



NSEA Governance Districts

NSEA's elected Board of Directors comes from, and reflects, Association membership.

For most of NSEA's long history, the state has been divided into governance districts, with representatives from each district serving on the statewide Board of Directors.

In late winter each year, NSEA members begin the process of electing colleagues to the NSEA Board of Directors. Representatives are elected on a proportional basis; each board member represents 1,227 members, with a variance of no more than 10 percent from district to district.

The NSEA Executive Committee is comprised of representatives elected at large: the president, vice president and two members of the National Education Association Board of Directors. In addition, 17 members of the board are elected based on membership in each NSEA district. Presidents of those districts serve on the board in a non-voting capacity.

Other non-voting board members represent the Higher Education Academy, Education Support Professionals and NSEA's three affiliates: NSEA-Retired, the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN), and the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee.

The current board includes three former Nebraska Teachers of the Year and two past recipients of NSEA's Teaching Excellence Award.

The board meets up to nine times a year, including a meeting at the site of the annual Delegate Assembly. At those meetings, board members consider and act on issues of importance and concern to association members.

Always remember: Board members represent you!

NSEA Executive Committee



Nancy Fulton
Wilber-Clatonia,
NSEA President,
2017

Nancy Fulton, President, Wilber-Clatonia

An Iowa native, Nancy Fulton earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education/math from Iowa's Central College and her master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Doane College. She spent 34 years as an elementary teacher with the Wilber-Clatonia Public Schools.

Fulton served as the Wilber-Clatonia Education Association president and treasurer, and for 31 years was on the WCEA negotiations team. At the state level, she has served as Capitol District treasurer, as a Capitol District representative on the NSEA Board of Directors, and as NSEA vice president from 2005-11. NSEA members elected her as NSEA president in 2011, and she was re-elected in 2014.

Fulton was NSEA's 2002 Teaching Excellence Award winner.

Fulton has been a member of the Wilber Housing Authority Board, the Czech Village Senior Living Home Board, and the Wilber United Methodist Church. Along with husband Randy, she enjoys spending time with their children Kristin and Aaron and their spouses, and granddaughters Daphne and Colette.

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Jenni Benson
Lincoln,
NSEA Vice President,
2017

Jenni Benson, Vice-President, Lincoln

Jenni Benson graduated from Mid-Plains Community College and moved to Lincoln to earn money to finish school, working at a camp for kids with disabilities. There, she found her passion, and moved back to North Platte and worked as a teacher's aide in the public school preschool for children with disabilities.

Benson then put herself through school and graduated from UNL with a degree in elementary and special education. She got married while in school, and moved to Texas, where she taught in Austin, Harlingen and Edinburg. She has been with LPS for the past 21 years, plus two more years in between living in Texas for seven years.

Benson says she took a very unplanned but traditional route through Association leadership. She was a building representative, served on every committee and the LEA Board as well as the NSEA Board, was LEA vice president and now full-time LEA president, NEA director and now is NSEA vice president. Association work has been a huge part of her life for more than 20 years.

Benson's husband Mike and her four children support her passion and commitment to Association. "I am proud to be an advocate for children, educators, and public education," she said.

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John Heineman
Omaha,
NEA Director,
2017

John Heineman, NEA Director, Omaha

John Heineman is a theatre and English teacher at Omaha Bryan High School, and previously taught at Lincoln High School for more than 30 years. He loves to travel and has visited more than 20 countries. He is an avid sports fan including all things Husker, and loves going to Sporting Kansas City Soccer games. He loves to sing and has sung in the First-Plymouth Church Choir and Abendmusik Chorus for decades! One of his proudest moments was when he was selected as Nebraska Teacher of the Year, 2000.

Contact him at: ringojohn@gmail.com



Deb Gnuse, NEA Director, Grand Island

Deb Gnuse grew up in a family of teachers and has been teaching for more than 25 years. Gnuse and husband Jay have two sons and now enjoy being empty nesters. She is the president of the Grand Island Education Association, and serves on the NSEA and NEA boards. In her free time, she enjoys reading, crafting, Jazercise, and golfing.

