

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ April 2019

NO on LB670

Also Inside:

- Flood Disaster Aid Available
- Don't Ignore Extra Duty Schedules
- Gerry Brooks Coming to NSEA!
- Effective Classroom Management Tips

Nebraska State Education Association
605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
nsea.org
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Executive Director **Maddie Fennell, NBCT**
Assoc. Executive Director **Neal Clayburn**
Director of Public Affairs **Karen Kilgarin**
Assistant Comm. Director **Al Koontz**

NSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President **Jenni Benson, Lincoln**
jenni.benson@nsea.org
Vice President **Paul Schulte, Millard**
meapresident@hotmail.com
NEA Director **Tracy Hartman-Bradley, Omaha**
trhb1000@gmail.com
NEA Director **Linda Freye, Lincoln**
lfrey62@gmail.com

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New Leaders Elected; Terms Start in August

NSEA Members Fill District, State Office Vacancies

NSEA members elected new leaders to fill nearly three dozen district and state officers vacancies during an online voting process in late February and early March.

These representatives will take office beginning with the Aug. 1 start date of the 2019-20 Association year:

TRI-VALLEY DISTRICT

- NSEA Board of Directors: Deb Lyons, Hastings.
- Executive committee: Robin Henrichs, McCook; Jennifer Kotschwar, Wilcox-Hildreth.
- Bylaws Amendment: For, 236; Against, 11.

ELKHORN DISTRICT

- District President: Lisa Hanson, Neligh-Oakdale.
- NSEA Board of Directors: Kimberly Erickson, Norfolk.
- District Vice President: Rae Carbaugh, Niobrara.
- Executive Committee: Manni Belfrage, Tekamah-Herman; Gary Loftis, Lyons-Decatur; Marsha Silver, Scribner-Snyder; Pamela Anderson, Hartington-Newcastle.
- Bylaws Amendment: For, 189; Against, 18.

CAPITOL DISTRICT

- District Vice President: Jen Yoder, Lincoln.
- NSEA Board of Directors: Deb

Rasmussen and Julie Colby, Lincoln.
■ Bylaws Amendment: For, 306; Against, 14.

METRO DISTRICT

- District President: Dave Herben-er, Papillion-LaVista.
- NSEA Board of Directors: Robert (Bobby) Miller, Omaha; Kathie Garabrandt, Millard.
- Executive Committee: Chris Janovec, Millard; Julie Adams, Bellevue.
- Bylaws Amendment: For, 439; Against, 46.

PANHANDLE DISTRICT

- District Treasurer: Matt Chrisman, Mitchell.
- District Secretary: Shannon Kinsella, Alliance.
- NSEA Board of Directors: Dashiell Rohan, Sioux County.
- Executive Committee: Shannon Shuck, Gordon-Rushville; Alexandra Peters, Leyton.
- Bylaws Amendment: For, 62; Against, 2.

SANDHILLS DISTRICT

- District President: Kevin Pettigrew, Valentine.
- District Vice President: Bryan Regier, Hyannis.
- Executive Committee: Whitney Wurst, Sargent.
- Bylaws Amendment: For, 61; Against, 5.

Have Your Contact Details Changed?

Have you moved? Have you changed your name by marriage? Are you planning to move? If so, you can update your NSEA membership information online.

How? Log on to the NSEA website and click on the 'For Members' on the top right side of the home page. Then click on the blue 'Member Update' button in the center of the next screen, and follow directions. Keep your issue of The Voice near, as the mailing label includes your membership number, used to access your information. The NSEA website is at:

www.nsea.org

On the Cover: Members of the Omaha Education Association and Lincoln Education Association descended on the State Capitol in March to talk lawmakers about education-related legislation. Legislatively, it has been a busy month. For all the details, turn to Page 7.

A Sweet, Sweet Deal ... for Some



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

**Overwhelmingly
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”

The legislative season is a busy time of year at the NSEA, and the deeper into the session we go, the faster the pace.

