'either you're green and growing, or you're brown and dying,'" said Moody.

He is certainly the former, especially when you add to his list of responsibilities service as vice president of the Seward Education Association, member of the SEA negotiations team and a strong proponent for Association membership.

"The obvious reason for membership is the protection issue – that safety net NSEA provides if a problem with your employment arises," he said. "NSEA is there to support you and to provide assistance."

The local Association also negotiates salaries and benefits, with the support of NSEA, and NSEA and NEA offer money-saving member benefits programs, he said.

Locally, the SEA is "active and well-respected in the community," said Moody.

"We honor our retirees, we donate to local charities, we work with Habitat for Humanity, the food pantry, the blood drive and other projects," he said. "The members and the public see the benefit. We are visible in the community."

'Good Listener'

Nebraska Coaches Association Ex-

With a membership in both the NSEA and the NCA, teachers and coaches have two organizations working to help them be the best educator they can be — which is exactly what students and athletes across Nebraska deserve.

Darin Boysen,
Executive Director,
Nebraska Coaches
Association

ecutive Director Darin Boysen says membership both in his organization and NSEA will help teachers and coaches to become better teachers.

“With a membership in both the NSEA and the NCA, teachers and coaches have two organizations working to help them be the best educator they can be – which is exactly what students and athletes across Nebraska deserve,” said Boysen.

For instance, with NSEA providing a safety net, educators can work secure in the knowledge that they have the backing of a team of experts in teaching, administration, education law and other facets of education. NSEA’s 18 field staff – called UniServ directors – offer that expertise.

Speaking of skills, Moody’s busy schedule has taught him much, he said, including reinforcing skills he uses in the classroom and as a negotiator for his fellow Association members. As a basketball referee and negotiator, he said, listening is an essential skill. “You need to be a good listener, and listen more than respond,” he said.

That skill spills over to other areas, as well.

“That has taught me to listen and to see that there are two sides to an issue, and to see the issue through someone else’s eyes,” said Moody. “That helps at the negotiations table, in the classroom and with parents.”

The ‘Big Rocks’

In the past, Moody has also coached in summer softball leagues, and coached football, basketball and college basketball. To juggle that kind of hectic schedule, “you have to be a planner and an organizer, and set priorities,” he said.

His wife, Julie, a bookkeeper for the Seward Public Schools, and daughters Sarah and Hannah give him a lot of support. “My wife and kids know and understand there is some passion for some things, and everyone has to make some sacrifice to make it work,” he said.

Moody is quick to note that the “big rocks in the jar” are family, church, community and school activities. Educators who keep those items at the forefront will find time for Association membership and leadership. And they’ll continue to be green, growing – and successful.



Action from the Nebraska Coaches Association Clinic

Hundreds of NSEA members visited the NSEA booth at the Nebraska Coaches Association Clinic in late July, where they posted their name and school district on a map of the state, and registered for one of four \$25 gift certificates to Scheels.

Pictured, from top down, posting their names on the state map are Brian Thimm, Ashland-Greenwood Education Association; Kami Florea, McPherson County Teachers Association; Tom Johnson, Hastings Education Association; Kim Cotton, Garden County Education Association; and Ashley Borer and Crystal Hasenstab, both of the South Central Unified Education Association at Sutton.

Winners of the four gift cards were Scott Hansen, Emerson Hubbard Education Association; Amy Wattier, Twin River Education Association; Monte Burrell, Chase County Education Association; and Matthew Koehn, St. Paul Education Association.



dress for the part



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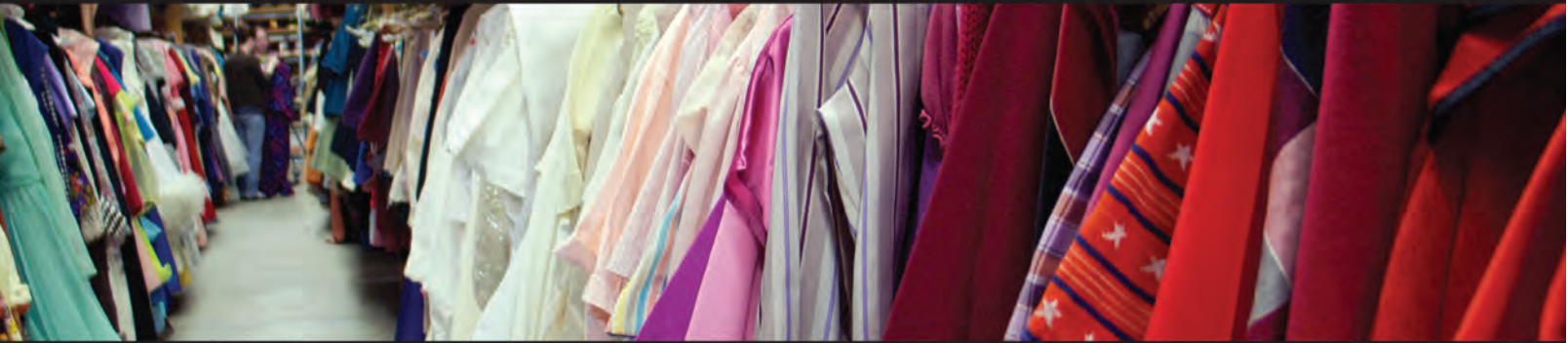
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Norfolk EA Connects with Chamber

'Local First: Norfolk' Campaign Kicks off School Year, Thanks Businesses

The Norfolk City Education Association is on a roll.

More than 125 members and local business owners attended the first of what may be an annual teacher/business luncheon to kick off the school year.

Billed as a 'welcome back' for teachers, the barbecue was also a 'thank you' to local businesses for their support of local school events and projects.

The luncheon was part of the Local First project by the NCEA, an effort to help citizens understand the relationship between strong schools, a strong community and a strong economy.

In attendance were various community leaders, educators, school administrators and dignitaries, including State Sen. Jim Scheer. The Norfolk City Education Association, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk Public School and the Norfolk Public Board of Education sponsored the event.

NCEA member and NSEA Vice President Leann Widhalm said the barbecue was also a well-timed congratulations to the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce for receiving 2013 National Chamber of the Year honors. The American Chamber of Commerce Executives organization in July named the Norfolk Chamber as the 2013 chamber of the year in the 100,000 or less population category.

