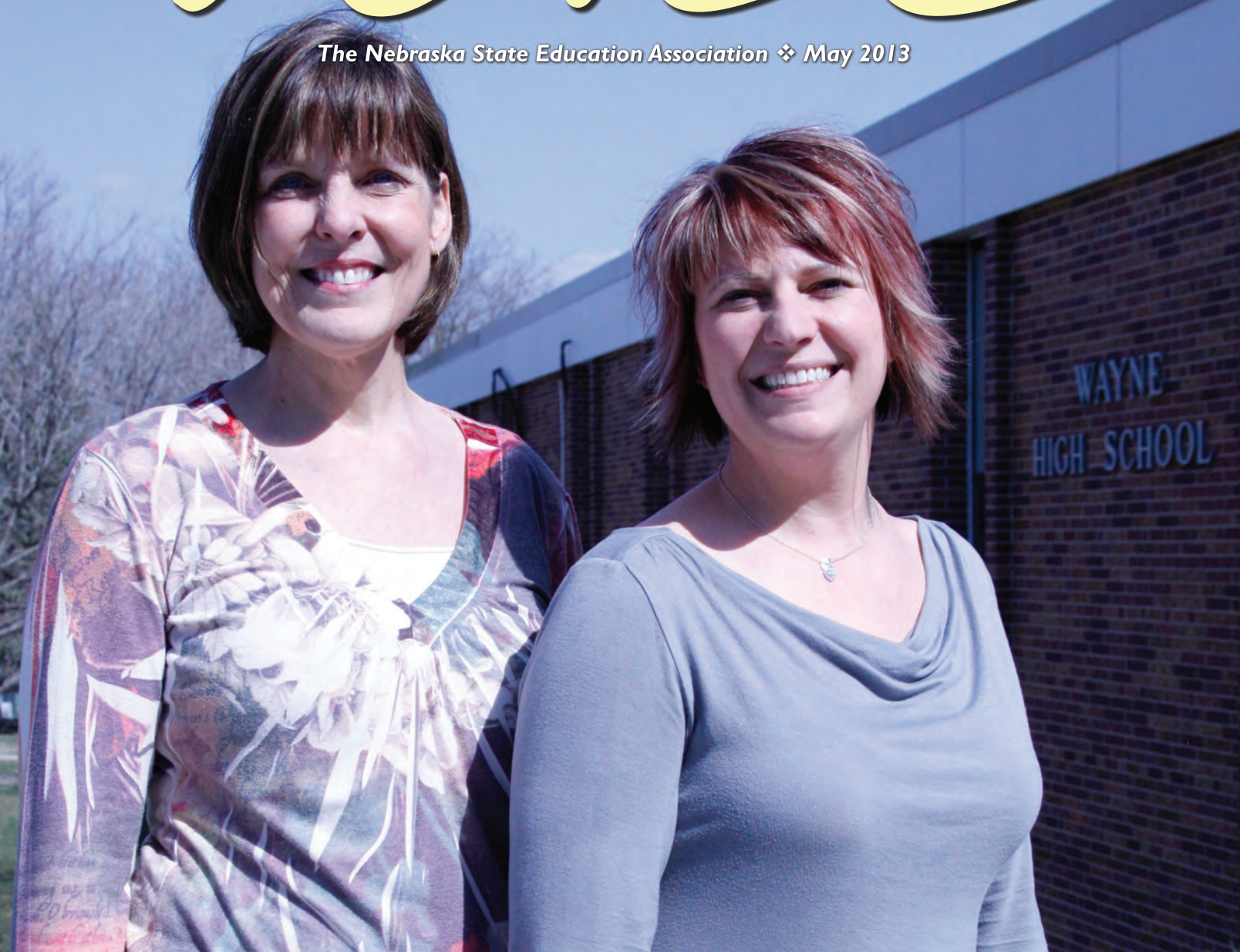


THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ May 2013



CERTIFICATION: *It Just Makes Sense.*

**Blue Shirts Swarm
at Delegate Assembly!**

**South Central Earns
Good School Award**

Upcoming Assignments

May 7

National Teacher Day!

■ **What:** On National Teacher Day, thousands of communities honor local educators and acknowledge the crucial role teachers play in making sure every student receives a quality education.

■ **Details:** Learn how you can encourage a local observance by clicking on the 'Grants & Opportunities' tab at:

www.nea.org

June 1

SEAN Golf Scramble

■ **What:** The Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) will host a golf scramble at Lincoln's Woodland Hills Golf Course to benefit the Outreach to Teach program. Play begins at 1 p.m. Cost is \$55 per player, \$220 per team. Reach Tommie Leaders or Devin Garcia at these e-mails:

tommieleaders@yahoo.com
degarcia@campus.peru.edu

July 16-18

NSEA Leadership Institute

■ **What:** NSEA's annual skills workshop for future leaders.

■ **Details:** up to 40 members in an expense-paid workshop on leadership skills. For more, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Fremont Educators Earn NEA Grant

NEA Foundation Funds 'Sensory Courtyard' for Special Needs Students

Mary Robinson, a teacher of the blind, and co-applicant, Maggie George, both of the Fremont Public Schools, have received a \$5,000 Student Achievement Grant from the NEA Foundation to create a "Sensory Courtyard." The courtyard will offer a unique, hands-on approach to providing greater educational opportunities for students with special needs. Students will have opportunities to actively participate in unique educational experiences and increase their exploration of new textures to awaken their senses and become more productive.

"With these grants, we are supporting educator-driven solutions that contribute to improved student performance in public schools," said Harriet Sanford, president and CEO of the NEA Foundation. "Our support enables educators to engage in a wide variety of innovative approaches to the benefit of students across the country."

Nationwide, the NEA Foundation announced 55 grants totaling \$176,000 to support efforts to improve teaching and learning. The Foundation awards two levels of funding, \$2,000 or \$5,000, for two categories of grants to public education professionals: Student Achievement Grants for initiatives to improve academic achievement, and Learning and Leadership Grants for high-quality professional development activities.

Eighteen grantees plan to conduct interdisciplinary projects. The remaining grantees will address nine different subject areas, reaching a total of nearly 21,000 students and more than 1,600 educators at schools, where the average free or reduced lunch rate is 48 percent.

Each year, the Foundation awards approximately 150 Student Achievement and Learning & Leadership Grants. To learn about these projects, visit the Foundation's newly redesigned Grantee Archive, where you can search for grantees and projects by grade level, subject, state, or keyword. That site is at:

www.neafoundation.org/pages/past-grantees/

How to Apply

The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators three times a year. The next grant deadline is June 1. 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/

On the Cover:

Educators in Wayne weren't certain what a certification election meant for their local. Once they found out, they were all aboard. Find out what a certification election means for your local association when you turn to

Page 14



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Great Public Schools For Every Child

Pause, Reflect, Assess



**NSEA President
Nancy Fulton**

“
As educators,
as we reflect
and assess, we
must dream
of a future
that includes
the resources
needed to help
every child
succeed.

”

Like many teachers, I paused for a moment near the end of the school year to reflect and assess the past term's accomplishments. It is always good practice to keep past accomplishments in mind as we begin to prepare and dream for the next year.

As association members, it is important that we pause, reflect and assess as well – which is just what 300 of your colleagues did at the recent NSEA Delegate Assembly. In a two-day exercise in democracy, they received reports on the past year of NSEA activities and then discussed and set the Association's direction for the future.

As you near the end of the school year, perhaps you will pause to assess the value of your Association membership. Some questions to consider:

- What might your classroom or career be like in a Nebraska without NSEA?
- Would your salary reflect your additional hours of schooling and degrees?
- Would your gender or your standing (or lack thereof) in the eyes of an administrator cause you to earn more or less than a colleague down the hall, even though that colleague's duties mirror yours?
- Would your district offer health insurance coverage?
- Would you have a retirement plan that guaranteed your ability to retire in dignity?
- Who would represent your interests before policymakers?

Vigilance on Retirement

As I write this, late on a Wednesday evening, NSEA is working for you in the Capitol Rotunda. Key state senators have worked with NSEA for six months on a plan to keep your defined benefit retirement plan solvent well into the future. LB533 embodies that plan.

At the last moment, as LB533 was set to advance from Select File to Final Reading, Omaha Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh lobbed a hand grenade into the middle of the compromise. His last-second amendment would have stripped the bill of virtually all elements of the compromise, leaving the state with a statutory obligation of \$108 million over two years to keep the retirement plan viable. Sen. Tyson Larson of O'Neill championed Lautenbaugh's amendment during debate.

Of course, there was no intent to pay the \$108 million, and the amendment offered no alternative to LB533's compromise.

The fact is that the only leadership on maintaining the retirement plan solvency has come from a handful of key senators, NSEA and others in the education family. With those senators and other allies, NSEA, late tonight, worked to ensure LB533 was not stripped of its provisions, that the common

sense solution to solvency and your retirement future was advanced, and that Sen. Lautenbaugh's diversion was defeated.

That kind of vigilance and work takes each of us. It is comforting to know that, as we stand in the Rotunda, nearly 28,000 members stand behind us.

Married at 11

That is but one assessment of the value of your Association membership. As we reflect and assess, we also dream of how we might improve our work.

We ask what our communities might look like without quality teachers and great public schools. Would our students rank in the Top 10 in the nation in achievement? Would our graduates still possess the Nebraska work ethic? Would Nebraska have weathered the recession better than almost any state in the union? I think not.