If truth be told, every season is busy at the NSEA, and the time flies by. I blinked and April was upon us.

Speaking of “blinking,” we keep a pretty steady eye out watching the news, watching what others are saying, monitoring trends and developments across the state. Once in a great while, we catch information or a statement that needs to be corrected.

So it was a couple of weeks ago in a mid-Nebraska daily newspaper. A state senator from the area had addressed the local League of Women Voters, and the newspaper was on hand to capture the moment. That local coverage was fortunate for NSEA.

The senator defended LB670, which would hand out a dollar-for-dollar tax credit to businesses and individuals who donate to private K-12 school scholarships. For every dollar donated, the donor would get a dollar reduction in income tax obligation – a sweet, sweet deal for those corporations and individuals who can afford it. However, this means tax dollars that could otherwise be collected and used to fund our public schools would be given to the benefit of private schools.

If the program is fully utilized in the first year, it would mean a \$10 million loss in state revenue. Given the overly generous dollar-for-dollar tax break provided in LB670 there is no reason to believe the tax credit would not be fully utilized.

It's the State Aid!

This ill-advised proposal comes at the very moment when the state is dealing with a projected budget shortfall of \$110 million.

It comes at the very moment when the state is looking at easily more than a billion dollars in ice and flood damage to schools; to city, county and state roads and bridges; and to other infrastructure.

Within 10 years, it is estimated that the private school giveaway ensconced in LB670 would grow to a loss of \$100 million per year in state revenue.

The senator in question also noted state aid to education is \$1.2 billion this year. What he failed to note was that Nebraska ranks 48th in the nation in state aid to schools. That is the very reason that property taxes are so very high in Nebraska.

In fact, Sen. Lou Ann Linehan of Elkhorn, the sponsor of LB670, has publicly noted that the state of Nebraska spends about \$1,000 per student less on state aid than does the state of Iowa, and about \$3,000 less per student than do South Dakota and Kansas.

Think about what kind of property tax relief Nebraskans would have if state leaders matched Iowa's per student state aid, or approached what South Dakota and Kansas provide.

Revenue Like a River

Last year, I traveled 30,000 miles around Nebraska, visiting far more than 100 locations, and talking about public education with hundreds of members, community leaders, parents and taxpayers. As I visited with people from Superior to Crawford, Atkinson to McCook, or Kimball to Hartington, the stories were very similar.

Nebraskans value public education. Educators are well-respected members of their communities. There must be property tax relief. We need more resources. Overwhelmingly I heard we cannot spread our state revenue resources thinner and thinner with tax incentives, vouchers or charter schools in Nebraska.

Our revenue stream must be more like the Missouri River than the Platte River. That would be broad, channeled and deep enough to meet needs, versus narrow, meandering and so shallow as to be inadequate in times of crisis.

In my travels, I continue to learn things I can and do share with our elected leaders who are working hard in the Legislature, representing all Nebraskans.

So, I look forward to continuing my travels across the state. I look forward to listening and learning about our communities, our schools and their needs. And I look forward to continuing to give my full support to our quality public schools!

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Federal Declaration Will Assist Disaster Victims

NSEA, NEA Have Resources to Assist Recovery

Days after flooding crippled the city of Valley, Douglas County West Education Association President Mary Clare Liescheski gathered with other NSEA members to brainstorm ways to help the students and residents of their district.

"I think there are members of our school and our community that probably couldn't even afford a hotel. How do we get in touch with those people, you know? If someone's living out of their car," Liescheski said.

Liescheski's experience was not unlike those of other Nebraskans as the mid-March weather turned from frigid to warming and then wet. Snowmelt and heavy rain caused runoff that led to record flooding along nearly every stream and river in the eastern half of Nebraska. The western half of the state, meanwhile, was digging out of a blizzard that dropped as much as 18 inches of snow on some locations.