"For a first attempt at trying to get teachers, administrators, school board members, chamber, and local leaders at the same place, we had a very successful event," said Widhalm. "The focus was thanking local business leaders for being in Norfolk, but we also wanted to



Sharing the message: Holding up a banner touting the 'Local First' theme are, from left, Lisa Pospishil, Norfolk Public Schools assistive technology coordinator; Norfolk Senior High School student Erika Hansen; NSEA Vice President Leann Widhalm; Norfolk City Education Association Treasurer Deb Holland; and NSEA UniServ Director Rich Wergin.

stress that we are all in this together. In working together for Norfolk's youth we continue to build 'Strong Schools, a Strong Community, and a Strong Economy!' and that's a win-win for all of us."

Educators distributed information that showed that, for every \$100 spent locally, \$68 stays in Norfolk.

Also unveiled were four new commercials, shot by Norfolk students, featuring interviews with local businesses. The commercials each point out the dis-

tinct and vibrant relationship between local merchants and local schools, and how buying from those local merchants enhances the community.

"Our public schools get great support from our local chamber members and our local merchants," said Widhalm. "And our NCEA members certainly support local merchants. It's win-win."

The new commercials are at this website:

<http://bit.ly/localfirstnorfolk>

Lex EA Plants Seeds of Support for Business

Springtime is a season of renewal and, this past spring, Lexington students and educators renewed their support for downtown businesses.

In April, Lexington Public Schools students and employees participated in a 'Pennies for Planting' campaign that gave students and school employees an opportunity to give their spare pennies to help fund the purchase of flowers and plants to decorate the downtown Lexington business district.

The City of Lexington placed flowers and other plants in containers throughout downtown, and pennies collected by Lexington students and teachers will defray the cost.

The campaign emanated from the Lexington Education Association's Love Lexington Committee.

"By helping to make the downtown business district a more

beautiful place, it will help the businesses there and give people a sense of pride in their community," said Tracy Naylor, Love Lexington co-chair.

A jar was located at each Lexington school for students and staff to place their pennies. The school that collected the most pennies received a tree for planting on the school's property.

"As we strive to make our community a better place, it seems fitting that an appropriate acknowledgement of a school's generosity would be a tree. A tree is enduring — like our commitment to Lexington," Naylor said.

Pennies for Planting is the second activity sponsored by the Love Lexington campaign. In February, a receipt drive was held to demonstrate the importance and economic impact of buying locally.

Love Lexington
Strong Schools...Strong Community...Strong Economy



The Cupcake Caucus: Three members of NSEA’s Cupcake Caucus pause for a moment during deliberations at the NEA Representative Assembly in Atlanta this summer. From left are Kory Hall, Bellevue; Michelle Kelsey, Ralston; and Verla Martin, Dundy County-Stratton.

‘We Educate America’

At NEA Representative Assembly, Members Urged to Take on Leadership Roles

Now, more than ever, educators must take on leadership roles, fight for social justice and work together to create positive change for students in their schools and classrooms — ensuring great public schools for every student.

That was the crux of the message by National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel to nearly 9,000 delegates at the NEA’s 72nd annual Representative Assembly in Atlanta. More than 100 NSEA members attended as delegates, led by President Nancy Fulton, Wilber-Clatonia.

Van Roekel’s remarks served as a strong reminder of the NEA’s powerful and consistent voice for equal opportunity in education, economic and civil rights for all. Throughout its history, NEA has taken bold steps in transforming America’s public education system, from the 1966 merger with the American Teachers Association to its decision to collectively bargain in the 1970s.

Today is no different: inadequate funding, overuse and

misuse of testing, and misguided and unproven policies continue to threaten and undermine student success.

“This is a defining moment,” Van Roekel told delegates.

Van Roekel recounted slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s warning to his followers: “There is no time, ‘to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the drug of gradualism,’” stressing that the delegates must “act in the urgency of now” to empower NEA members to create change that really helps improve student success.

“We educate America,” Van Roekel said. “It’s what we do every day as individuals, but also what we do together as an organization ... working to lead our

professions and taking responsibility for our professional practices.”

Van Roekel referenced legislative attacks on unions and attempts to privatize education by corporate “education reformers.” He pressed delegates to keep fighting for their students and schools “if we are going to take charge of our

“Politics is a team sport. We need to make sure we are heard at city hall, the statehouse and the White House. We need to have a presence on local, state and national committees responsible for setting this nation’s education agenda.”

**— Donna Schulze,
NEA ESP of the Year**



Fourth of July Finery and Other Photos:The NEA Representative Assembly session held on July 4 each year offers a splash of patriotism, as shown from left, by Pat Etherton of Lincoln; Tom Meyer, Lincoln; and Taralyn Brown, Omaha. Also pictured are Tiffany Heese, Winnebago, directing NSEA delegates to oppose New Business Item No. 11, as determined by a vote of NSEA delegates earlier in the day; and Lincoln teacher Susan Townsend with a very good Abraham Lincoln look-alike.

own professions, if we want to move beyond the old debate that has been defined by others — and replace their kind of solutions with our solutions.”

A ‘Team Sport’

The first step, however, is a step to the fore, said NEA Education Support Professional of the Year Donna Schulze.

Getting politically active at all levels of public discourse “is critical to assuring that parents, school board members, and the general public understand our daily work,” Schulze said. “I think much of the public has a distorted picture of teachers, principals and school support staff. They’ve seen too many movies.”

A Maryland para-educator for 23 years, Schulze urged the 9,000-plus delegates gathered in Atlanta to “get in the game” and “be a player” at all levels of government, education, and politics.

“Politics is a team sport,” said Schulze. “We need to make sure we are heard at city hall, the statehouse and the White House. We need to have a presence on local, state and national committees responsible for setting this nation’s education agenda.”

Schulze told teachers, school support staff, and administrators from K-12 to higher education that the general public “is probably not aware of how much work you take home each night. They don’t reflect on how evening and weekend school work can conflict with family time.” By getting politically active, she said, educators can help to clear up common misperceptions about the daily workload.

“The public seems to think that you get paid to attend back-to-school nights, weekend dances, and sporting events,” said Schulze. “They are also under the grand illusion that the school board pays for all of the supplies in our classrooms.”

“We need to raise our hands and our voices and educate them to the truth,” said Schulze. “And for this to succeed, we need to step up and step out of our comfort zones and get politically active.”



Gordon Peeks is the Man: North Platte Education Association member Gordon Peeks is comfortable sharing the spotlight with, from left, South Sioux City’s Tracia Blom; Deb Pauley, Omaha; Lincoln’s Tammy Schaefer; and Omaha’s Rebecca Marks.

