

**DON'T FORGET THESE DATES:**



**NSEA'S 2016 DELEGATE ASSEMBLY**

**LINCOLN, EMBASSY SUITES**

**April 15-16, 2016**

Details to be announced

**NEA SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**June 29-July 2, 2016**

**NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**July 2-7, 2016**

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## Praxis Preview Available

### *Pilot Project Gives Teacher Candidates a Testing Preview*

Metro area college students who might wish to buff up on their skills before taking the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators test to enter a college of education program may want to reserve Tuesday, April 12.

That's the date of a pilot program offered by the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN). The single session in Omaha will give future educators an opportunity to polish their skills and knowledge before tackling the Praxis test. The Nebraska Department of Education requires passing scores on the test for admission into any Nebraska teacher education program.

The single session is set for the campus of the College of St. Mary, 7000 Mercy Road, Omaha. The work starts at 6:30 p.m. in the Mercy Hall meeting room.

The Praxis test is designed to determine whether candidates for education programs can demonstrate "basic skills competency" in reading, writing and mathematics. The math

portion of the test is often cited as a stumbling block for those seeking entry into teacher education programs and later, for certification.

NSEA Organizational Specialist Mike Wiesen is the advisor to SEAN, and assisted with arrangements for the session.

"This won't be a practice testing session," he said. "It will be a review format designed to familiarize participants with the test format and the kinds of questions, problems and issues that appear on the typical Praxis test."

NSEA Organizational Specialists Carol Hicks and Andrea Longoria will assist.

The session is open to any student who hopes to enter a teacher education program; participants do not need to be SEAN members. There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. The registration deadline is Monday, April 11. To register, go to:

**<https://www.nsea.org/praxis>**

Questions? Contact Wiesen at:

**[mike.wiesen@nsea.org](mailto:mike.wiesen@nsea.org)**



### **Smile!**

If you missed the SEAN Spring Conference and Delegate Assembly, well, you missed a great deal!

These four SEAN leaders took a moment for a smile and a selfie during the Friday night Delegate Assembly portion of the conference. From left are Madison Kinney, York College; Emily Wilmes, Wayne State College; Jeana Rezac, Midland University; and Mikayla Nelson, Nebraska Wesleyan University.

To learn which of these four were elected to leadership posts for 2016-17, see inside.

## YOU SHOULD KNOW...

### ...About NSEA Delegate Assembly

Every year since 1867, NSEA members have met in convention to assess the state of public education in Nebraska and to set goals for the next year.

As usual, several SEAN members will represent education majors at Delegate Assembly, set for April 15-16 in Lincoln.

SEAN President **Joel Schroeder, Wayne State College**, will attend by virtue of office.

Other delegates elected in February are: **Pamela Riffle, Peru State College; Denton Beacom, Wayne State College; Evann Vrana and Kira Hess, University of Nebraska Lincoln; and Madison Kinney, York College.**

Alternates are **Hannah Wulbert, Creighton University; and Hannah Smith, Wayne State College.**

### ...About NEA Rep Assembly

For 90 years, the National Education Association has met in convention, with Nebraska delegates in attendance. This year, Wayne State College enjoyed a clean sweep of delegates elected to attend the July meeting in Washington, D.C.

Representing SEAN will be 2016-17 President **Denton Beacom**; Underclass Representative-elect **Hannah Smith**; and Northeast Region Representative-elect **Bailey Schlueter**.

They will also attend the NEA Student Program Summer Leadership Conference in D.C., along 2016-17 **President-Elect Madison Kinney, York College; Southeast Region Representative Mikayla Nelson, Nebraska Wesleyan University; and Underclass Representative-elect Evann Vrana, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.**



## Education's Future

Concerned about the future of education in America? Worry not, as these bright faces — elected to the Executive Committee of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) in February — represent the next generation of educators.

Seated, from left, are Evann Vrana, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, SEAN underclass representative; Hannah Smith, Wayne State College, secretary; Denton Beacom, Wayne State College, president; and Madison Kinney, York College, president-elect.

Standing, from left, are Ali Johnson, Hastings College, western region representative; Mikayla Nelson, Nebraska Wesleyan University, southeast region representative; Elizabeth Milliken, University of Nebraska-Omaha, metro region representative; and Bailey Schlueter, Wayne State College, northeast region representative.

For a look at the SEAN Spring Conference, turn to Page 21.

## Attention Sophomores, Juniors:

### NSEA-Retired Offers \$1,000 Stipends to Three SEAN Members

Those education majors who plan to begin their student teaching semester during the 2017-18 school year should keep this thought in mind: The NSEA-Retired affiliate awards three \$1,000 scholarships each year for a SEAN member to use during his or her student teaching semester.

The application period for 2016-17's school year is past and those scholarships have been awarded (see box). The deadline for application for the 2017-18 school year will arrive in March 2017.

Watch the SEAN Scene next fall for details, and begin thinking about those recommendation letters.

In the meantime, for details, contact Tamra Mick at 1-800-742-0047 or via e-mail at: [tamra.mick@nsea.org](mailto:tamra.mick@nsea.org)

### Breaking News!

The NSEA-Retired affiliate has just announced the three recipients of \$1,000 scholarships for 2016-17.

They are **Haley Montgomery, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and Caitlin Cassell and Mariah Bigelow, both of Peru State College.**

Congratulations and good luck during your student teaching experience!



# Attention Graduates!

Have you been an officer, active in your chapter or at the state level in the Student Education Association of Nebraska?