Federal Disaster

The result was a federal disaster declaration to aid recovery from an early estimate of \$1.3 billion in damages. As many as 15 state highway bridges were damaged or destroyed; 200 miles of state roads were in need of repair; countless city and county roads and bridges were damaged; businesses, homes, farms and ranches were harmed. Ag losses, including a projected loss of one million head of cattle, were staggering.

An early report from the Nebraska Department of Education indicated 89 school districts affected by flooding,

with at least one building closed in 60 districts. Fortunately, only a few buildings suffered physical damage.

"This harmed hundreds upon hundreds of our members and thousands of our students," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "We have resources available and we want to make those known to members who are in need."

Benson urged members to utilize the NSEA and NEA resources (see box).

'Everyone Evacuated'

When the Platte River spilled from its banks, flooding homes and displacing Valley residents, DC West High School transformed into a haven for community members with no place to go. The American Red Cross opened a shelter for those affected and classes were cancelled for the week.

Liescheski said her colleagues hoped to help those displaced or stranded. Those sheltered at DC West High School eventually had to move to Elkhorn Middle School after flood-related sewer problems hit the high school.

"Everyone was evacuated from Valley and had to come into Omaha. They're staying with friends and family or they're staying in a hotel. Not a lot of them, I think, chose to stay in the shelter because that is just not the most convenient," Liescheski said.

Such hardships were spread across the state. By late March, 65 of 93 counties were under emergency declaration.

"The damage is so widespread, it's just staggering," said Benson. "NSEA and NEA have resources. We hope members and take advantage of those resources where possible."

NSEA, NEA Disaster Resources

Here is a list of potential resources for those dealing with the ice, flood and blizzard recovery:

NSEA Children's Fund

Executive Director Maddie Fennell says NSEA will focus on meeting basic needs of students via the Children's Fund (see story below). To access the fund, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Contract Days

Fennell said because there are members who lost homes in the disaster, local association presidents are encouraged to work with school administration to accommodate those members and to contact NSEA field staff as is necessary in those instances.

NEA

NEA Member Benefits has activated its Disaster Relief Program in response to the FEMA-declared disaster.

Members who receive insurance and other products through NEAMB will have several resources, including payment delay for up to a year for some products. Details can be found at: neamb.com/disaster-assistance.htm

Horace Mann

Horace Mann agents are ready to aid those affected by the disaster. Reach local agents or claims reps at 1-800-999-1030. Find claims checklists at: horacemann.com/claims

FEMA

Learn more about FEMA aid at: <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4420>

Children's Fund Ready to Assist State's Disaster Victims

With families across three-quarters of Nebraska suffering loss from flood, ice and snow, the need for assistance from the NSEA Children's Fund is greater than ever before.

For a quarter century, the NSEA Children's Fund has made a difference for children in poverty or for children facing devastating loss. Fortunately, generosity of members through a drive during NSEA's sesquicentennial two years ago helped solidify the fund's health.

The Children's Fund was established for one reason: When an NSEA member sees a child in need of a warm coat, eyeglasses or other basic needs, all the member needs to do is call NSEA and ask for the Children's Fund.

Since 1994, the Children's Fund has provided thou-

sands of dollars to children in need. In the last two years, the Fund has given nearly \$100,000 in relief.

On the other side of the ledger, local associations are encouraged to brainstorm fundraising ideas: collect change; host a jeans day fundraiser; or consider other ideas to raise funds on behalf of the Children's Fund. The fund is financed entirely through donations and NSEA picks up all administrative expenses and costs.

To make donations easier, the Fund now accepts gifts through PayPal. Find the link at:

nsea.org/childrensfund

For details, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047 or at: sally.bodtke@nsea.org



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Advocating with Sen. Hunt: When about 50 Omaha Education Association members traveled to the State Capitol to talk about education with state senators, the Capitol Rotunda became a busy place. Here, five teachers gathered to talk with Omaha Sen. Megan Hunt. From left are Elizabeth Jensen, Sen. Hunt, Tracy Hartman-Bradley, Jan Machmuller, Teresa Franks and Andrea Boyd.