The Six Tenets of ‘Educational Paradise’

NEA Teacher of the Year: Great Teachers Do Not Allow Students to Fail

NEA 2013 Teacher of the Year, Jeff Charbonneau of Zillah, WA, cautioned against anyone thinking that teachers don’t set high standards. On the contrary, he said, “great teachers do not allow students to fail.” Insisting on student success is one of the six tenets of his self-described “educational paradise.” The other five? Every day is the most important day for every one of your students; all students deserve help; great teachers always find solutions; teachers help each other; and a culture of high professional ambition benefits students.

“These strategies define teaching. They define the state of education in our country, because each and every one of them is taking place in schools throughout our nation. But these six strategies also define something else. They define leadership.”

Such leadership must be moved to the forefront for the entire nation to see.

“I need you to use your leadership abilities to their fullest to help redefine the message of education to match what we see everyday,” he said. “We are not a nation of failing schools. We are a nation of schools that are continually working to improve and adapt to a changing world. Please continue to lead our students and our colleagues into a future that recognizes just how valuable an asset public education is to our society.”

Fourth Grade Alert: Ag Sack Lunch is Back!

Soybean, Pork, Corn Producers Sponsor Lunch at State Capitol

A free sack lunch and a presentation about Nebraska agriculture await fourth-graders again this school year, thanks to a program sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB), the Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA) and the Nebraska Corn Board (NCB).

The Nebraska Ag Sack Lunch program, starting its fourth year, educates Nebraska fourth-graders about the importance of agriculture.

Each year more than 20,000 fourth graders visit the State Capitol as part of their curriculum. The Ag Sack Lunch Program invites teachers to reserve a time and place – either before or after their tour – to enjoy the presentation and lunch. Program sponsors provide 5,000 free lunches. Reservations are on a first-come-first-served basis.

In addition to the free lunches, students receive a card game full of farm-related facts to take home and play with their families. Many teachers use the game in classroom settings, as well.

In early September, fourth-grade teachers in about 660 elementary schools in the eastern third of the state will receive letters of invitation. Those classrooms are deemed most likely to make the Lincoln trip.

The presentations, which last about 20 minutes, teach students about the vital role agriculture plays in the state's economy. The Ag Ambassador presentation leaders are University of Nebraska-Lincoln students.

For example, students will learn that Nebraska ranks second in the country in cattle production, sixth in pork production, and that more than one-third of Nebraska-produced grain is fed to livestock within the state.

"Participating teachers continue to tell us how their students learn so much from the presentations," said Victor Bohuslavsky, NSB executive director. "Their visit to the State Capitol provides a great opportunity for us to help them understand where their food comes from and how farm production practice used by Nebraska farmers help protect the environment while ensuring food safety and promoting animal health."

The lunches donated by the NSB, NPPA and the NCB are limited to the first 5,000 students to register. Project coordinators urge teachers to register as soon as possible, even if they haven't firmed up their Capitol tour. The program runs through the entire school year. Registration is available on-line at:

brokawmarketing.com/reservation

University of Nebraska High Offers 100 Scholarships

Virtual Scholars Initiative Provides 100 Stipends For University Classwork

The University of Nebraska has launched the second phase of its Nebraska Virtual Scholars program.

Initiated in 2011, the program will expand access to online courses to more high school students in the state and create opportunities for the university to work with school administrators – particularly those in rural Nebraska – to identify challenges that could be addressed through online education.

This year, the Virtual Scholars program will provide 100 scholarships to Nebraska schools for students to take courses from the University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) for free. Formerly the Independent Study High School, the University of Nebraska High School is a university-wide initiative that, in line with the goals of the state's P-16 Initiative, is expanding access to education to more students who face barriers with traditional paths to degrees. The program is especially focused on supplementing the education of Nebraska students by providing STEM, Advanced Placement, foreign language and other courses not offered at their schools.

Schools must apply on behalf of their students. Applications are available here and will be accepted until Sept. 13, with recipients announced in early October. While the program is open to all Nebraska schools, it is focused on expanding opportunities for students in rural schools. The University of Nebraska High School's full catalog of more than 100 core, elective and Advanced Place-

ment courses will be made available.

The University of Nebraska High School serves more than 2,400 students, 250 of whom are from Nebraska. Scholarships provided through the Virtual Scholars program cover tuition, fees and course materials. The standard cost for Nebraska residents for University of Nebraska High School courses is \$194 per one-semester course.

<http://www.education.ne.gov/cspd/Mentoring.html>



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Supported through IDEA funds administered by Nebraska Department of Education (alice.sensenev@nebraska.gov) in partnership with the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha along with the New Teacher Center.



At the table: NSEA President Nancy Fulton and Director of Instructional Advocacy Jay Sears, at right, consulted with the State Board of Education's Search Committee as it began the task of hiring a new Commissioner of Education. From left are State Board of Education Pat Timm, Beatrice; Lynn Cronk, Grand Island; Mark Quandahl, Omaha; and a Department of Education employee. Also on the committee is State Board of Education member Rebecca Valdez, Omaha.

Search for New Ed Commissioner Under Way

NSEA Offers Preferred Characteristics for Next Department of Ed Boss

As the State Board of Education search for a new commissioner of education got under way in August, members of the search committee made certain that key education community stakeholders had input in the outcome.

At the top of the stakeholder list: NSEA.

NSEA President Nancy Fulton and Director of Instructional Advocacy Jay Sears met with members of the search committee to lay out some of the ideal qualifications for a new commissioner.

Among those characteristics deemed important by Nebraska teachers, said Fulton, the next commissioner must:

- Understand the diversity of school districts in Nebraska and be able to work with small, medium, urban, suburban and rural schools.
- Have the respect of Nebraska educators.
- Be able to build working relationships with the legislature, governor and policy partners.
- Be focused on supporting student learning.
- Have a vision that is compatible to the State Board of Education and its policy partners.

■ Not have a plan to “fix” Nebraska K-12 education, but be willing to listen and collaborate with all stakeholders.

The new commissioner will face many challenges, said Fulton, not the least of which is implementation of a new teacher evaluation model, the Teacher and Principal Performance Framework. Nearly two dozen Nebraska school districts are piloting the model this year.

State's English Standards A-OK Study: Nebraska Matches Well with Common Core

Nebraska English-language educators wondering about how the state's four-year-old standards stack up against Common Core standards can rest easy.