Contact her at: jazzerdeb@gmail.com

Deb Gnuse
Grand Island,
NEA Director,
2016

Capitol District Board Members



Will West, Lincoln, Capitol District President

Will West is the new NSEA Capitol District president. He is a French International Baccalaureate teacher at Lincoln High School, and previously taught at Park Middle School, Schoo Middle School and Lincoln Northstar High School.

A native of New York state, West grew up and was educated in Colorado, and received an undergraduate degree in French and secondary education from the University of Northern Colorado. He earned a master's of science degree in curriculum and instruction from Western Governor's University. He has served as senior faculty representative, junior faculty representative and as a board member for the Lincoln Education Association, as well as on the LEA executive committee and as LEA treasurer.

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William West
Lincoln,
Capitol District
President,
2017



Rita Bennett, Lincoln

Rita Bennett has been an active Association member for her entire teaching career. She is a business teacher for the Lincoln Public Schools Entrepreneurship Focus Program; prior to that, she taught business and English at Lincoln Southeast High School for 20 years. Bennett also acts as the eLearning (online course) program coordinator for the district. She has served the Lincoln Education Association as a faculty representative for 23 years, has served a number of times as an LEA board member and is a past LEA vice president. She is currently an LEA board member, NSEA Capitol District board member, and is excited to add to her statewide involvement as an NSEA board member. Bennett chairs a number of committees on behalf of LEA and LPS and volunteers as a tabulations coordinator for local and NSBA marching band contests. She is a proud mom of Katie Bennett, who is a future educator and active SEAN member.

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Rita Bennett
Lincoln,
Capitol District,
2017



Linda Freye, Lincoln

Linda Freye grew up in Crete and graduated from Doane College with an elementary education/early childhood endorsement. She received a master's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Early Childhood Education. Over her career, she has been a second and third grade teacher for the Columbus Public Schools; an instructor in early childhood education at UNL; a staff developer at the Nebraska Department of Education for the Arts Framework Project; and a Head Start/preschool teacher. She now works as a kindergarten teacher at Maxey Elementary in Lincoln. She is secretary-treasurer of the Lincoln Education Association and an NSEA Board member from Capitol District.

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Linda Freye
Lincoln,
Capitol District,
2016



Deb Rasmussen, Lincoln

Deb Rasmussen comes from a large family of educators. She has taught and counseled in three states over 31 years. As the oldest of 10 children and mother of one, Rasmussen has been told she has been teaching all her life – and she loves what she does. She was raised in a family with an Association president and lives and breathes association work. She spends free time with family and friends, and her greatest joy at the end of each day is coming home to her adorable and very spoiled three dogs and a cat (who thinks she's a dog).

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Deb Rasmussen
Lincoln,
Capitol District,
2015



Jen Yoder, Lincoln

Jen Yoder has lived in Lincoln since moving with family in 1984. After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, she began her teaching career with Lincoln Public Schools, where she continues to teach today. Yoder has received additional degrees from UNL as she believes strongly in being a lifelong learner. She has also been an adjunct professor at both UNL and Midland University as well as the Interim Director of Special Education at Nebraska Wesleyan University. She has been a proud Association member her entire career and has been a member of many boards of directors. She lives in Lincoln with her husband, Tollie, and sons Noah and Jake.

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Jen Yoder
Lincoln,
Capitol District,
2016

Elkhorn District Board Members



Tracia Blom, South Sioux City, Elkhorn District President

Tracia Blom was born, raised and has been a lifelong resident of South Sioux City. She has two younger sisters, a younger brother, and her parents still reside in South Sioux City. Her sons, Joshua, who is married to Justa; and Seth, who is engaged to Heather; also live in South Sioux City.

Attending Wayne State College, Blom received a bachelor of fine arts in education and a master's in curriculum and instruction. Over the past 25 years, she has been the middle school art teacher in South Sioux City, and was a substitute teacher for four years before that. Some of her favorite activities include drawing, painting, needlepoint and cross-stitch, watching movies and playing with her dog Lucy, and her cats Mittens and Moo Moo.