\$10 Million Reasons

No to LB670: Keep Public Dollars for Public Schools Rather Than Give Tax Breaks to Private School Donors

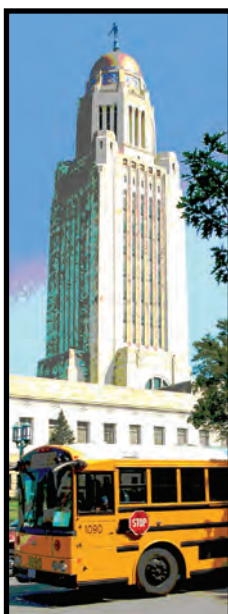
“NSEA opposes LB670.”

Those three words opened the early March testimony of NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell on a bill that could have a tremendous effect on the revenues of Nebraska public schools and higher education institutions.

While Fennell’s opening was short, the reasons for NSEA’s opposition are many, including 10 million reasons in the next year alone.

LB670 would create a generous dollar-for-dollar tax credit for individuals and corporations that contribute to a scholarship-granting organization such as a private or parochial school. Should an individual or corporation donate \$1,000 to a qualifying school, for instance, that individual or corporation would be eligible for a corresponding \$1,000 deduction on state taxes for that calendar year.

Such giveaways cut deeply into state



Nebraska Legislature ‘19

revenues, which fund state aid to public schools, higher education and other state expenses. While LB670 caps the collective deductions from state taxes at \$10 million the first year, the cap rises by 25 percent every year that 90 percent of the cap is met. An independent analysis projects that the collective deductions could remove as much as \$100 million from the state revenue stream within as few as 10 years.

Fennell also appealed to the fiscal conservatives on the Revenue Committee, which will reject LB670 or advance it to the full Legislature for consideration. “Even absent the suspected constitutional issues with LB670,” said Fennell, “a projected

state revenue shortfall of more than \$110 million complicates the issue.

If You Write Just One Letter...

Reaching out to lawmakers can make a huge difference. The more letters and calls received, the more likely to change minds. NSEA urges members to write, call or email their senators on these topics:

■ **OPPOSE LB670**, which would cut state tax revenues by giving dollar-for-dollar tax credits to donors who give to private schools (see main story).

■ **SUPPORT LB241**, which would use proceeds from solar and wind leases on state-owned school properties to fund teacher mentoring programs.

■ **SUPPORT LB147**, which would enhance the Student Discipline Act by authorizing and defining the physical contact needed to restrain a student who threatens to harm himself or others. It would also give more authority to teachers to have a disruptive student removed from the classroom.

To email your senator, go to NSEA’s website, click on the “What We Do” link on the home page, and then find the “Email Your Senator” link. NSEA is at:

www.nsea.org

“How responsible, how conservative is it for the state to implement and begin funding a new program at a cost of millions of dollars?” said Fennell. “With taxpayers across the state calling for changes to lower property taxes, how does diverting income tax funds to private schools

help our taxpayers?”

Unexpected, devastating natural events such as the flooding that has caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damage to the state's infrastructure make it even more vital that the state preserve its sources of revenues.

Bottom line, however, said Fennell, is that “We need to be investing in public schools, not diverting public dollars into private school coffers.”

Fennell said her K-12 years were spent in parochial schools and her post-secondary degrees were all earned at private institutions.

“My family rejected the notion that paying taxes and paying private school tuition was ‘double paying’ for something,” she said. “They also paid for roads they would never travel, for sidewalks they would never walk. But they saw this as a commitment to the common good.”

She urged the committee to reject LB670 and fully fund public schools.

State Aid Scaled Back

Meanwhile, a new state budget offered by the Legislature's Appropriations Committee has scaled back support for state aid to a level far lower than even Gov. Pete Ricketts offered in January.

In January, the governor's plan offered an increase of \$77.5 million in state aid for 2019-20, and another \$7.45 million raise in 2020-21. With the latest report from the state's revenue forecast showing a \$110 million revenue drop, the committee lowered the 2019-20 increase to \$51.48 million and set the 2020-21 increase to \$33.5 million.