Your advocacy makes each day a little better, both for our profession and our students. As teachers, we reflect and assess so our work today, tomorrow and the next day can assist children in meeting their dreams. That is the work of our profession. That is the work of our Association.

I recently heard the remarkable Dr. Tererai Trent tell her amazing story, and later was able to spend a few moments with her.

Trent was barred from school in her native Zimbabwe because of her gender. At 11, she was forced into an arranged marriage to a man who abused her. She had four children before she was 18. Yet she maintained her dream of becoming educated.

Her mother encouraged her to write down her dream and bury it under a rock in the woods. Trent did that and ultimately achieved her dream. She came to the United States, where she learned to read and write. She eventually earned a doctorate, and founded an organization that builds and repairs schools in Zimbabwe – schools that accept boys and girls. Dr. Trent's belief is that education is the main pathway out of poverty.

The foundation of her belief was a dream and a refusal to accept the status quo.

A Dream Worth Dreaming

As educators, as we reflect and assess, we must dream of a future that includes the resources needed to help every child succeed.

We must dream of having the time we need to prepare and teach – not just test – our students. We must dream of having the respect of parents and policymakers.

A dream worth dreaming is worth the effort to make it come true. So please pause, reflect, assess, and then work with your colleagues and NSEA to make those dreams come true.

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Effort to Derail LB553 Averted

Senators Stand for Retirement Plan Against Last-Second Opposition

During the last full week of April, a small handful of state senators attempted to derail a compromise on LB553, a bill that will keep the defined benefit retirement plan for teachers solvent well into the future.

Late on a Wednesday evening, as LB553 was nearing a move from Select File to Final Reading, Omaha Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh offered an amendment that essentially gutted the bill and maintained the status quo. O'Neill Sen. Tyson Larson led the charge for the amendment, but senators who had toiled on the bill for more than six months moved swiftly to avert the threat.

Sen. Heath Mello, Sen. Jeremy Nordquist, Sen. Al Davis and Sen. Burke Harr, among others, spoke eloquently in favor of the LB553 compromise that took so long to craft.

During the entire debate, NSEA staff was in the Capitol Rotunda, monitoring the LB553 progress, ensuring that the bill moved safely and quickly to Final Reading.

Precarious Position

Had the opposition to LB553 prevailed, the amendment would have gutted substantive provisions of the bill, which represent a long-term funding solution for the School Employees retirement plan.

Further, the teacher retirement plan would have been put in a precarious position: The state would have been on the hook for a required actuarial contribution of \$48.1 million in this fiscal year and another \$60.5 million next fiscal year — a level of funding that Lautenbaugh, Larson, the governor and other backers of the amendment were unlikely to support.

The state is required by law to fund these actuarial shortfalls or adopt an alternative plan to address such funding needs. LB553 meets the alternative plan.

During debate, Nordquist, chair of the Legislature's Retirement Committee, described the lengthy process involved since the summer of 2012 to craft a compromise with teachers, school districts and school administrators. Mello explained that without LB553 there would be large funding gap created in the state budget. Mello said efforts to derail the bill, at such a late stage in the process, were fiscally irresponsible. Davis explained that without the provisions of LB553, the state would fail to meet its financial obligations — just as the state failed to meet its state banking guarantees for Commonwealth Savings depositors 30 years ago.

Adjustments Included

LB553 would increase the state contribution rate from

one to two percent of pay, which equates to about \$20 million annually for the state and Omaha Public Schools retirement plans. The proposal would also eliminate all contribution sunsets scheduled in 2017 for employees, employers and the state — thus continuing the school employee contribution rate at 9.78 percent of pay with the employer match of 101 percent.

In other words, educators are doing more than their fair share to keep the retirement plan solvent.

LB553 would also add an adjusted benefit schedule for school employees hired after July 1, 2013. The adjusted schedule would determine retirement benefits based on the average final salary over the five highest year salaries, rather than the current three highest year periods. The cost of living adjustment (COLA) cap would be set at 1 percent for new employees during their retirement years. Similar changes, such as the 5-year averaging, the 1 percent COLA, and the 9.78 percent contribution rate would also occur for the OPS retirement plan.

Precarious Position

Senators also made significant progress with state aid.

A compromise plan put state aid for the 2013-14 school year at about 6.2 percent more than the \$850 million allocated during the current school year. State aid next year, depending on final calculations, will total about \$905 million.

In addition, a key provision of the state aid formula — the teacher education allowance — remained intact. That is the only portion of the state aid formula that recognizes the cost and value of good teaching. Encompassed in LB407, the state aid plan includes these key provisions:

■ Beginning in 2013-14, state aid will include \$30 million in teacher education allowance funds. Half of that allowance will be paid as teacher education aid to both equalized and non-equalized school districts. NSEA believes that the Teacher Education Allowance is an important component of state aid to education and the incentives incorporated within TEA

need to continue.

■ Beginning with 2013-14, the formula will include \$20 million in instructional time allowance, with the distribution based on the average days in session in excess of 175 days multiplied by formula students. Half of that allowance will be paid as instructional time aid to both equalized and non-equalized school districts.

Priority Bills

As of March 18, all priority bills for the 2013 Legislative Session have been selected. For the remainder of the session, only those bills that have been selected as priority bills and have been advanced from committee will be scheduled for debate.



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South Central UD Course Rewarded for Excellence

Parent Nominates Program for NSEA Good Schools/Good Business Award

There is a winner!

A \$1,000 prize has been awarded to the South Central Unified School District No. 5, after the district was nominated by parent Nanette Shackelford.

The prize was awarded at the conclusion of NSEA's "Good Schools are Good for Business" campaign, which began in February and spotlighted how good, well-funded schools contribute to the economy.

Shackelford's nomination highlighted a series of course offerings by the South Central district at its Clay Center building (see nomination letter, below). South Central also has buildings at Lawrence, Nelson and Fairfield.

NSEA President Nancy Fulton presented the award to South Central's Connie Porter during NSEA's Delegate Assembly in Kearney in April. Fulton thanked Shackelford for working with Porter and the school district to reach out and create partnerships with local businesses.

"These partnerships help our students, our schools, the community and the economy," said Fulton.

NSEA's campaign included a website that provided Nebraskans an opportunity to share stories of how schools and businesses working together create strong schools, strong communities and a strong economy. Two dozen examples of school and community co-

operation were submitted for consideration for judges before the South Central entry was selected as the recipient.

The interactive campaign also encouraged Nebraskans to join with NSEA members to strengthen public education in communities across our state.

"We all know that public schools are a critical part of our state and local economies," said Fulton. "We want to shine a light on those businesses and business leaders that are partnering with our schools and teachers to help our students succeed. To do that, we encourage Nebraskans to share their story about a business/school partnership."

The NSEA has made a strong effort in the last two years researching the results of strong public education and the needs of the community. A 2010 national poll conducted by the National Education Association showed 90 percent of those surveyed strongly believed that public schools play a critical role in the nation's economy. In the same survey, 94 percent of voters believe that when youth are better educated, they get better jobs and go on to contribute more to the community as adults.

Fulton said that through this campaign, NSEA hopes to create a movement "that will help kids learn the value of community by gaining perspectives from beyond the classroom."



Recognized! NSEA President Nancy Fulton, rewarded South Central Unified School District No. 5 teacher Connie Porter with a certificate and a \$1,000 check for her school, after the school won NSEA's 'Good Schools are Good for Business' contest in April.

'CSI Clay Center' and Other Offerings Catch Eye of Judges

Parent Nanette Shackelford nominated the South Central Unified School District No. 5 for the NSEA Good Schools are Good for Business award. Here is her letter of nomination:

"Each year for the last 9 years I have designed a mini-course day for Clay Center (now Sandy Creek and SCUSD No. 5) where local professionals design hands-on activities so that students learn about different careers AND get to know people in the community.

"One very popular course is *CSI Clay Center* where a "crime" is committed. First, the local Sheriff's Office personnel teach students to fingerprint and investigate the crime. Then a scientist from the nearby U.S. Meat Animal Research Center provides instruction about DNA testing and helps take samples from the "suspects" (teachers and school staff). Finally, a local attorney leads the students through the court system process.

The above course gives students a taste of law enforcement, the science field, and law careers.

Other past offerings are: *Iron Chef* (cooking with active Super Senior Center instructors); *Clay's Anatomy* (Health Field activities with local nursing and medical instructors); *Animal Practice* (veterinary medicine); *Survivor* (team-building activities by University Extension professionals); *Myth Busters* (electricity & science by South Central Public Power District); *The Apprentice* (student groups create business plans with local small business mentors); and many more.

This has been an amazing project for our school! Community and business members and students get to know each other on a deeper level, and students get a good taste of different careers. These mini-course days have solidified student decisions about college majors and has even prompted job shadow and internship opportunities.

A school/business partnership is a symbiotic relationship. The school gets pertinent, real world instruction, the business gains customers and potential employees.



Difference-makers! These four NSEA members were on the floor at Delegate Assembly in Kearney making a difference and learning the ropes. Stephanie Wanek, left, a member of the Neligh-Oakdale Education Association, was a guest of delegate Megan Jacob, second from left, also of the NOEA. Third from left is Jose Hernandez, a member of the Norfolk City Education Association for just four days when this photo was snapped, and college friend and delegate Curtis Reese of the Battle Creek Education Association. Each is wearing the ‘Strong Schools, Strong Communities, Strong Economy’ t-shirts each delegate received.