She enjoys being active at the local, district, state and national levels. She has been local

Tracia Blom
South Sioux City,
Elkhorn President,
2015

secretary, vice president, president and negotiator; district vice president and president; NSEA Board of Directors; Resolutions Committee chair, Bylaws Committee co-chair, Personnel Committee, RA Planning Committee, ESP Committee, Membership Committee, Government Relations Committee, NEA Women's Leadership Trainer and RA Delegate.

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Jason Wiese
Arlington,
Elkhorn District,
2018

Jason Wiese, Arlington

Jason Wiese earned a bachelor's degree from Midland Lutheran College and a master's degree from Doane College. The 2015-16 school year marks his 20th year teaching social studies (2 years at Fremont Bergan and 18 at Arlington Public Schools). He is the coach and sponsor of the girls' golf team, middle school boys' basketball, middle school track and Quiz Bowl.

Wiese has served as the AEA head negotiator, vice president and president over the years, as well as two years on the board of NSEA's Elkhorn District. He is a member of the Arlington Village Board. His wife Sarah is an RN at Nye Legacy in Fremont and his son Michael is a junior at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

"As a member of NSEA and through my involvement, I have had the opportunity to become a leader in educational issues at the local, state and national levels," said Wiese. "The NSEA also provides valuable resources for me in the areas of bargaining, liability insurance, access to NEA Benefits, NSEA Access Discounts, government relations. I love lobbying and government relations as a social studies teacher, and I personally took advantage of the BCBS scholarship multiple times as I earned my master's and other post graduate work."

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Doug Sheppard
Fremont,
Elkhorn District,
2016

Doug Sheppard, Fremont

Born and raised in Fremont, Doug Sheppard grew up in a family of educators. Following graduation from Fremont High School, he earned a bachelor of education degree from Wayne State College and later his master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Doane College. Sheppard began his teaching career at Valentine City Schools teaching fourth grade and then sixth grade math and science. Fourteen years ago, he moved back to his hometown to teach sixth grade math. He has also coached football, basketball, wrestling and track at the middle school and high school levels during the past 20 years. Sheppard has been very active in his local education association, serving on committees as well as holding several leadership positions at the local, district and state levels. He currently serves as president of the Fremont Education Association and on the NSEA Board of Directors.

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David Shrader
Neligh-Oakdale,
Elkhorn District,
2017

David Shrader, Verdigre

Dave Shrader taught for 38 years at Verdigre High School, where he taught grades 8-12 mathematics, with a yearly rotation of chemistry and physics. He now teaches at Neligh-Oakdale.

Shrader has a brother and sister-in-law; 1 niece, 5 nephews and their spouses; 7 great-nieces and 3 great nephews.

Shrader grew up on the family farm, still owns it and spends time there. He enjoys watching WWII movies, collecting Santas, looking for antiques and singing in the community choir. He is president of the Verdigre Heritage Museum and Vice President of the Verdigre Improvement Club.

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Metro District Board Members



Bobby Miller
Elkhorn,
Metro District
President,
2016

Bobby Miller, Omaha, Metro District President

Bobby Miller has been a teacher for 14 years, all for the Omaha Public Schools. He graduated from Wayne State College with a bachelor of science degree in education and completed his master's of science with an endorsement in assessment at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Miller is a third grade teacher at Masters Elementary. He is an active member of the Omaha Education Association, and has served as an association representative to his building. He currently serves on the OEA's Board of Directors. He was elected to serve as the NSEA Metro District President. Miller and his wife, Kari, are parents of a 12-year-old daughter, Emma, and 9-year-old son, Zander.

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Alan Bone
Westside Dist. 66,
Metro District,
2017

Alan Bone, Westside District 66

Alan Bone was elected to the NSEA Board of Directors in 2011 and is Student Services Coordinator for the Westside Community Schools, where he taught high school English from 2000-11. Prior to that, he taught at Ralston High School and Arlington Junior-Senior High School. He and his wife, Missy, have been married for 32 years and have four sons, aged 29, 27, 24 and 19.