That is \$38.5 million less than Ricketts proposed in January – not a good move forward when Nebraska continues to rank near the bottom of all states in terms of state aid to schools. That reduction also does little for property tax relief.

“To fully equip Nebraska students to take on the future, they need a quality education,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “To provide that, public education must be fully funded.”

Here are updates on other bills NSEA is following:

Teacher Mentoring Funds

One of NSEA's priority bills is LB241, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz. Revenues from solar and wind energy leases on state school lands would fund three-year grants for mentoring programs in Nebraska school districts. The state would develop basic mentoring guidelines, and training for mentor teachers would be provided. Three-quarters of the grant to a district would be used to pay mentor teachers. It remains in the Education Committee.

Student Discipline

LB147 would amend the Student Discipline Act, authorizing a teacher or administrator to use physical contact to restrain a student who becomes physically violent. It also provides for the removal of a chronically disruptive student from the classroom, and in most cases prohibits an administrator from returning the student to the classroom without the teacher's consent. NSEA supports LB147, which is an Education Committee priority.

‘No’ on Constitutional Limits

NSEA opposes LR8CA, a proposed constitutional amendment that would limit the annual increase in property tax revenue by a political subdivision to three percent, unless the subdivision re-

ceives a majority vote from the public allowing the subdivision to exceed that limit.

The problem, said Benson, is that the plan does not address valuations, broad swings in state aid or changes in other sources of funding, any of which could create revenue flow or other unforeseen financial issues for school districts.

“Our election process is not nimble enough to handle such contingencies, and districts caught in such instances would be forced to make dramatic cuts to services,” said Benson. “We should not hamper the education of our children in such an unpredictable and whimsical manner. After all, our third graders get one chance at third grade.”

Mental Health Training

Lincoln Education Association President Rita Bennett voiced NSEA's support for LB120, which would broaden the existing requirement that teachers receive a minimum of one hour of suicide awareness and prevention training each year to include a wider range of mental health topics.

“This is important, because to discuss and learn suicide prevention strategies, we must also have some knowledge about underlying conditions that may contribute to suicidal ideation,” said Bennett.

Special Education Funding

NSEA President Jenni Benson told the Education Committee that NSEA supports LB346, which would increase the amount of state aid reimbursement provided to school

districts. “This would help tremendously in keeping local property tax rates in check by providing additional state funding for both equalized and non-equalized school districts,” said Benson.

The state reimbursement rate for special ed is 51 percent of local district expenses. Historically, the rate has been 80 percent.

Hearing Aid Act

NSEA supports Sen. Carol Blood's LB15, the Children of Nebraska Hearing Aid Act. It would require insurance plans to provide children in need with a hearing aid. LB15 is a speaker priority.

“Poor hearing impedes language acquisition and can negatively affect both a child's ability to acquire knowledge in school and that child's ability to interact socially with peers,” said Benson.

Child Abuse Hotline

NSEA lined up in support of LB281, which would provide for the posting by public schools of a toll-free number to report child abuse or neglect.

Benson told the Education Committee that “We have a tremendous responsibility to care for our most vulnerable citizens, and it is important to have reporting information readily at hand when needed,” said Benson.

If LB281 passes, Benson committed to publishing a poster in The Voice highlighting the toll-free number that would be suitable for hanging in classrooms and teacher lounges.

School Bond Funding

NSEA opposes LB183, the priority bill of Sen. Tom Briese. It would reduce valuations of ag and horticultural land when financing bond issues using property taxes. It would put more of the cost of bond issues on residential and commercial properties. LB183 does not help rectify the property tax issue for Nebraskans. The bill simply shifts property taxes paid from one group to another.



Working Together: Omaha Senator John McCollister met with Omaha education Association member Beth Winbinger during the OEA's visit to Lincoln in March.