Decisive Action at DA

Ten New Business Items Approved; Association to Be Quite Active Next Year!

Stanford University offered a full-ride scholarship to a top student who spent his K-12 school years excelling in Nebraska public schools. Yet, he was unable to accept the scholarship. He is now poised to graduate from a Nebraska college but, for the same reason that he turned down the Stanford offer, his job prospects after college are bleak: He is ‘undocumented’ – his family came to America illegally when he was a young child.

It is for children like this that Sasha Chavez Cervantes urged fellow members at NSEA’s 152nd Delegate Assembly to adopt New Business Item No. 10. Her proposal directed NSEA to support efforts to provide such students with a pathway to citizenship.



Friend of Education: Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop received NSEA’s highest award, the Friend of Education, from NSEA President Nancy Fulton.

The nearly 250 delegates adopted Cervantes’ proposal without dissent.

Her proposal was one of 10 New Business Items approved by delegates during the Association’s annual meeting, held in Kearney for the first time since 1970 (see full list of New Business Items on these pages).

Delegates also re-elected Lincoln’s Jenni Absalon to the NEA Board of Directors; approved a minor change to the Association’s Bylaws; and approved a \$4 dues increase for the 2013-14 Association year.

Although temperatures ranged in the low 40s, delegates spent 20 minutes outdoors in windy conditions celebrating NSEA’s ‘Strong



Rally under way! NSEA President Nancy Fulton, right, of Wilber-Clatonia, addresses delegates during a ‘Strong Schools, Strong Communities, Strong Economy’ rally outside the Younes Convention Center in Kearney on April 20.

A Swarm of Blue Shirts!

Hundreds of blue t-shirts bearing NSEA’s ‘Strong Schools. Communities. Economy.’ slogan flooded the convention center in Kearney during Delegate Assembly on April 20.

The campaign stresses how money spent to strengthen public schools builds a strong community and benefits the local economy. Four NSEA local associations — Lincoln, Norfolk, Grand Island and Lexington — were feted for their work in furthering the campaign. Delegates also rallied outside the convention center to learn about the campaign, and to celebrate a new award for the NSEA Children’s Fund (see photo at right). Old Mill Toyoto donated \$1,000 to the Children’s Fund to mark the occasion.



Cheers for the Children’s Fund! Plainview Education Association member Michelle Bearinger gives a fist pump as she accepts the award for the local association that gave the most cash per member to the Children’s Fund in the past year. At right, Brad Wellmann of the Bellevue Education Association accepted on behalf of the local that gave the most cash, total. NSEA President Nancy Fulton presented the awards during the ‘Strong Schools, Strong Communities, Strong Economy’ rally at Delegate Assembly.

Schools. Strong Communities. Strong Economy.’ campaign. The campaign makes the connection between the dollars that flow through public schools and into the local economy in every community in the state.

As part of the ceremonies, Old Mill Toyota’s Jason Fricke announced the dealership had donated \$1,000 to the NSEA Children’s Fund.

Several members and other Nebraskans earned awards from NSEA. State Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha received the Association’s highest

honor, the Friend of Education Award. Lathrop was recognized for his continued work on behalf of children, the developmentally disabled, public education, and the middle class. Lathrop virtually saved collective bargaining for public sector unions in Nebraska during the 2011 legislative debate on the issue.

Get the Word Out!

Cervantes’ story about the Omaha student was important because it illustrated well the need for action. Telling

stories about the good that happens in public schools is exactly what teachers must do, said Dr. John Draper, the Assembly’s keynote speaker.

Today’s teachers are better prepared than ever before, and are doing better work than those in the profession have ever done, said Draper, a former teacher and principal, and now president of Cambridge Strategic Services. Even so, educators feel constantly tossed about in a political storm, he said.

The myth that “my school is good,



Tell a story! Keynote speaker Dr. John Draper told delegates that teachers talking to friends and neighbors about the good things that happen in public schools will change the conversation about American schools.

but others are bad” allows any group of elected officials to act badly toward all public schools, said Draper. In actuality, only about five percent of the nation’s schools struggle, and that myth does an injustice to the other 95 percent.

The best way to change the conversation, said Draper, is for teachers to tell others about the good things happening in public schools.

“When teachers talk,” said Draper, “people listen. Teachers have got to have a voice.”

He urged delegates to tell a good story about their classroom to someone in the community at least once a week. He also urged educators to work to change the conversation. For instance, he noted that poverty is the greatest common factor among low-achieving children. “We don’t have an achievement gap; we have a poverty gap,” he said.

“The real question is ‘how do we negate the ill effects of poverty, dysfunctional families and unsafe communities?’”

One Member, One Vote

Delegates slightly broadened membership with an amendment to NSEA Bylaws. Approved by a 194-7 margin, the change added “substitute, reserve and staff” to the membership categories.

A second Bylaws proposal failed to gain the necessary two-thirds vote for approval. The measure would have al-



NSEA Honorees: John Langan, a music teacher and member of the Umo^{ho} Nation Education Association, received the Great Plains Milestone Award; Sheila Remmereid, special education teacher with the Johnson-Brock Education Association, received the Rookie of the Year Award; and Janis Elliot, a physics teacher and member of the Bellevue Public Education Association, earned the Teaching Excellence Award.

lowed the Association’s Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee chair a vote on the NSEA Board of Directors. The EMAC Chair is currently a non-voting board member.

EMAC Chair Tracy Hartman-Bradley, Omaha, argued that the measure would ensure greater diversity on the NSEA Board of Directors. Others noted that minority members already have board representation through their governance district, and while that representation may not be minority in nature, EMAC members may run for those seats.

To allow minority members further representation through the EMAC chair would muddy the “one member, one vote” tenets of the Association, effectively giving EMAC members two votes on the board: a district representative and the EMAC chair. With 78 in favor, and 121 against, the measure did not reach the two-thirds majority required to pass.

Westside delegate Alan Bone proposed a New Business Item that will encourage the Association to develop short- and long-term strategies for increasing the number of ethnic and minority members in leadership positions at all levels. He noted that minority membership in the Association is at 3.3 percent, and representation on the NSEA Board of Directors is 4.7 percent – both “unacceptably low.”

Bone’s proposal passed via voice vote.

Also approved was a new Resolution that called on the Association to support a position that Social Security and pension funds should not be subject to state income tax.

10 New Business Items on NSEA Agenda for 2013-14

Topics: Common Core, Internet Sales Tax Revenue, Future Educators Association

The 250 delegates at Delegate Assembly approved 10 New Business Items over the course of the Assembly.

A New Business Item is a statement that establishes, alters or abolishes substantive policies or programs of the Association. Such proposals are not to be in direct conflict with existing Association Resolutions. Each New Business Item is in force for one year, unless another length of time is specified by the Assembly. It may be renewed by the discretion of the Assembly.

These New Business Items were approved by delegates:

NBI No. 1: Treasurer's Form

Propose that all treasurer forms, particularly the "Dues Transmittal" and the "Add, Delete, Adjustment" forms be made editable PDF files so that treasurers can type all the data in, making the forms more professional looking as well as easier to read. (By Darryl Partner, Metro Community College)

NBI No. 2: Common Core, State Board

NSEA applauds the Nebraska State Board of Education for its careful investigation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). NSEA urges the Nebraska State Board of Education to continue this approach in order to study how implementation of CCSS has affected students, educators and parents in other states. (By John Jensen, Omaha)

NBI No. 3: 'Strong Schools, Strong Community, Strong Economy'

Direct the NSEA to provide assistance to local associations to develop "Strong Schools, Strong Community, Strong Economy" Buy Local programs in their communities, through existing resources, including the NSEA website, Facebook, Twitter, and publications. (By Leann Widhalm, Norfolk City Education Association)

NBI No. 4: Delegate Attendance

The NSEA will initiate a recognition program, beginning in 2014, that would include two traveling trophies presented each year to the governance district and NSEA affiliates that have the highest percent of credentialed delegates (versus the district's potential delegates) at Delegate Assembly. (By Janis Elliott, Bellevue Education Association)

NBI No. 5: Research Alignment of Standards

The NSEA will develop a committee charged to research and promote the alignment of state standards, instructional practices and assessment through a comprehensive delivery system that leads to student success. The committee will de-

termine how best to promote this alignment through the legislature, Department of Education, Colleges of Education and other stakeholders and present the plan to the NSEA Board of Directors by April 2014. (By Tammy Schafer, Lincoln Education Association)

NBI No. 6: Future Educators Association

NSEA supports the Future Educators Association of Nebraska (FEA-NE) and will promote through available resources the involvement of the NSEA local associations with FEA-NE. This could include sponsoring and/or forming local FEA-NE Career Student Organizations. (By David Shrader, Clearwater Orchard Verdigre Unified Education Association)

NBI No. 7: Internet Sales Tax Revenue

Direct the NSEA's Government Relations Team to develop a legislative proposal to place all future state revenue from Internet sales tax into an Education Trust Fund, with that revenue to enhance, but not supplant, state aid to education. (By NSEA Board of Directors)

NBI No. 8: Ethnic Minority Leadership

NSEA leadership will formulate both short- and long-term proposals for increasing the number of ethnic and minority members in leadership positions at the state, district, and local levels and present those proposals as one or more new business items and/or bylaws amendments at the 2014 Delegate Assembly. In so doing, NSEA leaders are encouraged to seek additional external funding to support implementation of the aforementioned proposals. (By NSEA Board of Directors)

NBI No. 9: Targeted Membership

Direct the NSEA to develop a membership program to provide training and incentives for local associations with less than 75 percent of membership potential or locals having more than 100 non-members. (By NSEA Board of Directors)

NBI No. 10: A Pathway to Legal Status

NSEA supports legislation that would provide a path to legal status for students who came to the U.S. as children at least five years ago and have grown up here, remained in school, and out of trouble. NSEA will communicate with members the importance of advocating for this legislation, including directing members to the NEA's TAKE ACTION link on the NEA website. (By Sasha Chavez Cervantes, Omaha Education Association)



Elkhorn is Tops! George Weiland, Umo^{ho} Nation Education Association, president of NSEA's Elkhorn District, holds the William Gallagher Award, given to the district that enrolls the largest percent of eligible members.