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Marsha Edquist
Millard,
Metro District,
2017

Marsha Edquist, Millard

Marsha Edquist is in her 25th year of teaching. She has been active with NSEA since she was the state president of the Student Education Association of Nebraska during her college career. Edquist has taught and served on the association boards in Colorado and Nebraska. She says she is lucky to have been educated in Nebraska, where she received her teaching degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her master's at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Becoming a teacher was a dream for Edquist, beginning in second grade. Each day at school she says she feels blessed to touch the lives of students as she works to make them feel they are a special part of the classroom. Her goal and dream is that they become lifelong learners and want to become the best they can be as a member of the community they live in. She enjoys spending time with family and friends who are always supportive.

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Maddie Fennell, Omaha

Maddie Fennell has been an elementary teacher in the Omaha Public Schools for 25 years. She has served in numerous education advocacy roles, including Chairing the NEA Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching, presenting at the 2012 International Summit on the Teaching Profession, blogging for Education Week and being honored as the 2007 Nebraska Teacher of the Year. Fennell is currently working for a second year as a United States Department of Education Classroom Teacher Ambassador Fellow. She also serves as secretary of the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and as a teacher representative on the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution Re-Imagining Education Project.

Maddie Fennell

Omaha,
Metro District,
2016

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Paul Schulte, Millard

Paul Schulte just began his 16th year with Millard Public Schools. He began his teaching career at Disney Elementary, where he taught Kindergarten for eight years and then served for five years as the Teacher Librarian. He currently serves as the release time President of the Millard Education Association, where he advocates for MEA members by serving on many district committees as well as serving on the Millard Public School Foundation Board of Directors. As the oldest of five kids, Schulte loves to spend time with his family, especially his nieces and nephews. He comes from a family of educators, including his mom and sister, who work for Kearney Public Schools. Schulte was introduced at an early age to the NSEA, where he would accompany his great uncle to the NSEA offices. He is proud to serve the members of the MEA as well as continue to serve the NSEA members from across our great state in the footsteps of his great uncle!

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Brad Wellmann, Bellevue

Wellmann grew up on a family farm near Waco, where his family raised soybeans, milo and pigs. He graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and he later earned a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Doane College. He has worked for Bellevue Public Schools since 2003. He worked as a fourth grade teacher at Fort Crook Elementary for 10 years, then as a lead teacher at Belleaire Elementary for two years, and is currently the principal at Bellevue Elementary. He has served the Bellevue Education Association (BEA) in numerous roles, including building representative, elementary executive board member, vice president and president. He has also represented BEA on the state and national level as a delegate to the NSEA Delegate Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly. In addition, he served as president of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) in 2002-03.

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Brad Wellmann

Bellevue,
Metro District,
2018

Panhandle District Board Members



Dan Spatzierath

Mitchell,
Panhandle District
President,
2016

Dan Spatzierath, Mitchell, Panhandle District President

Dan Spatzierath is originally from Montana. He came to Nebraska in 2007 to begin his teaching career in Mitchell. He has taught 7th grade reading, 9th grade grammar, novels, and speech, and 11th grade American literature, speech, and (starting in 2015) advanced composition and grammar. Additionally, he has worn various extra-duty hats: coaching, sponsorship, and a/v technician. He joined the NSEA in his first year of teaching primarily because of the legal benefits and the membership savings card. Within three years, he was the president of the Mitchell Education Association. The following year he became the treasurer of the NSEA Panhandle District. In 2014, he was elected president of the Panhandle District, and says his viewpoint on the Education Association has broadened from the first year. "It is important that all teachers have a voice when it comes to education and the Education Association is responsible for ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity to share their viewpoints," he said. As a leader at a local level and district level, he wants to ensure that he is always available to members if they have questions or concerns.

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Vacancy

Contact information: -----

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Panhandle District,
2016

Sandhills District Board Members



ML Lehman, ESU No. 16, Sandhills District President

ML Lehman has been a teacher since 1974 – in Sidney, Nebraska; Soldotna, Alaska; Savoonga, Alaska; and North Platte. She has a bachelor's degree in special education and a master's degree in behavior disorders. Lehman is a past recipient of the NEA Foundation Hilda Maehling Award for professional development. Her current union involvement includes president of the ESU No. 16 Education Association; service on the Sandhills District Board; and service in her last year on the NSEA Board of Directors. She has been married to husband Jeff for 19 years and is the mother of 6 adult children.