Are you about to graduate? Consider that graduates-to-be with records of participation are eligible to wear graduation cords or sashes over their graduation gowns.

If you're interested in recognizing your participation in SEAN during your graduation ceremonies, visit with your campus advisor for details.



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# SEAN Urged to Commit, Advocate

## 100 Attend Spring Conference at Hastings

Members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska got a good review of life after college at the Association's annual spring conference on the Hastings College Campus in late February.

Sessions reviewed topics like how to reduce student loan debt; how to make ends meet on a teacher's salary; facts about master agreements and first contracts; and first year teacher expectations.

Nebraska 2016 Teacher of the Year Tim Royers offered three practical classroom tips he said that "have stood out for me."

First, he said, teachers must make subject matter relevant. "Connect it to their lives or make them live it," he said.

He urged them to "fully commit" to students. That means going to musicals, athletic events, prom, graduation and more.

"Kids love to see teachers get involved in what they care about. When you show you care, they buy in a million times more to what you're doing in the classroom."

And he urged teachers to advocate beyond the classroom. "You are not alone. Your classroom does not function in isolation," he said.

Hastings Public Schools Superintendent Craig Kautz joined Omaha Sen. Rick Kolowski for a general session and was critical of the charter school movement.

"Those who support the charter experiments can walk away if the charter experiment fails," said Kautz. "After all, their children are not at risk."

Some student members also met Friday night for the SEAN Delegate Assembly, and elected new officers.



**The Numbers:** Wayne State College's Emily Wilmes studies a salary schedule in a session entitled Master Agreements and Your First Contract.



**One-on-One:** Hastings Education Association's Ben Welsch, left, presented on contracts and master agreements. He answered questions from Peru State College's Caitlin Cassell and Amanda Volksen and Doane College's Taylor Ruzicka.



**Free Shirts!** The advocacy group Nebraska Loves Public Schools offered free t-shirts — and students at the Spring Conference gobbled them up!



**Learning the Ropes:** Nebraska Wesleyan University's Mikayla Nelson, right, explains the duties of a regional representative to her colleagues from SEAN's Southeast Region. Nelson was reappointed to serve a second term.



# Encouraging Parental Involvement...

## ...Without Breaking the Budget!

*Reprinted by permission from Project Appleseed, the National Campaign for Public School Improvement.*

All too often, parent involvement in schools is not much more than the summation of a parent-teacher conference and an open house night.

If parents are ever contacted individually by teachers, it is usually concerning a behavioral or academic issue in the classroom, and parents are left with a negative view of what it means to be involved with their children's school.

However, parent involvement is vital in student success and in creating a healthy, effective school environment.

■ **Plan your Open House.** A parent night is a great opportunity to connect with your students' parents, familiarize them with your teaching style and classroom, and let them know what you expect from their children in the coming year. More than that, it is the perfect opportunity to get parents involved with the school and volunteering. However, parent night, family nights and open houses leave little time for one-on-one conversations or extended meetings.

■ **Make the first contact a positive one.** Teachers should not be introducing themselves to parents moments before explaining that their child has gotten into trouble or has fallen behind academically. At the beginning of the year, reach out to parents through a letter or email. Don't just call home if a child has acted out or caused concern, call when the child has accomplished something notable. Take five minutes each day to send a postcard home to one child's parents remarking on a specific achievement.

■ **Recruit parent classroom volunteers.** Some parents want to be involved but don't know how. Having groups of parents work on acquiring supplies, positing bulletin boards, and other activities behind the scenes is a great way to get parents in the school and save a teacher's time. With a little training, parents can also be valuable inside the classroom as aides, readers, test monitors, and tutors.

■ **Ask parents to use the Parental Involvement Report Card.** Project Appleseed provides a self-diagnostic tool intended to help parents rate their contributions to their child's success at school. Use the 31 questions as a guide to discover some of the ways that you can help your child at home and at school.

■ **Identify parents' special skills with the Parental Involvement Pledge.** If you know one of your students' parents is a chemist, bring her in for a demonstration during a science block. If you know one of your parents is a baker, bring her in to help make gingerbread houses during the holidays. If you know one of your parents is a carpenter, ask him for help on the school play set design. Many parents are happy to help, especially when they are being singled out for their talents.

■ **Keep parents informed.** Send home a list of the skills and subjects that each child will be responsible for learning during the school year. This will help parents know what skill level their child should be performing at and give them an opportunity to involve themselves in their child's learning after school. In addition, parents will be more aware of academic issues and difficulties if they appear.

■ **Ask for input on the school's parent involvement policy.** As a component of the school-level parental involvement policy mandated by federal law Title I, each school served

under this part shall jointly develop, with parents for all children served under this part, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's standards.

■ **Don't forget fathers.** A recent study published by the Education Resource Information Center shows that a father's participation in school events increases student achievement – and yet fathers are often forgotten in many parent-teacher activities and programs. Make sure that your parent events are father-friendly and don't hesitate to have one involved father recruit other fathers.

■ **Start a blog.** A school-wide blog run by an administrator or an individual classroom blog run by a teacher can be a wonderful way to reach out to parents on a regular basis – and they are free and easy to set up. A blog can keep parents informed of the daily and weekly events at the school and alert those to opportunities to become involved themselves. If parents are more aware of what goes on in the classroom, they will be better able to offer specific help.

■ **Hold a school-wide book club.** There are a number of high-quality young adult novels that everyone in the family can enjoy. By holding a school-wide book club, parents, students, teachers, and administrators can all have a common starting point for conversation – and students will have the added bonus of seeing their mentors reading for fun.

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