A study of Nebraska's four-year-old language arts standards indicate they meet Common Core standards in most cases. In fact, a 400-page study paid for by the Nebraska Department of Education said Nebraska's four-year-old standards are more demanding in some areas.

The final tally indicated that in about 97 percent of the standards studied, Nebraska's standards meet or exceed Common Core requirements.

“I think we can be proud of the standards we have,” said Donlynn Rice, curriculum director for the Nebraska Department of Education. “The differences are not major.”

The study was conducted by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

The study said there were differences in the way the standards were organized and also in levels of specificity, but nonetheless said the standards were largely aligned. The results of the study were released during the August meeting of the State Board of Education.

While there were some differences in the rigor between the two sets of standards, NDE Director of Language Arts Education Tricia Parker said when measured side-by-side, the Nebraska standards had more rigor.

“This is evidence that our Nebraska teaching professionals are performing excellent work, providing world-class, challenging teaching and assessment,” said NSEA President Nancy Fulton.

The results of a study of the state's math standards will be released at the State Board's September meeting.

Also on the immediate horizon, said Fulton, is resisting pressure around Common Core State Standards vs. Strong Nebraska Standards and Assessments; negotiating the effect of federal influence on requirements to receive federal education dollars; balancing testing and instruction requirements; a new governor and legislature in 2015.

“Among all those considerations, that next commissioner must be able to sift through the chaff and be able to put students and classroom learning above

all else,” said Fulton.

On behalf of NSEA, Fulton and Sears complimented the Nebraska Department of Education's knowledgeable staff and efficient use of resources.

“There is a focus on student learning and involvement of all stakeholders. Department efforts do work to seek ‘Nebraska solutions’ to education issues, rather than hopping on the latest educational bandwagon,” said Fulton.

The new hire will replace Roger Breed, who retired in June. The board hopes to hire a replacement in January.

From Nebraska to Oklahoma:

Following a series of deadly spring tornadoes in Oklahoma, the Columbus Education Association donated \$1,000 to the Oklahoma Education Association's tornado relief fund. The fund helps teachers affected by the tornadoes reestablish their classrooms. From left are CEA members Cristine Niles, Jane Dodson, Sandy Seckel, Lori Foher and Mindi Struebing.



Rural Nebraskans Support Spending on Education

Poll Puts Education Near Top of Priorities

Most rural Nebraskans support continued or even increased spending on a variety of public services ranging from public broadcasting to roads, education and safety, according to the 2013 Nebraska Rural Poll.

The 18th annual University of Nebraska-Lincoln poll went to 6,320 households in Nebraska's 84 nonmetropolitan counties in March and April.

Thirty-eight percent of rural Nebraskans supported increased spending on roads and bridges, and **35 percent supported more spending for education.** No other public service garnered more than 21 percent support for an increase in public spending. The poll found that most rural Nebraskans would like to see no change in the level of spending for:

- Public safety (police, fire, etc.), 69 percent;
- Hospitals and health care, 64 percent;
- Natural resources, parks and recreation, 63 percent;
- Corrections and rehabilitation, 61 percent;
- Housing and community development, 61 percent;

- Workforce training, 60 percent;
- Public broadcasting services, 59 percent;
- Roads and bridges, 56 percent;
- Medical assistance to the poor, 53 percent.

The only public service for which a majority of respondents – 51 percent –

supported less public spending was unemployment compensation.

The Rural Poll is the largest annual poll of rural Nebraskans' perceptions on quality of life and policy issues. The margin of error is plus or minus 2 percent. Find complete results at:

ruralpoll.unl.edu



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It's Time!

Blue Cross & Blue Shield Scholarship Applications Due in October

Are you looking to enhance your knowledge and skills, but to do so in an inexpensive way? Apply for a scholarship through the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Professional Development Fund.



The scholarships are awarded three times yearly, and the next deadline, for the fall term, is Saturday, Oct. 12. Applications must be made

through the NSEA website. If you do not receive e-mail confirmation of your application, call NSEA.

Scholarships may be used to pursue an advanced degree, seek additional endorsements or for certification. Stipends may cover up to 50 percent of the cost of a single, three-hour college course. Applicants may seek scholarships for no more than three hours. Books and supplies are not covered.

To apply, NSEA members must complete the application form on the NSEA website. The form will be posted at nsea.org through the Saturday, Oct. 12, deadline.

Scholarship winners will be notified by Nov. 1. The goal is to award stipends to the largest number of members from each of NSEA's governance districts. To be eligible, NSEA members must be covered by single or family Blue Cross/Blue Shield health care.

Previous applicants, successful or not, may re-apply. However, applicants may be scholarship recipients in only two of the three scholarship cycles during a school year.

Winners must provide evidence of completion of course work at an accredited post-secondary institution before they receive the scholarship funds. Courses must be taken for credit.

Since 1986, 4,895 NSEA members have shared more than \$640,000 in scholarship dollars. The program does not affect Blue Cross and Blue Shield premiums. To apply, go to:

www.nsea.org

For details, reach Sally Bodtke at 1-800-742-0047 at:

sally.bodtke@nsea.org

Nurses, Trainers Eligible for Additional Liability Coverage

Employment Liability Program is Just \$13 Annually

For nurses who teach or supervise in the medical arts area, it would not be wise to start the school year without the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program Insurance.

For only \$13, NEA provides nurses and other health educators and athletic trainers additional liability insurance coverage for teaching and supervisory responsibilities.

The policy for active and active part-time NSEA members covers school nurses for:

- Rendering first-aid and regular nursing services as a part of the member's educational employment.

- Administering oral prescription medicine to students, if advance written authorization has been provided.

In addition to nurses, eligible school employees include dental hygienists, occupational therapists or physical therapists. NSEA members who are athletic trainers may also buy the additional coverage.

NSEA members wishing to purchase this extended coverage should send a letter requesting the coverage, along with a check for \$13, payable to NSEA, to: Megan Lyons, NSEA, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Be sure to indicate your occupation (school nurse). Also include your home and work telephone numbers.

Checks for the 2013-14 school year must be received by Oct. 1, 2013. Checks received after that date will provide coverage for the remaining months of the employment year.

For more details, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer

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Middle Level Institute Planned at Fremont

The Nebraska Association for Middle Level Education will host the association's annual institute in Fremont on Friday, Oct. 11, at Fremont.

The keynote speaker will be former Norfolk teacher Kim Campbell, a geography and history teacher, author and Minnesota Middle Level Teacher of the Year. She is a positive behavior intervention specialist, and created an after-school program, Students in Academic Rise, which works to close the achievement gap in her Hopkins, MN, school.