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ML Lehman
ESU No. 16,
Sandhills District
President,
2017



Joy Schott, Garfield County

Playing volleyball for Coach Sally Thalken at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte, and continuing on to the University of Alaska at Anchorage as a student/ athlete opened up a world of adventure and broadened perspective for small town native Joy Schott. Attaining personal goals and setting high expectations professionally fueled her ideology of creating a great educational experience for every child. After completing her B.A. in Education, Schott returned to her hometown to teach the sixth grade in the same classroom as her late grandmother, Laura Hughes, once did.

After teaching four years, Schott earned her master's in curriculum and instruction within two years. Her years with students have had many rewards that include: 10/11 Golden Apple 2004, selected Belfer Grant recipient 2010 and 2011, fundraised and commissioned the Children's Peace Monument in Burwell, and won the E-Instruction \$30,000 video contest in 2009.

She has served NSEA in many capacities, including Delegate Assembly representative for 12 years; Sandhills District treasurer. 8 years; Sandhills District Executive Committee, 3 years; Sandhills District vice president, 3 years; service on five different NSEA ad hoc committees; NEA Western Region Leadership Conference in Omaha in 2006 and Albuquerque in 2009. She is currently serving a second term on the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission.

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Joy Schott
Garfield County,
Sandhills District,
2018



Tri-Valley District Board Members

Michelle Carter, Grand Island, Tri-Valley District President

Michelle Carter has been an educator more than 25 years. She has always been an active member in her local association. She has served as vice president, membership chair, building representative and negotiator. She currently serves the Grand Island Education Association as vice president. She also serves at the state level as president of the Tri-Valley District. Michelle has three teenage children, twins Hannah and Macy, and Jacob.

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Michelle Carter
Grand Island,
Tri-Valley District
President,
2015



Dennis Batterman, Imperial

Dennis Batterman is originally from South Dakota, and attended college at the University of South Dakota at Springfield, where he received his teaching degree in 1974. Batterman worked for six summers at the famous Wall Drug Store near the Black Hills in order to finance his education. He began his teaching career in Hamlet, NE, then to Wauneta and finally (I think) to Imperial. All those years in grades 5 thru 8.

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Dennis Batterman
Imperial,
Tri-Valley District,
2017



Melissa Boutwell, Lexington

Melissa Boutwell is married, has three children and two grandchildren and has lived almost all of her life in Holdrege. She has been teaching in Lexington for 15 years, and says that even with a commute of 80 miles each day, she would not teach anywhere else. During the summer months she enjoys traveling for NSEA, teaching private swimming lessons, spending time at the lake with her family and friends and acting in community theaters. She also officiates volleyball and likes to watch the Huskers play.

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Melissa Boutwell

Lexington,
Tri-Valley District,
2017



David Witt, Hastings

David Witt began his career as a professional educator at Columbus High School in 1987 and moved to Hastings Senior High in 1999. In addition to teaching English and Communication Arts, he coached speech and debate for 16 years before retiring from those activities to concentrate on the classroom. He has an associate's degree in broadcasting from Central Wyoming College, a bachelor's degree in education from Black Hills State College, and a master's degree in education from the University of Nebraska-Kearney. In Columbus, he served on various local association committees, including a term as chief negotiator. He was elected to four consecutive two-year terms as president of the Hastings Education Association before stepping down in 2011, and he began serving on the Tri-Valley District Board in 2012. David is a new appointee to the NSEA board in 2014.

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David Witt
Hastings,
Tri-Valley District,
2015



NSEA Affiliate Board Members

Diane Garner, Columbus, Chair, Education Support Professional (ESP) Representative

Diane Garner earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 1975 and started teaching Title 1 Reading at Columbus Junior High that fall. She earned a master's degree from UNL in 1989. She has taught study skills, English, computers, and social studies at the junior high and middle school.