Mother-daughter, Part 1: Omaha Education Association member Sheryl Rich, left, poses with her mother, Barbara Madsen, also an OEA member and an active teacher and delegate at age 85.



Mother-daughter, Part 2: Lincoln Education Association member Rita Bennett, right, smiles as daughter and Wayne State College student and delegate Katie Bennett attends her first Delegate Assembly, representing the Student Education Association of Nebraska.



Teacher-student: Lincoln Education Association member Tammy Schafer, right, discovered that a former fourth grade student of hers — Betsy Hall — was on hand as a delegate for the Omaha Education Association.



Partner in Education: Gil Poese of KBRX radio in O'Neill received NSEA's 2013 Partner in Education Award for his station's long-term and generous support of the area's public schools. Taking the stage with Poese were, from left, O'Neill teachers Allen Spangler and Bill Walters. The award was presented by Jenni Absalon, right, a Lincoln teacher elected at Delegate Assembly to a second term on the NEA Board of Directors.

NSEA also presented the Champion of Education Award to KMTV Channel 3 in Omaha, for excellence in reporting on a voter ID law considered by the Legislature in 2012.



Four for harmony: A quartet from the Kearney High School Music Department provided delegates with a fine rendition of the Star Spangled Banner.



Quilt winner! Grand Island Education Association member Rene Hinman won a quilt raffled by the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee. Umo'ho' Nation Education Association member Vernon Miller presented the quilt.



They were there...last time: 2013 marked the first time since 1970 that NSEA held Delegate Assembly in Kearney, Gordon Peeks, North Platte Education Association, and Tom Black, NSEA-Retired, were in attendance at both.

Study: Frequent Moves Hamper Achievement

Policies That Aid Low-Income Stability Also Found to Improve Achievement

Residential moves in the early elementary years have a negative effect on math and reading achievement in the third grade, and a negative effect on the trajectory of reading scores thereafter, according to researchers from Vanderbilt University.

In a study involving students from 11 middle schools in a large urban district in Tennessee from 2003-09, it was discovered that for every move during the period between kindergarten and second grade, there was an associated drop in test scores.

The researchers concluded that “reducing residential mobility is in the interest of urban elementary and middle school students. Policies that make it easier for low-income families to stay in their homes – including affordable housing and efforts to enforce fair housing laws and combat predatory lending – could be helpful in reducing mobility.”

The full text from “Longitudinal Effects of Residential Mobility on the Academic Achievement of Urban Elementary and Middle School Students can be found at:

<http://edr.sagepub.com/content/41/9/385.abstract>

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To do so, find the NSEA website and click on the ‘Member Info’ button on the left side of the screen. Click on the ‘Member Update’ icon in the center of the next screen, and follow directions. Keep a recent issue of *The Voice* near, as the mailing label includes your membership number, used to access your information. The NSEA web site is at:

www.nsea.org



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Certification —Yes! Wayne Education Association President Jennifer Thomas, left, and WEA Chief Negotiator Lee Brogie, right, speak highly of the need for and logic behind certification, which gives local associations permanent bargaining status.

Certification: It Just Makes Sense.

Wayne, Crawford, Gordon-Rushville Certify. Should Your Local be Next?

Once she learned the logic behind a bargaining unit certification election, Wayne Education Association President Jennifer Thomas had one question.

“Why wouldn’t we do this?” she said.

Once the election to permanently certify WEA as bargaining agent for Wayne educators was complete, WEA Chief Negotiator Lee Brogie was struck by the ease of the process.

“We didn’t think it would be so easy,” said Brogie.

On March 4, the Commission of Industrial Relations certified these results: Members of the bargaining unit represented by the Wayne Education Association had voted 36-0 in favor of certification. That vote set three facts in stone. First, the WEA is now the permanent bargaining agent for educators in Wayne. As such, the WEA never again must submit an annual, written, request to the Wayne Board of Education asking for recognition as bargaining agent. Finally, the Wayne Board of Education no longer must deal with that request for recognition as an annual board agenda item.

Wayne was one of three NSEA local associations to receive formal notice of certification in a five-week span. After success-

ful elections, CIR officials also notified the Crawford Teachers Association and the Gordon-Rushville Education Association of Teachers of certification. Crawford members voted 18-0 for certification. Gordon-Rushville members favored certification 40-0.

That makes five NSEA locals to certify in the past 12 months. Members of the state’s largest local association, Omaha, and one of the smallest, Umo”ho” Nation Education Association at Macy, both voted to certify by overwhelming margins last year.

Since the first NSEA local – Metropolitan Community College – certified in 1978, nearly 30 NSEA local associations have followed suit, said NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan.

NSEA President Nancy Fulton commended the most recent locals to join that group.

“These elections affirm that, going forward, members at Wayne, Crawford and Gordon-Rushville will have a voice in their workplace – a voice that helps to determine working conditions, compensation and what is best for students,” she said.

Request Letter Now Obsolete

Passage of LB397 during the 2011 session of the Nebraska Legislature spurred the recent flurry of certification elections.

At one point in the legislative process, LB397 very nearly

LB397 Set Course for Bargaining Timeline; NSEA Set Timeline for Recognition Request Process

The Nebraska Legislature's passage of LB397 in 2011 prompted this recent spate of certification elections. With the three announced on this page, five locals – including Omaha – have recently joined the list of four dozen locals permanently recognized as bargaining agents.

LB397 revised collective bargaining statutes and, among other things, set a firm timetable for the negotiations process between Nebraska school districts and local association bargaining units.

Under the new statutes, bargaining must begin no later than Nov. 1 each year and conclude by the following Feb. 8. If the two sides have not reached agreement by Feb. 8, fact-finding is required before a resolution officer. That officer selects the offer deemed as “most reasonable.”

The new law also requires that the local association must request from the school board, in writing, to be recognized as the sole bargaining agent for employees in that school district. Statute requires that request to be made no later than Sept. 1 each year.

So why does NSEA push locals to seek recognition in December or January when the statutory deadline is Sept. 1? Because locals that are denied recognition by their board of education must have adequate time to seek and conduct a certification election – a process that could take months. Permanent recognition as bargaining agent comes to a local association that conducts a successful certification election.

Indeed, the Omaha Education Association's certification



process started in late February 2012. By the time OEA members had collected enough signature cards to require an election; by the time the election was scheduled and held; and by the time the Commission of Industrial Relations had collected and counted ballots, months had passed. Indeed, the CIR notification that members had OK'd certification came in late October, just days before the Nov. 1 deadline to begin bargaining.

While some might argue that smaller locals would conclude certification more quickly than did Omaha, any number of technical or legal issues could delay the process. Even at Crawford, where 18

members voted for certification, the process took more than two months from start to finish.

NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan said some school superintendents may be resistant to the process because the Commission of Industrial Relations is involved. But because the process is governed by state regulations, the CIR merely facilitates the certification election process, distributing ballots, collecting ballots and counting ballots.

“These elections frequently involve the school attorney only minimally,” said Guinan. “The election has to be conducted by the CIR, but NSEA handles much of the preparation work for the election.”

If your local association is interested in conducting a certification election, contact your NSEA UniServ director at 1-800-742-0047.

did away with collective bargaining for public sector unions in Nebraska. Facing pressure from NSEA and other sectors, lawmakers opted instead to set a rigid bargaining calendar into state statute. Included in that calendar was a provision that requires the bargaining agent – in this case the local education association – to submit to the school board the written request for recognition as the bargaining agent for educators. Bargaining must begin in October, and conclude in early February, for the contract that will be in effect the following school year.

Failure to adhere to the statutory calendar and reach agreement by the February date could put contract provisions in the hands of a third, outside arbiter.

But it all starts with the request for recognition. Following certification, a local is permanently recognized and each year can simply notify the school board that “we're ready to bargain.” A formal letter of request is no longer needed.

Once explained, Wayne's Thomas said WEA members saw the logic behind the process. “They said ‘the WEA has been our representative for years. Why not make it official?’”

Thomas said school leaders thought it made sense. Brogie agreed, and noted that the WEA has worked well with the superintendent and Wayne Board of Education.

“But we recognize that might not always continue,” she said.

Prudence and Timing

A smooth working relationship between board and local is

not always the case. NSEA Attorney Scott Norby said leaders at the Gordon-Rushville Education Association followed procedure and offered the recognition letter in a timely manner. The board approved recognition – with conditions.

“The board's recognition was conditional. That doesn't work,” he said. “So the local went ahead and held the election.”

Crawford Education Association leaders also followed procedure, but at a December meeting, board of education members had several reasons to decline the request. A second request by the CEA in January met similar resistance.