Face-to-Face Meeting: The Omaha Education Association's Kathy Poehling, right, had a chance to talk to Bellevue Sen. Carol Blood during OEA's March visit to the State Capitol.

Bill Would Allow Grieving of Plans of Improvement

Fennell Calls Punitive Trend 'Troubling'

NSEA supports a legislative proposal that educators hope will stem what NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell called a "troubling trend" in the teaching profession: the inclusion of punitive measures in performance improvement plans for educators.

Fennell testified before the Legislature's Education Committee in favor of LB537, offered by Sen. Steve Lathrop, Omaha. LB537 would allow educators to file a grievance over performance plans that contain burdensome and punitive measures.

Fennell said shortly after she became NSEA's executive director two years ago the Association's organizational specialists reported an increasing number of teachers were being placed on performance improvement plans that were more than improvement plans. The plans – and Fennell provided examples to the Legislature's Education Committee as she testified in favor of LB537 – were actually punitive in nature.

Teachers "were assigned lists of books to read and other tasks that were burdensome and were not supportive of best practice in adult learning."

"It was evident that many of these plans weren't personalized to the needs of the educator," said Fennell. "Instead, they were 'cookie cutter' plans designed to burden the teacher, not improve instruction."

Fennell said teachers have no means of appealing or grieving burdensome and unreasonable performance plans.

"Administrators writing these poor plans use them as a method to drive out teachers without exercising (their) due diligence and without following established dismissal practices," said Fennell.

No teacher, she said, enters the teaching profession wanting or hoping to fail.

"We support LB537 because administrators must also be held accountable for providing support for teachers who are struggling. To succeed, teachers need administrators who will exercise their own teaching skills with a sincere desire to help these struggling teachers improve," she said.

NSEA encouraged the committee to advance LB537 to the full Legislature.



Kolowski

Mental Health Enhanced by LB619

NSEA testified in favor of LB619, which would make it clear that a student may receive mental health services from a licensed provider in a school building, and that those services could be covered by the student's insurance coverage. It is on Select File.

Sen. Rick Kolowski, Millard, has made LB619 his priority bill. Jason Hayes, NSEA's director of Public Policy, said one advantage is that students will miss less classroom time.

"This will hopefully enable a student receiving such therapy to miss less time in the classroom, because the provider will be able to come to the student rather than the student travelling back and forth to the provider's office," he said.

The practice of such coverage is inconsistent across Nebraska. In places where an insurance company has not covered the therapy, it has created a "chilling effect" thereafter limiting the number of providers willing to deliver services at a school. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska favors LB619 and began covering such services earlier this year.

Arming Teachers a 'Faulty Approach' to Curbing School Violence

NSEA said an attempt to curb school violence by arming teachers is a "faulty approach in the effort to make schools safer."

Testifying in opposition to LB343, NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte, Millard, told the Legislature's Judiciary Committee that stronger security measures and better-trained resource officers would make more sense. Even better, he said, would be an approach to benefit all children: implementation of deeper and more complete counseling and mental health services in every school.

"Teachers are first and foremost educators," said Schulte. "Teachers should not be placed in a position of personal responsibility, and by extension personal liability, as armed first responders in an attempt to deter school shootings."

Schulte also questioned whether a school district could afford liability insurance for arming teachers. He said that when Kansas lawmakers approved arming teachers, three companies that provided liability insurance to school districts in that state refused to cover schools for allowing teachers to carry firearms.

At an interim hearing on arming educators last fall, a Nebraska Association of School Boards representative noted that 16 states allow school boards to arm educators, but boards have rarely adopted such a plan. Georgia has had a local-option plan since 2016, but no district has yet taken advantage of it.

Introduced by Sen. Steve Halloran of Hastings, LB343 remains in committee.

Talking Education with the Senators

More than 100 NSEA members from across Nebraska braved cold and snow in early March to journey to Lincoln to talk education with state senators. Here are scenes from that evening.