She has authored two books, *SOAR: A Handbook for Addressing the Achievement Gap*, and *If You Can't Manage Them, You Can't Teach Them*.

The institute is set for Fremont's Johnson Crossing Academic Center. Registration and a continental breakfast open at 7:30 a.m. The institute will begin at 8:15 a.m. and conclude at 3:15 p.m., and will include a variety of breakout sessions.

Registration is \$70 for NAMLE members; \$90 for non-members. Schools with institutional membership bringing 10 or more receive a \$50 per head rate. For details, call Brent Cudly at 402-721-2003, or go to:

www.namle.org

Pork, Soybean Producers Offer Free Teaching Tools

The Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA) and the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB) are offering entertainment-based educational packages free to teachers to increase awareness of the importance of agriculture.

Food for Thought is a 22-minute animated video that teaches students how hog farming is practiced in Nebraska. It is accompanied by a complete lesson plan and a short video filmed on a Nebraska hog farm to show day-to-day farm life.

Bingo is a card game featuring "Pork Bingo" on one side and "Soy Bingo" on the other. It teaches students important facts about pork production, soybean farming and how science helps us use virtually every part of the pig and bean.

Quantities are limited. Order at:

brokawmarketing.com/food-for-thought

or

brokawmarketing.com/bingo

Staples Says: 'It Pays to Be a Member!'

Staples claims that "it pays to be a Staples Rewards member."

That was never more true than today, with the start of the Reward a Classroom program that allows Staples customers to earn extra rewards for a teacher of their choice.

As educators, teachers can already earn 5 percent back in rewards. The Reward a Classroom program allows parents to earn extra rewards, and designated those rewards to a particular teacher, including:

- 2 percent back in rewards on everything, excluding postage, phone and gift cards, and savings passes;

- 5 percent back in rewards on every copy and print purchase.

Teachers must be enrolled in the Teacher Rewards program, and parents must be a part of the Staples Rewards program, in order to participate. Teachers and parents can join the rewards program at the Staples website, and parents will select their participating teacher at the Staples website.

The Rewards program includes purchases made at any Staples store – there are stores convenient to NSEA members in Omaha, Lincoln, Fremont, North Platte and Scottsbluff – or online. And the best news: free shipping for online orders, with no minimum order. Learn more at:

staples.com/rewardaclassroom

Ed Tech Association Sets Dates for Fall Conference

The Nebraska Educational Technology Association's fall conference will be held Oct. 2-3 at Kearney.

Registration opens at noon on Oct. 2, with optional pre-conference workshops from 1-5 p.m. The conference

begins at 6 p.m. with dinner and a keynote. Registration fees include dinner and Thursday lunch.

Oct. 3 will feature a full day of sessions with classroom strategies and tools to enhance learning. Registration opens at 7:30 a.m. that morning.

Seating is limited. For details, go to:

www.fall.netasite.org

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Higher Ed Summer Conference Sizzles!

Members Set Higher Ed Plans for Coming Year, Get Bargaining Update

More than 20 Higher Ed Academy leaders from NSEA's higher education locals, as well as NSEA leadership and staff, met in Kearney in late July to review current staffing and programs and to plan for the coming academic year.

NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn provided an overview of the NSEA UniServ program, highlighting elements specific to higher education. This included identifying those UniServ directors with higher education assignments and reviewing training and resources available for higher education locals and leadership.

The most recent training opportunity was the NEA-sponsored Western Regional Organizing Institute, held in Albuquerque, NM, attended by Bill Wozniak, president of the University of Nebraska at Kearney Education Association, and by Charissa Loftis, president of the Nebraska State College Professional Association – Wayne Campus.

NSEA Director of Research Larry Scherer focused on collective bargaining tools and strategies, including how to locate and make effective use of IPED and CUPA data. Peru State College's Spencer Davis said "The HEA conference presented valuable updates

on NSEA policy and trends for the next several years. Our members should benefit from this detailed information."

One highlight of a social note was the presentation of a plaque from NSEA President Nancy Fulton to Roger Davis, former NSEA Higher Education Academy president and 10-year member of the NSEA Board of Directors.

Higher education members found the conference rewarding and worthwhile, as reflected in the following comments:

"Not only did I receive a ton of useful information, but the discussion among the HEA officers and the dia-

logue between us and the NSEA staff was productive." – William Wozniak, UNK.

"I felt that NSEA listened to the issues and concerns of the Higher Education Board and to the members who were in attendance at the conference," –Linda Chandler, Metro Community College.

And, from Karen Granberg of Wayne State College, "The HEA conference this summer effectively met the needs of our local Association with excellent exchange with NSEA regarding collective bargaining, as well as Higher Education Academy visibility concerns."

Horace Mann Wants You to Have a Year of Coffee

Teachers are up early and what better way to start the day off than with a cup of coffee or another favorite morning drink. Horace Mann's Cup-A-Day Giveaway Facebook contest will give one teacher the opportunity to get a cup of coffee every day of the school year.

Through September 13, go to Horace Mann's Facebook page and enter to win. You'll have a chance to win the \$499 grand prize VISA gift card, which will cover the cost of one educator's morning drink for the rest of the school year. Plus, each day of the contest we will give away a \$20 gift card to Starbucks.

For more information on the rules, go to Horace Mann's Facebook page.



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NSEA, LEA Mourn Radenslaben

The NSEA lost one of their own on Aug. 4 when Taina Radenslaben died in Lincoln, ending a lengthy battle with cancer. She was 41. She had worked as an administrative assistant at the Lincoln Education Association for five years.



Radenslaben

Radenslaben's battle with cancer began at age 14, and her lengthy history with the disease enabled her to inspire and counsel others. She was a recognized Cancer Survivor and appeared on Susan G. Komen Survivor billboards in Lincoln and Omaha. She also participated in many Relay-for-Life fund-raisers and social functions of a cancer support group at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

She was a graduate of the Leigh Community Schools and Platte Community College in Columbus. She worked at Educational Service Unit No. 7 and in other office management positions before joining LEA.

LEA President Jenni Absalon called Radenslaben "the heart and the beautiful smile of our office."

"She was never in a bad mood, always positive to every member and person who called or came into our office. She made me a better person, a better president. She will be missed terribly by her LEA family," said Absalon.

LEA Executive Director Dan Studer said she always put others before herself.