“CEA members came back to us, and we assisted them with the election,” said Norby.

In some cases, it is prudent organizationally to conduct a certification election. In other cases, he said, the election arises out of frustration by the local in efforts to secure recognition.

In other cases, timing matters. Brogie noted that the WEA was in the midst of a two-year agreement. It made sense to clean up the certification in an off-year from negotiations.

Norby said the NSEA will systematically move toward certification.

“It is nonsense for a local that has been representing members forever to have to ask for recognition every year – it's time for permanent status.”

As members at Wayne realized, it just makes sense.

Bullying: Enough is Enough!

Stand4Change Asks for Action to Dispel Bullying

Every seven minutes, a child is bullied; one in seven students is a bully or a victim of bullying.

Stand4Change is an effort to stand up against bullying. NSEA has endorsed Stand4Change, which will be observed Friday, May 3. The request is simple: at 11 a.m. Central Standard Time, 10 a.m. Mountain Standard Time, the movement asks that you stop, stand and let the world know you will no longer tolerate bullying in your school or community.

Those who support an end to bullying – teachers, students and others – are asked to rise and stand together, united against bullying, for five minutes.

“If students in every school across the nation will ‘Stand4Change’ on May 3, they will further the case against bullying,” said NSEA President Nancy Fulton.

The movement is supported by the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Anti-Defamation League and others.

Participation is easy. Act in your



Bully free: NSEA President Nancy Fulton, with the help of NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen, displays a t-shirt from the National Education Association’s ‘Bully Free: It Starts With Me’ campaign. NEA anti-bullying resources include a bullying prevention kit, an anti-bullying pledge, and more. Learn about the campaign at nea.org/home/neabullyfree.

school at 11 a.m. CST on Friday, May 3. Register your school, and discover

more details about the event at: www.stand4change.org

Ag Sack Lunch Concludes Successful Year

Fourth Graders Eat Free, Learn About Ag During Capitol Visit

Nebraska fourth graders are receiving an extra lesson on agriculture during their trip to visit the State Capitol Building.

The Ag Sack Lunch program, co-sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB), the Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA) and the Nebraska Corn Board (NCB), reaches fourth-grade students and their families.

The Ag Sack Lunch program highlights the fourth-grade curriculum’s focus by celebrating Nebraska’s deep agricultural legacy. The program includes a sack lunch donated by the NSB, NPPA and NCB. The lunch features nutritious foods produced in Nebraska, a 20-minute presentation by University of Nebraska-Lincoln student “Ag Ambassadors” on the vital role agriculture plays in the state’s economy, and a fact-filled card game for students to take home, which helps carry the ag-centered message to their families.

Roughly 5,000 free lunches will have been served by the

end of the school year, the third straight year the program has met its budgeted limit. In all, 95 classes from across east-central Nebraska will have enjoyed the presentations this year.

Presentations highlight the fact that one in three Nebraska jobs have a connection to agriculture, including a variety of support industries such as equipment manufacturing and sales, building construction, transportation and retail. Of these jobs, only about 10 percent is traditional farming.

“Coming from a small, rural community, they still need to learn more about agriculture since there aren’t as many farmers anymore. I have very few students these days whose parents farm compared to earlier in my teaching career. Our students really enjoyed the program,” said NSEA member Kristi Bult, a teacher at Hartington Public School.

Other teachers report similar reaction.

“My students learned why agriculture is so important in Nebraska,” said Mary Jean Fitzgerald, a teacher at Douglas County West Elementary. “They learned where all the meats come from, that all of the animals are raised in Nebraska and that there are different kinds of cows.”

More than 20,000 fourth-graders visit the State Capitol Building in Lincoln each year as part of their curriculum.

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 EDAD 898-01 Endorsement Internship
 EDAD 899P-01 ST: Introduction to Educational Administration Research
 EDAD 958-01 Educational Facility Planning
 EDAD 991-01 Field Study
 EDAD 992-01 The Executive Administrator
 ENG 803-01 Descriptive Linguistics
 FORL 800-01 Curriculum Development & Research
 FORL 870P-01 TESOL
 FORL 872P-01 Foreign Language Pedagogy
 FSI 881P-01 Cross-Cultural Family Patterns
 MIS 802-01 Management Information Systems Seminar

MKT 830P-01 International Marketing
 MUS 802P-01 Music History & Theory Review
 MUS 857P-01 Elementary School Music
 MUS 894P-01 Workshop in Instrumental Art
 MUS 897-01 Graduate Capstone Project
 PE 801P-01 Psychology of Sport
 PE 825P-01 Sport & Recreation Law
 PE 828P-01 Secondary School Physical Education
 PE 851P-01 Organization & Administration of Sports & Recreation
 PE 871-01 Physical Education for Students with Disabilities
 PE 875-01 Analysis of Physical Education Teaching
 PE 895 Graduate Internship (3 & 6 cr. hrs.)
 PHYS 813-01 Introduction to Analog & Digital Electronics
 PHYS 813-02 Lab
 SFED 310-01 Driving Task Analysis
 SFED 430-01 Developing Driver Education Classroom Skills
 SFED 431-01 Developing Driver Education Vehicle Skills
 SFED 431-02 (Lab)
 SPCH 851P-01 Leadership Communication
 TE 800 Educational Research (3 sections)
 TE 803 Philosophy of Education (3 sections)
 TE 804 Curriculum Development in Multicultural Education (2 sections)
 TE 805P Overview of Assistive Technology (2 sections)
 TE 807P-01 Multiple Intelligences
 TE 808P-01 Human Relations
 TE 809-01 Curriculum Implementation
 TE 815P-01 The Effective Teacher: Enhancing Classroom Instruction
 TE 816A Practicum: Education (2 sections)
 TE 816B-01 Practicum: Reading
 TE 825-01 English Language Learners (ELL): Culture, Civil Rights, & Advocacy
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 TE 853C-01 Improvement of Instruction in Elementary School Language Arts
 TE 854-01 Reading in the Content Areas
 TE 867-01 Storytelling in the School Library & Classroom
 TE 868 Copyright, Fair Use, & Ethics (2 sections)
 TE 872-01 Organization of School Library & Technology Resources
 TE 886P Technology Tools for Teachers (4 sections)
 TE 892 Internship in Instructional Technology (1, 2, 3, & 6 cr. hrs.)
 TE 897-01 Seminar in Education
 TE 898 Independent Study (1, 2, 3 cr. hrs.)
 TE 899P-01 ST: Improving Mathematics Instruction-Intermediate Grades 3-5
 TE 899P-02 ST: Learning & Teaching Together
 TE 899P-03 ST: Motivating the 21st Century Learner
 TE 899P-04 ST: Improving Mathematics Instruction-Primary Grades K-2
 TE 899P-05 ST: Inclusion & Differentiation Techniques for the 21st Century Classroom
 TESE 816C-01 Practicum in Gifted & Talented Education
 TESE 821P-01 Nature & Needs of Exceptionalities
 TESE 824-01 Identification, Assessment & Evaluation for Gifted/Talented Education
 TESE 830-01 Consultation & Collaboration with Families and Agencies Serving Individuals with Disabilities
 TESE 837P-01 Medical Aspects of Individuals with Disabilities
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Open Resources in Nebraska

State Colleges Lead in Providing Open Educational Materials

By **Dr. Don R. King, Chair**

Department of Education,
Chadron State College

Open Education has hit the education profession by storm, and Nebraska's state colleges have been quick to respond to this opportunity. Why? To reduce education costs to state college students, to work collaboratively with colleagues, and to improve upon the quality and strength of our course offerings.

Open educational resources (OER) are educational materials used for teaching, learning, research and other purposes. An OER specializes in delivering effective learning experiences to students worldwide. They also use appropriate technology to break down barriers for those with disabilities, those who are isolated, and those challenged economically. Most importantly, OER materials are free, open to the public and aim to provide access to education for all.

Anyone can develop an OER, whether it is an article, paper, presentation, learning module, course or book. Once developed, the OER is licensed (typically through the Creative Commons licensing process) and the author posts it to an online repository or library, where it becomes accessible to the public. Depending on the type of licensure the creator-author selects, an OER may be re-used, re-mixed and/or re-distributed — with the intent being that the new “re-mixed” product will also then be posted to an open site repository, thereby building and improving upon the original product. As might be expected, appropriate authorship citations are required, and the OER quality will vary from author to author.

Some examples of OER sites include The Open University, Wikipedia, YouTubeEDU and the Khan Academy. Now, Nebraska has an open online resource repository/library located at:

OpenEducationNebraska.com

At the Nebraska website you may:

- Learn how to house and/or create your own open resources and share them on the web using our tools and

guides;

- View and download existing course materials and educational resources, including lectures, syllabi, and assignments developed by other people;

- Explore the Open Resource Community and its many projects, or learn how the Nebraska state college team can support your work.

It's About Sharing

With this program, the Nebraska State College System is leading the way in open education resources at the higher education level. A February summit brought together faculty, staff and administrators from Chadron State College, Peru State College and Wayne State College. The purposes of this summit were to:

- Provide educators with a better understanding of Open Education;

- Explore how OER's might play a role in reducing the educational costs to students;

- Work collaboratively with colleagues to identify ways to improve the quality of mutual course offerings (i.e., Education & Special Education courses).

Here's the bottom line: it's about sharing. Why should anyone or any group serve to profit from educating our youth?

