

**Report to the 2015 NSEA Delegate Assembly
by the Ad Hoc Committee on Nebraska State Student Standards**

Jen Yoder, Lincoln Education Association, Chair

The Ad Hoc Committee on Nebraska State Standards was first formed from a 2013 Delegate Assembly New Business Item, with the directive to research and promote the alignment of state standards, instructional practices, and assessments through a comprehensive delivery system that leads to student success. The committee was to determine how best to promote the 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.

As a result of the committee's work during the 2013-14 association year, amendments to Resolutions B-9, B-10, and B-11 were adopted by the 2014 Delegate Assembly. Three New Business Items, introduced by the committee, were passed by Delegate Assembly that directed the NSEA to:

1. Keep members informed of national trends in student standards, assessment, instructional practices, accountability and implementation of new curriculum to meet the "Common Core State Standards" and to apprise the members on how these national trends were being manifested in Nebraska.

2. Develop the capacity of local affiliates to advocate for members' professional partnerships in determining best instructional practices, curriculum selection, development, and implementation so students become proficient on Nebraska's "College and Career Ready Standards" and

3. Extend the Ad Hoc Committee on Nebraska State Standards through the 2014-15 Association year. The charge was to focus on issues related to gathering and analyzing data from local associations on current practice used to implement curriculum, and to compare the data gathered against research-based practices for professional development and implementation. The committee was asked to report our findings and recommendations to the NSEA Board of Directors to improve the state-wide professional development delivery system and align the system for implementation of Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards.

Legislation has been introduced on NSEA's behalf through LB239 (Educator Evaluation program); LB435 (Time to Teach/Time to Learn program); LB589 (Tuition Reimbursement Loan Forgiveness program); LB274 (Re-Fund Mentoring programs); LB185 (fund the National Board Certification program); LB443 (Provide resources to school districts for mental health programs); and LB438 (Education Trust Fund). Passage of these legislative bills will help support a comprehensive delivery system that leads to student success.

The committee used its time this year to review national standards for professional development and developed a survey for local affiliates to report their perceptions of professional development delivery systems within the state and their respective local districts. The results of that survey have been provided to the NSEA Board of Directors and NSEA staff.

After reviewing the progress of Nebraska's revision of "College and Career Ready Standards" for English Language Arts and Math, reviewing the process to be used to develop assessments for those standards, and reviewing the local association survey on professional development delivery, the committee decided to recommend additions to the NSEA Resolutions on Professional Development for Professional Educators and Education Support Professionals. These resolutions were developed from model standards from the "Learning Forward" organization and the Professional Development Standards in NEA resolutions D-15 and D-16. In adopting these new

resolutions, the NSEA will have in place the direction and belief statements to advocate for the development of a state-wide delivery system of professional learning to support student success.

The committee recommends that the Delegate Assembly adopt these new Professional Development resolutions to guide our association's advocacy in the future.

To understand the context of this report for 2014-15, we must explain the circumstances of the 2013 Delegate Assembly conversation that led to the formation of the ad hoc committee and its subsequent two year study and actions.

At the time of the 2013 Delegate Assembly, many states were in the process of adopting Common Core State Standards because they had agreed to accept the requirements of Race to the Top federal grants. Nebraska was not one of those 37 plus states. In fact, Nebraska was following a long established practice of adopting rigorous College and Career Ready student standards through an inclusive process involving classroom educators in the development of the standards and public input and public hearings on the standards before the State Board of Education adopted student content standards. Nebraska statute, section 79-760.01 Academic Content Standards State Board of Education Duties, outlines the parameters of adopting and revising state academic standards and assessments every five years. There was discussion at Delegate Assembly about sending a strong statement against the Common Core State Standards to the State Board of Education. There was also discussion about honoring the Nebraska process of developing rigorous standards through educator engagement and to not take any position on the Common Core. Out of this discussion, the ad hoc committee was formed and we began our work.

It became very apparent to the committee that the task ahead was daunting. We knew we could not fulfill the directives from DA in one year's time so we tackled the underpinnings of our association, our resolutions. We added to our resolutions on student achievement, student learning, student assessment, and student testing to support our actions in proposed legislation and building the capacity of NSEA staff and leaders to support our local affiliates as they advocated for members' professional involvement and partnerships. In our second year, the committee reviewed the process and progress of Nebraska's development of revised Nebraska College and Career Ready Student Standards. It is important to reiterate, Nebraska has NOT adopted the Common Core State Standards. Nebraska has developed rigorous standards, through the input of Nebraska classroom teachers and college professors, which will prepare Nebraska students to be able to enter college at the level of achievement they need to be able to succeed without remediation in credit-bearing first-year postsecondary courses.

Our second charge from DA was to review the professional development systems in our state and make recommendations to the NSEA Board of Directors on how to improve the "state-wide delivery system" of professional development. What we found should not be a shock to many NSEA members. **There is NO state-wide system of delivery for professional development!** The closest system we can find that meets the criteria of a "state-wide system of professional development" is that provided by the Educational Service Units (ESU's). The data from our survey to local affiliates can be summarized in these statements: Most professional development is provided by the local district or through an ESU. There is no state-wide delivery plan for professional development. Professional development for implementing curriculum to teach new student standards is a local decision. Only a few districts align evaluation and professional development. Most of the professional development provided by districts is about data and data analysis, with some time allotted for developing curriculum. Some professional development does focus on developing curriculum to support student learning of new academic standards. Much of what constitutes professional development in Nebraska does not meet the standards articulated in

the proposed resolutions the ad hoc committee recommends to the Delegate Assembly for adoption.

One of the dilemmas the committee discussed was the proliferation of curriculum materials available from commercial publishers that boldly list statements that the material is “aligned with the Common Core.” This phenomena creates confusion for Nebraska educators and the Nebraska Public School patrons, parents, and policymakers about the nature of Nebraska’s student content standards. Our dilemma is how to communicate to everyone that Nebraska has not adopted the Common Core. Nebraska has adopted and will continue to revise our own rigorous student content standards that prepare students to be college and career ready. The communication about Nebraska College and Career Student Standards is even more daunting given the nature of our state policy of local control of curriculum.

The committee highly recommends that the NSEA Board of Directors endorse the adoption of the new resolutions on Professional Development as we propose, and that NSEA continue to build the capacity of NSEA staff, leadership and local affiliates to advocate for members as expressed in the new business items from the 2014 Delegate Assembly.

Members of the committee: Jen Yoder, Lincoln, chair; Ann Allyn, William West and Linda Freye, Lincoln; Nancy Fulton, Wilber-Clatonia; Tiffany Lafrentz, South Sioux City; Pat McLaughlin, Alliance; Tracy Naylor, Lexington; Susan Stake, Waverly; Leann Widhalm, Norfolk. Jay Sears served as staff consultant and Sally Bodtke as support staff.