"Those who were lucky to know Taina know there was no one quite like her: kind and generous, always endeavoring to help others, a true optimist, caring and concerned about others, a hard worker, a fighter, a woman of deeply held values, always giving of herself," wrote Studer.

Survivors include her husband, Cory; children, Hunter and Ashley; her parents and siblings, nieces and nephews. Memorials are to an education fund for her children.

Two Join UniServ Staff

Longoria, Gordon New; Scherbring takes Millard Slot

Two retirements and a resignation have resulted in a shuffling of units among NSEA's 15 UniServ units across the state.

Longtime NSEA UniServ Directors Jackee Wise and Midge Dublinske retired over the summer, and Trent Steele resigned to take an administrator's position with the Papillion-LaVista Public Schools.

Wise had served members in southwest Nebraska for several years before taking over duties in the suburban Omaha area for the past 10 years. Over an 18-year span, Dublinske served educators in south central Nebraska and then Kearney, Hastings and Grand Island area. Steele worked with members in west central Nebraska, roughly from Broken Bow, southwest to McCook and east to Franklin.

New on board as UniServ directors are Andrea Longoria, who will be based in Scottsbluff and handle the Niobrara Unit in northwest and north central Nebraska, and Randy Gordon, who will take over the Central UniServ Unit formerly served by Steele.

Longoria is a graduate of the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University of Nebraska College of Law. For the past several years she has worked for the Scotts Bluff County Attorney's office as a deputy county attorney, where she handled juvenile cases, including child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency and truancy cases.

"I was the main attorney dealing with truancy issues, so I worked with the schools and am familiar with many of the administrators and some of the teachers in the area," she said. "And I really enjoyed the part of my job that involved working with the schools."

LPS Veteran

Gordon taught early primary grades and was a building rep at Longmont, CO, for four years, and then for the



Longoria



Gordon



Scherbring

Lincoln Public Schools for 15 years, before leaving to become a national program manager for the Arbor Day Foundation, where he managed the urban forestry program.

With LPS, Gordon was on the Lincoln Education Association Board of Directors; on the bargaining team; was a building rep; was a member of the school board contact team; and attended both NSEA Delegate Assembly and NEA Representative Assembly.

Also new on staff is Becky Scherbring, who will serve as associate staff for the Millard Education Association, replacing the retiring Mary Jo Warren.

Scherbring taught pre-school and early elementary grades for the Millard Public Schools for 12 years and was an active association member at Millard during those years. For the past five years, she has taught at Baby Maestro, a baby and toddler music class

Domino Effect

The Wise and Dublinske retirements set off a domino effect. Veteran UniServ Director Marlene Wehrbein moved to Wise's former unit, Metro South, which includes suburban Omaha and area local associations.

Gary Osborn moved to Wehrbein's former Southeast Unit, and former Omaha Education Association UniServ Director Ellen Yates has assumed Osborn's former Flatwater Unit, which includes Cuming, Colfax and Dodge counties.

Former Niobrara UniServ Unit Director Carol Hicks took Yates' position with the OEA.

Finally, High Plains UniServ Director Kristen Sedlacek has been assigned Dublinske's former Tri City unit, which includes locals in the Kearney, Hastings and Grand Island area.

An appointment to fill the High Plains unit is pending approval by the NSEA Board of Directors.

Save With Dave!

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neamb.com

Benefits include up to \$1,000 of life insurance; up to \$5,000 of AD&D insurance; and up to \$50,000 of AD&D for any covered accident while on the job or serving as an Association leader.

If death is caused by an unlawful homicide while the member is engaged in any activity in the express or implied terms of the member's occupation, the benefit payable is \$150,000.

Eligible NEA-Retired members are able to receive the \$50,000 benefit associated with Accidental Death & Accidental Dismemberment caused by an accident or assault while acting on Association business in the capacity of Association leader.

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

Savings for You!

Save Cash with These NEA Member Benefits Offers

Each month NEA Member Benefits offers some real savings opportunities for members. For the month of September, consider these options! Go to the NEA Member Benefits website (neamb.com) to find details on these deals:

■ Shop a great selection of key brands teachers have grown to trust and get 15 percent off on regular-priced items from Carson-Dellosa Publishing. That offer includes decoratives, pocket charts, games and books that will motivate students and take learning to another level. In addition, you'll find free shipping on orders of \$35 or more.

■ Using Digital Wish, you can build a wish list of technological products for your classroom, and tell prospective online donors how their support will help students. After your purchase, Digital Wish donates from 2 percent to 10 percent to your next project.

■ There is a sale going on at Smile-Makers! The online teacher store for student rewards, classroom décor and more has savings of up to 20 percent for NEA members, including free shipping on all orders. Use the promo code

NEAMB when placing your order.

■ Hard to believe, but NEA's Read Across America is just six months away. Find everything you need, and more, at the NEAMB Read Across America Dr. Seuss Store. NEA members receive 20 percent off, and free shipping on orders of \$25 or more.

■ Uboost is a neat way to recognize student achievement and engage students. Backed by research, the program rewards students with redeemable points for prizes they'll want. NEA members can register to receive a prize valued at \$265.

■ Adopt-A-Classroom utilizes social networking to encourage friends and others to donate to your Adopt-A-Classroom account. You can then use donated funds from online vendors to buy classroom supplies.

■ Curriki is a non-profit that empowers educators to share curricula. NEA members can upload and download as resources freely. That includes lesson plans, units, assessments, rubrics, online courses, and multimedia assets like ebooks, etextbooks, videos, podcasts, animations and photos – all at no charge!

Enter NEA's Sallie Mae Contest: You Could Win \$2,000!

NEA Member Benefits has teamed up with Sallie Mae, provider of the NEA® Smart Option Student Loan Program, to offer NEA members four chances to win \$2,000 cash! It's NEA Member Benefits' way of rewarding you for your dedication and helping you further your own educational pursuits.

Through September, enter to win. If you're one of the lucky \$2,000 winners, you could choose to fund professional development courses for yourself, cover some of your expenses toward National Board Certification, or even help a family member with their college tuition!

To enter, call the NEA Member Service Center at 1-800-637-4636, or visit:

www.neamb.com

New Members: 12 Months Free!