Potential Savings

Cable Green, a speaker at the February summit, expressed the OER advan-

tage. He claimed that, on average, most public school textbooks in this country are outdated by 18 years, even though school districts spend millions on new textbooks each year.

With “open access” one can pay institutions a fee to develop a high quality current textbook that would then be posted and made available in an open access online library — like that at the Open Education Nebraska website. The potential annual cost tax savings could be extreme, with the resulting new revenue used to offset other public education costs. Ultimately, P-12 Nebraska students will have current texts to use in all subjects, at all grade levels. The states of Utah and Washington are already moving toward this model.

As valuable as OER's might be, however, they will never take the place of teachers or schools. Since OER's are resources meant to be used for education rather than accredited educational institutions, they can neither award degrees nor provide academic or administrative support to students. This means that in order for people to get a diploma they must attend school.

So, what does this mean for teachers and educators? The impact of Open Educational Resources will grow as teachers utilize the abundant information available. OER's may help to make teachers' jobs easier, but more important they will enrich the quality and format of information provided to students in and out of the classroom.



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Questions for the expert: Students took advantage of a visit by 2013 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Angela Mosier to ask questions about her craft. Listening, from left, are T.J. Beckert, Peru State College; Jen Volkmer and Kimberly Chleborad, University of Nebraska-Omaha; Chelsea Turek, Peru State College; Jill Kimbrough, University of Nebraska-Kearney; Mosier.

Students Learn, Elect, Award

Mosier's Advice: Focus, Fear Not

When they eventually enter the classroom as teachers, some members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) hope to be more than an educator – they hope to serve as role models for their students.

Others see a future full with involvement in both school *and* community.

Those were among responses by SEAN members to a query about goals that came from 2013 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Angela Mosier during the SEAN Delegate Assembly.

Mosier then gave the students from eight Nebraska colleges and universities some tips about teaching. First, focus on instruction and teaching, she said.

“Don’t be afraid to make mistakes as a brand new teacher,” she said. “You’ll learn from it. Even veteran teachers make mistakes.”

Build relationships with parents and guardians, she said. Phone calls with good news builds relationships not only with parents, but with students.

“That one phone call a parent gets with a positive message may be the only call that parent gets,” she said. “And those calls help build relationships with your students.”

Finally, always continue professional growth. “Never settle. Always push.”

Delegates elected University of Nebraska-Omaha student Tommie Leaders as president for 2013-14. L.A. Adams of Peru State was elected vice president.



Taking the reins: University of Nebraska-Omaha student Tommie Leaders, left will serve as president of the Student Education Association of Nebraska in 2013-14. Other officers, from left, are L.A. Adams, Peru State College, vice president; Ryan Evans, Peru State College, secretary; Katie Bennett, Wayne State College, underclass rep; Sam Carman, Peru State College, southeast rep; Asia Berg, Wayne State College, northeast rep; Chelsi Reichwaldt, York College, western rep; and Jen Volkmer, University of Nebraska-Omaha, metro rep.

Delegates approved a dozen changes to SEAN Bylaws. Awards went to:

- Peru State’s Amanda Volksten as the NEA Underclass Student of the Year and as the SEAN Outstanding Underclass member at the state level.

- Peru State’s Allie Umland as the Outstanding Local Student Leader.

- Peru State’s Judith Ruskamp as Outstanding Local Chapter Advisor.

- Peru State College for the Outstanding Local Newsletter.

Students passed three New Business Items, including a call for the SEAN

Executive Committee to begin research and develop a policy handbook to create consistency in the SEAN program, and:

- A call to instruct the Executive Committee to ask NSEA’s comptroller to provide monthly financial statements and budget training for SEAN leaders.

- A call to instruct the Executive Committee to work with the NSEA-Retired affiliate to discuss criteria for scholarships provided by the Retired affiliate, with a goal to request information on applicant involvement in the NEA student program.

SEAN Golf Scramble will Benefit Outreach

The Student Education Association of Nebraska will host a golf scramble on June 1, with proceeds to benefit the Association's Outreach to Teach program.

The scramble will be held at Woodland Hills Golf Course near Eagle, just east of Lincoln. The tournament will include mulligans, skirts, flag prizes and a prize for the best-dressed team, as well as team awards.

The tournament is limited to 36 teams. Cost is \$55 per golfer and \$220 per team. The first team tees off at 1 p.m.

Each fall, members of SEAN visit a school and spruce it up by painting, raking, organizing and cleaning the school and school grounds. Past schools to benefit from Outreach to Teach have been in Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, Grand Island and Cedar Bluffs.

For details, contact Tommie Leaders at 402-659-1773, or:

tommieleaders@yahoo.com

Or, contact Devin Garcia at 402-239-6551, or:

degarcia@campus.peru.edu

'WILD' Workshops Open Across the State

Educators interested in enhancing their skills in the natural world have three opportunities for free workshops this month.

The Nebraska Game and Parks, the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Project Wild Nebraska and the Nebraska Environmental Trust sponsor the workshops. The programs are open to teachers and others and focus on interdisciplinary conservation and environmental curriculum. They include these opportunities:

■ **Thursday, May 23:** Growing Up Wild: Exploring Nature with Young Children will be held at Southeast Community College in Lincoln from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The program is for educators of children ages 3-7, and is correlated to Head Start domains.

■ **Friday, May 24:** Project Wild: K-12 Curriculum and Activity Guide will be offered at the Trails West YMCA Camp at Scottsbluff from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration deadline is May 10.

■ **Thursday, May 30:** Project

Double Your Gift to the Children's Fund!

On Thursday, May 16, the NSEA Children's Fund will be the beneficiary of a unique fund-raising event that will match a share of donations to the fund.

May 16 is the second 'Give to Lincoln Day' and a chance to make a real impact on a number of charities, including the Children's Fund.



Every donation made to the Children's Fund and a number of other charities on that day will be matched with a proportional share of a \$200,000 challenge match pool set up by the Lincoln Community Foundation.

It works this way: From 12 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. on May 16, gifts to the Children's Fund and other registered philanthropies may be made through a website (see details, below) or in person during regular business hours at the Lincoln Community Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South.

All donations will be matched with a proportional share of the \$200,000 challenge grant, provided by the Lincoln Community Foundation and several generous partners.

The Children's Fund benefits Nebraska children who arrive at school lacking the basic necessities, such as warm clothes, proper shoes, eyeglasses or other items. All an NSEA member need do is call NSEA to secure proper funding for such items. No red tape or forms to fill out.

To learn about 'Give to Lincoln Day' or to give on May 16, visit the website at:

givetolincoln.razoo.com/giving_events/g2113/home

Wild: K-12 Curriculum and Activity Guide is set for the Hudson-Meng Education Center at Crawford from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration deadline is May 16.

Space for each workshop is limit-

ed. For the Lincoln workshop, contact Lindsay at:

lindsay.rogers@nebraska.gov

Participants in the Scottsbluff and Crawford sites will receive guides with 600 pages of indoor and outdoor

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GreenSchools is an environmental, service-learning program that inspires K-12 students to take personal responsibility for improving the environment at their school and home, and in their community.

Program consists of five student-led investigations:

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- 💧 Water
- 🏠 School Site
- 🌿 Environmental Quality
- ♻️ Waste and Recycling

Tool kits may be checked out for student-led investigations

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Contact Jennifer Swerczek, NPPD Energy Education Specialist, at (402) 336-2701, or visit nppd.com/energy-education/greenschools.

activities. Contact Amanda at 308-436-3777, or:

amanda.filipi@nebraska.gov

Middle Level Academy set for Kearney in June

The 25th Nebraska Middle Level Academy will be held at Sunrise Middle School in Kearney on June 11-12.

This two day program provides middle level educators (grades 4-9) the opportunity to work on practical, proven, day-to-day activities that are effective in the education of the early adolescent.

The 2013 academy has been designed specifically to provide hands-on, as well as pragmatic middle level component information.

University of Nebraska at Kearney Chancellor Doug Kristensen will be the luncheon speaker on Tuesday at noon. The general session speaker will be Graci Gillming, a technology training coordinator at Educational Service Unit No. 10 at Kearney.

Gillming will discuss cyber bullying recognition, intervention and prevention.



Picture of activism: Regardless of your stance on the Keystone XL pipeline, one has to admire the debate that has taken place over the issue in Nebraska. Longtime NSEA members and activists Art and Helen Tanderup, Neligh, were at the center of a protest against the pipeline in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 17 when a photographer caught their passion. If approved, the pipeline would cross Tanderup property near Neligh. (Photo by Mary Anne Andreil/Bold Nebraska)

The following day, retiring Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Roger Breed will address the session.

For details, and to register, go to the website at:

nmla.shutterfly.com

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Rock the Vote Offers Class on Democracy

It's time to rock the classroom!

Rock the Vote's Democracy Class is a short, 45-minute civics education lesson that teaches high school students about the history of voting rights, the power of their participation in our democracy, and how the voting process works.

Using a celebrity-filled animated video, a mock election, and classroom discussion, the Democracy Class program has schooled nearly a quarter of a million students on what is at stake and prepared them to engage. More than 3,000 educators in all 50 states have brought Democracy Class to their school since it launched in 2010.

But that is not enough. For our democracy to truly thrive, we need every young person in America to get a civic education and a chance to register to vote as they turn 18!