After a brief retirement in 2009, she returned to substitute teach, then work as an in-school suspension supervisor. At the start of the 2015-16 school year, she served as a para-educator at the Columbus Middle School IMC.

Garner has served on numerous committees, written curriculum, designed classes and coached track. With CEA, she has been a building rep and president. She has attended several candidate interviews for various elections, and has attended many Delegate Assemblies and two NEA Representative Assemblies. She also served two terms on the Elkhorn District Board of Directors. Three years ago she attended the NEA-ESP conference in Kentucky, and in 2014-15 she was vice chair of the ESP/NSEA committee.

She has been married to husband Dale for 37 years, and they have two adult children.

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Diane Garner
Columbus,
ESP Representative,
2015-16



Edward Ventura, Omaha, Chair, Ethnic & Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC)

Edward T. Ventura, Jr., Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, is the chair of the NSEA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee. He is married to Ernestine Ortiz-Ventura, a second grade teacher at Gomez Heritage Elementary in the Omaha Public Schools. They are the parents of a son, Edward III, a freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Ventura also serves as the vice president of Member Benefits for the Omaha Education Association. He is a technology teacher at Castelar Elementary in the Omaha Public Schools. You can follow him on Twitter: @ventura_omaha.

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Edward Ventura
Omaha,
Ethnic Minority Affairs
Committee Chair,
2015-16



Andrew Lenzen, Nebraska Western Community College, President, Higher Education Academy

Andrew Lenzen has taught mathematics and statistics at Western Nebraska Community College for 12 years. He teaches online, interactive distance learning and traditional live courses. He has twice served as local president; was a founding member of the Higher Ed Academy; and has attended numerous Delegate Assemblies. He earned a bachelor's degree in math from Doane College; a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Washington University in St. Louis; a master's from Chadron State College; an educational specialist degree from Wayne State College; and a doctorate in adult and higher education from the University of South Dakota.

He is married with two grown step-daughters, one of whom is studying graphic design at Wayne State College. Lenzen and his wife also have three children, including a set of twins, who attend Sidney Public Schools. They have two granddaughters, ages 5 and 1.

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Joan Trimpey
Metro Community
College,
Higher Ed President,
2015



Roger Rea, Omaha, President, NSEA-Retired

Roger Rea is a retired high school chemistry teacher and was one of two Nebraska teachers selected to the NASA Teacher in Space Project in 1985. He received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching; was the Nebraska Teacher of the Year in 1989; was inducted into the Northwest High School Hall of Fame; authored several articles on the history of science; and helped write standardized high school chemistry tests. He is a past president of the Omaha Education Association and past chair of the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission. He is now Chairman of the Board of First Nebraska Educators Credit Union, is vice president of the Omaha School Employees' Retirement System, and serves on the National Council on Teacher Retirement Executive Committee. He enjoys travel, photography, gardening and playing the piano.

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Roger Rea
Omaha,
NSEA-R President,
2017



Joel Schroeder, Wayne State, President, Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN)

Joel Schroeder is a senior majoring in science education at Wayne State College. He is a proud and active member of Wayne State's North East Nebraska Teacher Academy (NENTA). He is the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) president for 2015-16.

Through NENTA, he has had the opportunity to substitute teach in more than 20 classrooms, teaching a variety of subjects including and levels, English language learners, middle school history, first grade, elementary technology, middle school science (a personal favorite), and more.

During the summer of 2015, he worked as a soil conservationist for the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the previous two summers he worked in the qual-

Joel Schroeder
Wayne State College,
SEAN President,
2015-16

ity assurance lab at Wells Inc. where part of his responsibilities included eating the ice cream to ensure its quality.

"While my science background has opened up a lot of alternative career opportunities, I will stay with education because it is a life style, calling, and in my opinion the most important profession in the world," he said.

"I have only been a member of the Student Education Association of Nebraska for two years, but have been very active that time," he said. "I am very serious and excited to represent student members at a time when student loan debt is greater than 1.2 trillion dollars."

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