The NEA Member Benefits Introductory Life Insurance Program offers \$15,000 in life insurance coverage for 12 months, at no cost to new members. After 12 months, the new member can choose to continue policy with no underwriting and at low, member-only rates. Check it out at:

www.neamb.com



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Don't Confuse Higher Ratings with Higher Ed

In education policy, definitions matter. Being a student is often a matter of popular definition. At Iowa State University, students are not “Iowa Staters” until they have been kissed under the Campanile. But definitions differ. Kissing someone under the Campanile at the University of Kansas define who you marry. When I was a freshman at the University of Nebraska, the tradition was that any girl who left NU without being kissed under the Columns would cause those columns to crumble. That didn't suit my interests, so I spread a new definition: freshmen were not really students unless they had been kissed under the Columns.

Changing the definition changes the game. Actions and results depend on meanings and definitions. Today, in colleges and universities across the nation, discussions are being held to consider new definitions — and new policy directions — for higher education.

The policy decisions that have evolved over a long period in this country on access and qualification for higher education tend to differ significantly from the general European model. In Europe, the tradition has been towards policy definitions that require a standard of preparation and academic achievement for what is generally a government subsidized college education.

U.S. Ranking Drops

In the U.S., values of democratization and equal opportunity extend deeply into the policy decisions of higher education. America tends to offer greater access to those secondary students (and adults) who decide relatively late that they want to attend college, even those with inadequate preparation or little record of academic achievement. On the other hand, European educational policy decisions generally incent high academic achievement and preparation for college with substantial subsidies for college students who qualify for admission.

The tension between the American and European approaches to college access (and financial support) is often seen in the debates on the public purpose of college education, the finan-

cial effects on students and their families, and the demand for job market values in determining both the value of a college education and the effectiveness of colleges in producing graduates. The numbers that accompany these debates are often interpreted as failures in the American college system. America once was ranked at the top internationally in the percentage of college graduates. The U.S. now ranks lower than many other

countries in the percentage of college graduates and higher in the cost to students and their families. There are consequences for how we define who ought to be a student and who should bear the cost of both success and failure. Policy definitions matter.

Not a Simple Measure

Recently, President Obama proposed a “market” rating system for America's higher education institutions. The ratings would measure a college's affordability, its graduation rate, and how high its students' incomes were after graduation. Critics may point to the use of affordability and graduation rate in masking the contentious issue of measuring the value of a college education by the income of its graduates, the so-called “gainful employment” measure of a student's education. The President also proposes support (and incentives) for more “innovations” by colleges to increase graduation rates. All of this sounds fairly reasonable, if the purpose is simply to ensure that those students with some of the \$150 billion

in aid are successful. The danger is that, as we have recently seen in K-12 education, the measurements often become the goals — the only goals. The goal for American higher education cannot be a simple measure of increasing students' income and their ability to pay off their student loans. Higher education is properly measured in more than economic terms.

If there are incentives for colleges to have a higher emphasis on saleable skills and graduate income, we will probably see increases in those measures. Those colleges will receive the highest ratings on this new scorecard. But let's never confuse higher ratings with higher education.



Definitions Matter: NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen under the Columns at the University of Nebraska.

Tax Breaks for Retirees Sought

Retiree-Friendly Policy Aim of Coalition Action

The Coalition to Make Nebraska Retiree Friendly met in July. Coalition members discussed the points they want to be sure to deliver to the Legislative Tax Modernization Committee during public hearings this fall. The time to act to make Nebraska more attractive and fair to retirees is now!

The coalition's core message says "It is in the State of Nebraska's best economic interest to treat retirees fairly regarding taxation of retirement income."

If you would like to help share this message with legislators, contact Roger Rea, NSEA-Retired president, at:

roger.omaha@gmail.com

Become a Lifetime Member of NSEA-Retired

The NSEA-Retired is a statewide association of educators committed to:

- Protecting and improving retiree pension and health benefits.

- Protecting and improving Social Security and Medicare.

- Improving public education through mentoring, literacy and intergenerational programs and activities.

- Achieving legislative and political action goals for public education, public education employees and NSEA-Retired members.

As an NSEA-Retired member, you are able to continue your NEA Member Benefit Programs, support your colleagues, public education and Nebraska's children. Several members share information about membership in the video, *NSEA-Retired: Now More Than Ever*, found at:

[youtube.com/](http://youtube.com/watch?v=jbZ6i33JIG0)

[watch?v=jbZ6i33JIG0](http://youtube.com/watch?v=jbZ6i33JIG0)

Active NSEA members may join as Pre-Retired Lifetime members while still teaching. Retired educators may



NSEA-Retired in Atlanta

The NSEA-Retired was ably represented at the NEA Representative Assembly in Atlanta this summer. Attending, from left, were Tom Black, West Point; Roger Rea, John Jensen, Carol Krejci and Walta Sue Dodd, all of Omaha; and Pat Etherton, Lincoln. At right, Jensen, serving as vice president of the NEA-Retired, takes a moment to relax during Representative Assembly activities.



join as Lifetime members or Annual members if they are at least 50 and were an active member in the Association the year they retired.

Seminars on Health Care for Retirees

The schedule and details about Health Care for Retirees seminars will be mailed to all members age 65 or older, and will be available on the NSEA-Retired website when the schedule is complete, in late September or early October. To date, the following seminars will be held:

- Oct. 29 in North Platte.
- Oct. 30 in Kearney.
- Oct 31 in Omaha.

- Nov. 12 in Norfolk.
- Nov. 9 in Scottsbluff (Medicare only).

Check *The Voice* next month for details.

More NSEA-Retired Details

Check out the NSEA-Retired website for details about activities, including information on the board of directors, calendar and meetings, important links, insurance and Medicare support, intergenerational mentoring, legislation, local retired organizations, member photo gallery and more. That site is at:

nsea.org/retired

—Rena Kelly, Editor
renaerkelly@gmail.com

Cookin' up a Fall Conference at the Institute of Culinary Arts

The 2013 NSEA-Retired Fall Conference will be held once again at the Institute of Culinary Arts on the Metropolitan Community College Campus in Omaha. Save Wednesday, Oct. 23, as the date for this informative event,

and look for more details on the NSEA-Retired website after Sept. 3, or in the October edition of *The Voice*.

To make reservations, contact NSEA's Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047.

Duncan Appoints Fennell to Teaching Fellow Post

Omaha teacher Maddie Fennell has been selected by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as one of eight Teaching Ambassador Fellows for the 2013-14 school year.

Three teachers will serve as full-time employees at Department of Education headquarters in Washington, D.C.. Fennell will be one of five who will remain in their classrooms and participate on a part-time basis.

“The Teaching Ambassador Fellows play a critical role in ensuring that we hear directly from classroom teachers across the country, helping us to understand their needs and hopes for students,” said Duncan.