Spread the word, and download the free Democracy Class toolkit at:

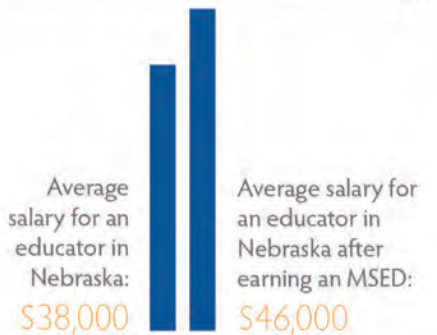
rtvote.com/i7T1cv



Cash for Gordon-Rushville: Like many athletic departments, the Gordon-Rushville High School program counts every penny. So a recent \$1,000 grant from the California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant initiative was quite welcome. Gordon-Rushville was among 85 public high schools in 38 states receiving a total of \$101,500. NSEA member and Gordon-Rushville activities director Matt Stetson applied for the grant to replace aging weightroom equipment.

The award was presented at the NSEA Delegate Assembly in Kearney in April. NSEA Panhandle District President Carolyn Campbell accepted the award on behalf of Stetson. From left are Cindy Freeman, representing California Casualty; NSEA President Nancy Fulton; and Campbell.

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*Tuition is subject to change.

Save With Dave!

As part of this year's NEA Member Benefits member appreciation celebration, Professional Learning Board (PLB) is pleased to offer their Reading Across the Curriculum self-study course for free to all NEA members during May. PLB, an NEA Academy partner, designed the interactive course (normally valued at \$39) for educators and paraeducators at all grade levels to improve student achievement in all content areas.



Glenn

Course highlights include bonus online classroom tools, research-based and classroom-proven reading instruction techniques; user-friendly interface with discussion board facilitation; methods to motivate and improve reading comprehension; a large number of tools, exercises and additional resources to reinforce student skills; and continuing education graduate credit available.

For details, please visit:

www.neacademy.org/continuing-education/reading-across-the-curriculum-self-study.html

A Pet Option

For most of us, pets are part of the family — we'll do whatever we can to be sure they're cared for properly. Veterinary care, however, can be costly.

One way to help protect your wallet and the pets you love is to obtain pet insurance through a reputable provider. NEA Member Benefits, in partnership with Pets Best Insurance, offers the NEA Pet Insurance Program, designed to help cover the cost of certain procedures and illnesses, and with the goal of making pet care more affordable.

The NEA Pet Insurance Program has many attractive features, including:

- Visit any licensed veterinarian.
- No upper age limits.
- Optional routine care coverage available for an additional cost.

Plans start at less than \$1 per day, and NEA members are eligible for a 5 percent discount in most states.

For details, look under the 'Insurance' tab at:

neamb.com

David Glenn is Nebraska's NEA Member Benefits representative.

Deals For You During Member Appreciation Week!

Sneak Preview Opens Thursday, May 2!

NEA Member Benefits is celebrating Member Appreciation Week and wants members to join in the fun!

From May 6-10 the NEA Member Benefits website will feature special deals, discounts and giveaways — all designed exclusively for NEA members. It's our way of saying "Thank You" for all you do!

Enter to win an iPad mini, select a free magazine subscription, save big on classroom supplies and personalized greeting cards and stationery, get discount coupons, gift cards, and much, much more!

There will be a sneak preview! To get an early start on the celebration, we'll provide a sneak preview of these special offers starting Thursday, May 2, at:

neamb.com/appreciation

Check the deals out ahead of time, and then visit often during the week of May 6 – 10!

Smilemakers, Too!

As part of the NEA Member Benefits Member Appreciation campaign, SmileMakers, the online store for student rewards, classroom

décor, and more, is giving a free gift and an even deeper discount to members making purchases from May 2 - 10.

Use promotion code NEAMB when you order \$25 or more in classroom supplies to receive:

- 25 percent off your purchase.
- Free shipping.
- A free gift.

Explore the best selection of rewards and incentives for students and a world of innovative education products at your fingertips. Included are products like these:

- Stickers and toys
- Arts and crafts
- Prizes and rewards
- Teaching resources
- Classroom décor
- School spirit items
- Writing accessories
- Staples products

Themed products for celebrations, including the largest selection of Dr. Seuss and Peanuts items.

To find everything you need for your classroom from SmileMakers, please visit:

smilemakers.com/nea.html

Save Cash with NEA Click & Save: Find Deals on Flowers, Clothes, More!

10-Day Free Trial Included in Offer

You can save tons of money using NEA Click & Save, the online discount buying service for NEA members. The service highlights select retailers and merchants each month. Check out these featured "Buy-lights" for May:

- Kohl's: Get 15 percent off orders of \$100 or more.
- Shoes.com: Get 10 percent off, plus free shipping.
- Cooking.com: Save up to 40 percent on Le Creuset cookware.
- PerfumeWorldWide.com: Get 10 percent off on any order.
- Sephora: Free shipping on orders over \$50.

Join the 288,500 NEA members already registered for NEA Click & Save. Go to:

neamb.com/clickandsave



Mother's Day is Near!

Whether it's to celebrate Mother's Day, a graduation, birthday, or new arrival, NEA members can delight their loved ones with a lush plant, gorgeous floral arrangement, or tantalizing gift basket — and get 20 percent off their orders — from 1800Flowers.com and 1800Baskets.com! For details, or to place your order, look for 1800Flowers.com under the 'Shopping and Discounts' tab at:

neamb.com



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What Are the Questions?

Albert Einstein, one of the great geniuses in the history of mankind, is credited with saying “If I had one hour to save the world, I would spend 55 minutes defining the problem and only five minutes finding the solution.”

This is not the usual approach for our society. We often jump immediately to solutions without knowing the right questions we are trying to answer. It is an approach commonly called: “ready, fire, aim.”

Asking the right questions is critical in the current focus on higher student achievement. We have found the right questions in the past. The problem is that now we tend to find the answers before the questions. It is a dangerous approach for the schoolchildren in this country...and for their schools.

Today’s school system in Nebraska is built on many of the fundamental questions that the NSEA raised in the past. In the 1890s, the NSEA worked hard for compulsory school attendance for all children. The NSEA was a primary voice for free tuition for rural high school students in the 1920s. The issue of stability in the teaching staff drew the NSEA’s support for continuing contracts in the 1930s. In the 1960s, the questions included collective bargaining for teachers and equal opportunities for minority students.

A Punitive Reaction

The NSEA over the last 146 years has been instrumental in improving the quality of our schools and the achievement of our students. The danger is that today’s impatience — and political agendas — force answers before we even decide what the appropriate questions are.

The fundamental issue that still haunts us as a society is why some students have such great difficulty reading, solving problems, doing mathematics, or even graduating from high school. Congress seems to have found the answer in No Child Left Behind: a testing system that has narrowed our curriculum, eliminated teaching in some subject areas, increased stress and pressure on both students and teachers, and indirectly produced a kind of grotesque sports metaphor of ranking schools as

“winning” or “losing.”

There are rational approaches to the questions about student achievement in Nebraska. A punitive reaction, based on test results, is one answer. But does it address the right question?

Reasonable Expectations

Educational research provides questions we should be asking about the policy structure of our school system. The research from RAND (“Teachers Matter,” 2012) indicates that teachers are the most important factor on achievement within the school, while Marzano’s study (“A New Era of School Reform,” 2000) clearly shows the impact of factors outside of school.

The most important factors that affect student achievement are parenting practices at home, including parental guidance, expectations, and teaching by reading and sharing general knowledge with children. Parents exert far more influence on student success than what a teacher is able to do. In fact, teachers only account for about 13 percent of the

variation in student achievement outcomes. The question is why our society views public policies on parental responsibility in education as “hands off” and, instead, focuses the responsibility for low achievement solely on teachers. This forms a fundamental question of what reasonable (and legal) expectations of parents should be.

The policy questions within the school setting are also fundamental. What should be the qualifications to teach? What role should teachers have in the educational policy community? How should practicing teachers be involved in the licensing, review, and retention of their peers? Does the current salary schedule method of paying teachers prevent teacher recognition and incentives for high performance?

As teachers have for the last 146 years, we will continue to ask these hard questions. Our goal must be to align research, educational policy, and student achievement. When we have the right questions, we will come to an answer that is framed by the expertise of practicing teachers. We are not there yet.



Promoting Achievement for 146 Years: NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen at the site of the 1867 founding of the NSEA, at Brownville.

“The danger is that today’s impatience — and political agendas — force answers before we even decide what the appropriate questions are.”

**— Craig R. Christiansen,
Executive Director,
NSEA**

EHA Wellness Links Abound

Information on Health is at Your Fingertips!

Interested in healthy living and issues geared toward that goal? The Educators Health Alliance offers links that will help NSEA-Retired members and others maintain and improve their overall health. Consider checking these links:

- Educators' Health Alliance Wellness Project has several pieces of information to help keep you healthy:

ehawellness.org/index.shtml

- The Healthy Matters site lets members focus on a certain health topic after each publication date. Find it at:

nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthchecktools.html

- Health Check Tools guides viewers in a self-assessment that encourages health choice decisions that will improve overall health. Find it at:

nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthchecktools.html

- Learn how to improve your health with quick and easy quizzes:

cdc.gov/family/quiz/

Retirement Seminars Available

The leadership of the NSEA-Retired offers both a retirement seminar and a financial planning seminar that is of great value to all educators.

Each of the six NSEA governance districts has established a policy to help cover the expense of bringing the sessions to their district. Local associations are encouraged to contact their district president to find out what kind of help they can access. There is no charge for NSEA members to attend. The Retirement Planning Seminar lasts 90 minutes, and explains benefits from the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System (NPERS). Topics covered include:

- How to calculate your retirement benefits?