Now in the sixth year, the Teaching Ambassador Fellowships were created to give outstanding teachers an opportunity to learn about national policy issues in education and to contribute their expertise to those discussions. Fellows, in turn, share what they’ve learned with other teachers in their professional networks, contributing to a larger understanding of federal initiatives and encouraging broader input into policy.

In early August, the eight new fellows participated in a four-day summit at the Department’s headquarters to become more familiar with federal education policy and Department staff, and to begin exchanging ideas for enhancing communication between teachers, stakeholders and education policy leaders.

This year’s fellows were selected from a pool of more than 1,200 applications. Fennell is a literacy coach at Miller Park Elementary School in Omaha, serves on the NSEA Board of Directors and was the 2007 Nebraska Teacher of the Year.



Fennell

Joseph Buettner

A past president and long-time member of the Holdrege Education Association, Joseph Buettner, died on May 5 in Holdrege. He was 87.

A lifetime association member, Buettner spent his entire 39-year teaching career in Holdrege, retiring in 1987. He began as a seventh and eighth grade math teacher and eventually became the Algebra I teacher, a post he held until retirement. He also coached junior high football, basketball and track.

A World War II veteran with the U.S. Navy, Buettner was active in the Elks Hoop Shoot contest, enjoyed sports and was past president of Holdrege Baseball, Inc.

Memorials will go to the Phelps County Community Foundation for a scholarship to benefit students pursuing a career in education.

Londa Lee Sanburg

Londa Lee Sanburg, 53, an NSEA member and a teacher at Scott Middle School in Lincoln, died July 26 in Lincoln.

Sanburg was born in Iowa and graduated from Westside District 66 in Omaha and Kearney State College. She taught at Doniphan before joining the Lincoln Public Schools, where she taught at Beattie and Hill Elementary Schools before joining the Scott Middle School staff.

Sanburg is survived by her husband, Sean, and three daughters.

Anne Shaughnessy

Anne Shaughnessy, 60, known for a love of art, theater and a passion for teaching, passed away on July 10 from cancer. Shaughnessy taught kindergarten for the Millard Public Schools for 33 years, was an award-winning educator and a leader in the Millard Education Association.

A Detroit native, she received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan and a master’s degree and a PhD from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She was named Millard’s Teacher of the Year award, and received honors from the Metropolitan Reading Association, the Library Board and other organizations.

Shaughnessy served as president of the Millard Education Association, on the NSEA Board of Directors, and the NSEA Metro District Board of Directors.

She was active with The Metropolitan Reading Council; the Nebraska State Reading Association and The Omaha Association for the Education of Young Children. She presented locally and nationally on language and literacy development in young children.

Memorials are requested to the Joslyn Art Museum, Theater Arts Guild, Josie Harper Hospice House or Planned Parenthood of the Heartland.

Ten First Place Awards at SEE!

NSEA Honored at 68th Annual Meeting of Editors

NSEA staff and leadership received 10 first place awards and another four honorable mention awards at the 68th annual meeting of the State Education Editors, held this past June in Atlanta.

Among top honors earned was Best Magazine, for the 2012-13 editions of *The Voice*; Best Website, for nsea.org; Best News Story; Best Feature Story; and Best Editorial.

A story on the emerging use of video cameras by school districts to monitor classrooms earned the Best Feature honors, as well as an award for Best Editorial Design.

The Best News Story honor came for an April 2012 report in *The Voice* on the overwhelming support among Omaha Education Association members to hold a bargaining certification vote.

NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen’s December 2012 column entitled *Measuring Up* was named Best Editorial.

A Read Across America photo series received Best Photo honors.

NSEA also swept honors in the Social Media categories, taking home first place in the Best Use of Social Media, for on-going efforts; and winning the Best Targeted Social Media Campaign for an Early Voter Campaign conducted in September and October 2012.

A win also came in the Best Design for Marketing Materials category for a Student Education Association of Nebraska ‘Learn with Friends’ campaign.

King's 'Dream' Speech is 50!

Anniversary Marked for March that Sought Equality, Justice

It has been 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr. sparked the Civil Rights movement with his timeless "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C.

As often happened, King went "off-script" and the "dream" portion of his speech was part extemporaneous and part rehash of a speech he had given at least twice on earlier occasions.

The difference was that the Aug. 28, 1963, event was before a crowd of 250,000, as well as a national television audience that for the first time heard King's well-honed and engaging speaking style, as well as saw a large and peaceful demonstration – sharp contrast to the confrontational marches in Birmingham that gained international notoriety just a few months earlier.

The anniversary was recalled with a week of commemorative programming in the U.S. Capitol, including a march along the historic 1963 route; the King Global Collegiate Leadership Summit; and bell-ringing ceremonies in Washington, D.C., and across the nation.

March organizers had set a broad goal of fundamental economic justice with a narrower focus of job creation for all Americans.

What they got was one of the greatest speeches in the country's history, rapid advancement in changes to civil rights law and the enduring legacy of a warm day in August 1963.

For more resources, go to:

<http://officialmlkdream50.com/>

Speaking of Teaching

"The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute and above all new wage levels that meant not mere survival, but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome."

— *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*
1929-1968



Teaching quartet: Betty Sluka Thomsen, seated, taught in rural school districts in Fillmore County from 1945-49, and then saw a second and third generation turn to the teaching profession, as well.

Standing, from left, are grandson Jason Thomsen, who taught science at Bellevue West before moving to Lincoln Southwest High School; daughter Gayla Probasco, a retired science teacher who started her career in 1971 at Holdrege Senior High and also taught at Arapahoe, Twin Valley and finally Southwest High School in Bartley; and son-in-law George Probasco, who began teaching elementary school at Arapahoe in 1965, later became a middle school science teacher, and also worked at ESU No. 17 in Ainsworth, at Twin Valley and at Southwest in Bartley before retiring in 2007.

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

'Let's Save the Earth' Presentation!

From Diane Postman, a science teacher in Yorktown, Virginia:

"After teaching my second and third grade science lab students about ways we can help the earth, I enlisted their help in creating a Power Point presentation to show our school. I asked the kids to have someone photograph them doing something that saves the earth. It could be anything.

"I got a wide variety of photos including: using reusable grocery bags, putting items in a recycling bin, reusing a 'junk' item, screwing in an energy-saver light bulb, pretending to take a shower as opposed to a bath, turning off unused lights. I created the presentation, set it to music, and showed it an assembly. It was very popular and really seemed to get kids to realize that every little bit helps."

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