- What factors affect your retirement benefit?



Spring Conference Kearney Fun!

The Spring Conference for the NSEA-Retired affiliate of NSEA was slowed, but not stopped by a spring snowstorm. These hardy souls from Lincoln, above, managed the trip to Kearney. From left are Eloise Hiatt, Bill Hayes, Jane Rowe and Pat Etherton. At right, a retired member enjoyed a moment with Shelby native and Olympic gold medal bobsledder Curt Tomasevicz.



- How do the eight payment options differ?

- Who should you name as your primary beneficiary?

- Health insurance after retirement.

The financial planning session lasts about 60 minutes. Topics include:

- The advantages of tax-deferred investments over taxable investments.

- Kinds of tax deferred investments available to school employees.

- Risks involved in making investments in stocks compared to the risks in bond investments.

- What mix should you consider for your investments.

To discuss scheduling either seminar, contact NSEA-Retired President Roger

Rea. Please put "Retirement Seminar for [your local name]" in the subject line of the e-mail. E-mail Rea at:

rrea68154@yahoo.com

EHA Sessions in May

Three seminars will be offered through EHA in May concerning pending 2013-14 changes to the Direct Bill Early Retirement Health Benefit Options. Those seminars will be held:

- Thursday, May 2, at 4 p.m. at the Younes Center in Kearney.

- Tuesday, May 7, at 4 p.m., BCBS Building, 1233 Lincoln Mall, Lincoln.

- Friday, May 17, 4 p.m., Westside Community Conference Center, Omaha.

— Renae Kelly, Editor

NSEA-Retired Election Results, Spring 2013

Board of Directors

Secretary: Janice Barnason

Treasurer: Art Tanderup

District Directors

Metro-1: John Jensen

Panhandle: James McDermott

Tri-Valley: Guy Roggenkamp

NSEA Delegate Assembly

Capitol: De Tonak, Pat Etherton, Bill Hayes

Elkhorn: Art Tanderup, Dan Schiefelbein

Metro: John Jensen, Liz Rea, Carol Krejci, Walta Sue Dodd, Ruby Davis

Panhandle: James McDermott

Sandhills: Dee Gillham

Tri-Valley: Guy Roggenkamp, Mary Ann Neimoth, Jan Barnason

At Large: Tom Black

NEA Representative Assembly

Region 1: Walta Sue Dodd

Region 2: Pat Etherton

At Large: Tom Black, Carol Krejci, John Jensen

Shut Out

California Community College Students Find Fewer Classes Available

The *Oakland (CA) Tribune* reports that California's community colleges – which comprise the nation's largest public higher education system – have endured so many budget cuts in recent years, and have lost so many teachers and classes, that students are being driven away.

Citing a report by the Public Policy Institute of California, the *Tribune* reported that the number of course sections are down systemwide by as much as 20 percent since 2008, causing enrollment rates to fall to the lowest point in decades.

As a result, the chancellor's office said that as many as one-half million students have been shut out of the system in recent years because they could not get into classes. Access is particularly difficult for first year students who must wait to register after returning students. The *Tribune* reported that the community college system counted 2.4 million students in 2011-12, down from 2.9 million students in 2008-09.

California voters last year approved a tax hike and the governor hopes to aid community colleges with an additional \$210 million, but the authors say that's far from enough. The state and the colleges must come up with a long-range plan to restore the system, whether through increased state revenue, local parcel taxes or student fees, the authors concluded.

Early Childhood Education: 'Extremely High Returns'

A story with a Nebraska twist indicates that investment in early childhood education would pay huge dividends.

The *New York Times* reported that James Heckman, a Nobel prize winner for economics, spoke to the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce in February, and displayed charts that "demolished the United States' entire approach to education."

The *Times* reported that Heckman's charts displayed the results of cognitive tests first performed in the 1980s on several hundred low-birthweight 3-year-olds, who were then retested at ages 5, 8 and 18.

Those children born of mothers who had graduated from college scored significantly higher at age 3 than did those children of mothers who were high school dropouts. That is proof, the *Times* reported, of the "advantage for young children of living in rich, stimulating environments." More surprising, said the *Times*: the difference in cognitive performance was just as big at age 18 as it had been at age 3.

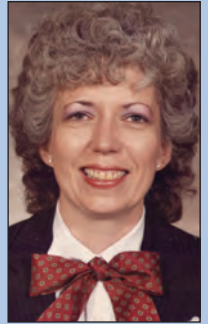
Another study by the University of Pennsylvania found that an enormous gap in math skills between wealthy and poor children was not much different at age 12 than it was at age 6. The gap, said the *Times*, is one of the widest among 65 countries taking part in the Program for International Student Achievement. Further, prosperous American students scored on average 110 points higher on reading tests than disadvantaged students – a rate similar to that in Tunisia.

The story concluded that investment in early education of disadvantaged children pays "extremely high returns." A chart accompanying the story indicated the U.S. ranks 31st among industrialized nations for spending on early childhood education.

Dr. Cheryl Blue

Cheryl Blue, 65, former president of NSEA's Metro District and the Ralston Education Association, died on April 13 from complications brought about by breast cancer.

Blue had also taught at Plattsmouth, where she was an elementary principal, middle school principal and assistant superintendent. She was also an assistant professor of education at Peru State College. At her death, she was principal of St. Columbkille Catholic School in Omaha.



Blue

Blue was elected president of Metro District in 1985, and had served in many other association capacities prior to her election. She had served the Ralston Education Association as secretary, chief negotiator and president; was a leader in many statewide association activities, including extra duty reform, salaries, and legislative committees.

She taught high school English at Ralston, and her diverse teaching career included several years in the Denver area, and several years teaching for Department of Defense schools in Germany.

She earned a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University and a master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado.

Survivors include a son, a stepdaughter, two stepsons, four step-grandchildren and seven step-great-grandchildren.

Sharon Erickson

Sharon Erickson, 63, Stanton, a former teacher and guidance counselor at Norfolk Junior High School, died Saturday, April 6.

A Stanton native, she earned a bachelor's degree in home economics from the University of Nebraska and a master's degree in counseling from Wayne State College. Her career at Norfolk spanned more than 20 years.

She is survived by her husband, two children and three grandchildren.

Ruth Anne Snavelly

Ruth Anne Snavelly, 79, former president of the Bellevue Education Association and a longtime teacher with the Bellevue Public Schools, died April 19.

Snavelly was active at all levels in the Association, and was a member of NSEA and the National Education Association at the time of her death.

She is survived by two brothers, a sister and numerous nieces and nephews. Memorials to Parkside Baptist Church or the American Diabetes Association.

Plum Creek Literacy Fest Draws Famed Artists, Writers

Caldecott, Newberry Winners on Agenda for Seward Festival

Plans are already well under way for the 2013 Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival, which will feature several nationally known speakers. Among those on the agenda are:

■ **Dr. Timothy Rasinski**, a professor of literacy at Kent State University and the author of more than 200 articles and author or co-author of 50 books or curriculum programs on reading. He is author of *The Fluent Reader* and *The Fluent Reader in Action*.

■ **Donalyn Miller**, a Texas middle school teacher and author of *The Book Whisperer* and *Reading in the Wild*.

■ **Kevin Henkes**, an award-winning author best known for *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Henkes has won both the Caldecott Medal and Newbery Honor for other books.

■ Illustrator and author **Judy Schachner**, a New York Times best-selling author and the brains behind the Skippyjon Jones series.

■ **Marla Frazee**, author and illustrator of *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*, a Caldecott Honor Award winner.

The schedule for the festival includes Children's Day on Thursday, Sept. 26, for Seward and Lincoln schools; Friday, Sept. 27, for commuting schools; and Saturday, Sept. 28, for the adult conference day and Kevin Henkes luncheon.

For details on the conference, go to the website at:

cune.edu/about/conferences-and-camps/plumcreek/

Speaking of Teaching

"To think that we can sit here and moan about losing competition to Japan while schools hold bake sales to raise money for pencils is to think we have no sense at all."

— **Derrick Jackson**,
Boston Globe Columnist

Family of Teachers



The Bengston family: Descendants of the Bengston family have numerous ties to the teaching profession. Seated, from left, are Natalie Dittmer, who has taught third grade at Elkhorn Valley Elementary in Tilden; and Alison Veburg, who is in her first year of tutoring at York High School.

Back row, from left, are Karin Anderson-Sweet, who has taught English at Princeton, IA; Ron Veburg, who taught drama at Hastings Senior High; and Brendan Dittmer who has taught English and also coaches at Elkhorn Valley High School.

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

Balloons-R-Us

From John Failor, a math teacher at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Illinois:

"I teach a program called Freshman Academy. This program takes the thirty to forty lowest incoming freshmen and tries to get them caught up in reading and mathematics.

I lead these students in running a school store called Balloons-R-Us. Balloons-R-Us allows students to purchase balloons at school for their friends' birthdays. We use the front of a

janitorial closet as a store. We are open every morning before school and provide a selection of around fifteen different balloons. Included with each balloon are helium, ribbon and a weight. Freshman Academy students work at the store, help select inventory, create advertising and marketing strategies and complete financial records. We have made a profit of five hundred dollars so far this year. We plan to do a year-end report and decide what to do with the profits. I have incorporated some of the math involved in the business in my math classes. I believe any school could operate such a business."



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