District 30 Members with Sen. Myron Dorn:

Seated, from left, are Fran Martin, Beatrice; Sen. Dorn; Susan Wait, Beatrice. Standing, left to right: Gene Martin, Beatrice; NSEA Organizational Specialist Rich Wergin, Seward; Burke Brown, Palmyra; Ed Ankrom, Beatrice.



Meeting the NSEA President:

Spending a few moments with NSEA President Jenni Benson were three members from south-central Nebraska. From left are Brendan Johnsen, Alma; Benson; Stephanie Hansen, Curtis; and Marcus Ehrke, Alma.



Sharing Stories with Sen. Wishart:

Meeting with Lincoln Sen. Anna Wishart were four Lincoln educators. From left are Linda Freye, Wishart, Alrene Rea, Jan Olmstead and Stu Friesen.



Sen. Brandt & Constituents:

Legislative District 32 was well-represented when newly elected Sen. Tom Brandt attended NSEA's Legislative Dinner. Seated, left to right, are Nancy Fulton, Wilber-Clatonia, and the senator's wife, Sandra Brandt. Standing, from left, are Eric Fahrlander, Crete; Jessica Brinkmeyer, Lincoln; Sen. Brandt; and Sharon Lauber, Fillmore Central.



Don't Ignore Extra Duty Schedules

Sometimes Neglected, Sometimes Forgotten
Extra Duty Pay Schedules Deserve Attention, Clarity

The extra-duty schedule is an often-neglected and sometimes forgotten part of your local association's negotiated agreement. It's occasionally left off the official and final signed contract, is difficult to modify at the table, requires regular language overhaul and is, from time to time, short on necessary detail.

But that doesn't mean the extra-duty schedule is any less important than other parts of your agreement. Extra duty assignments involve compensation for a variety of tasks and assignments, so the extra duty schedule is a mandatory subject of bargaining.

"Negotiators can't take a pass on bargaining compensation for extra-duty assignments," said NSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Randy Gordon. "An up-to-date schedule that includes positions with some specificity, compensation and even a provision for longevity within the assignment goes a long way in keeping things clear."

Club sponsor and coaching assign-



Gordon

ments fall under the "other duties as assigned" portion of the certificated teacher contract. Compensation and placement is negotiable, but the right to fill those positions is ultimately up to the administration.

Even so, these schedules are a regular source of questions from both members and negotiators. Agreements that lack specific and detailed language about years of service and advancement on the extra-duty schedule can result in confusion and pay disputes. Negotiators evaluating their extra-duty provisions might consider asking these questions:

■ **Positions/Assignments:** Are bargaining unit members performing an added assignment without compensation? Is the regular/annual assignment not listed on the schedule? Example: Is the sponsor now required to work with students at weekend competitions where previously it was a pilot after-school activity, only? Has an additional expectation been added, like an extra musical production or a camp?

■ **Placement:** Does the agreement include language about initial placement and allowable years of experience? Example: Is the language clear about whether junior high coaching counts towards placement when moving to a high school position?

■ **Descriptions/Duties:** Do extra-duty assignments come with accurate titles and descriptions? For instance, is the assignment description clear about length of season? Does the assignment designate what's required of camps, number of performances/competitions?

■ **Compensation:** Is the compensation commensurate with the length of season or number of comparable hours? For example: Does an assistant coach in X spend as many hours as the assistant coach in Y?

An NSEA organizational specialist covers every public school district and negotiated agreement in Nebraska. They can help your local association negotiators identify gaps in their extra duty schedules or language provisions. For more information, contact your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

Homestead Monument Offerings are Free

Distance Learning, Field Trips, Traveling Trunks Can Assist Your Teaching!

The Homestead Act of 1862 embodies the American Dream and nearly 160 years later the Homestead National Monument of America honors those hopes and dreams by offering free state and national curriculum aligned to the needs of students of all ages.

As millions of people filed claims under the Homestead Act, one-room schools began to pop up across the United States, greatly increasing access to public education. Now, students can benefit from programs that teach about the Homestead Act and much more. Consider these offerings through the Monument, located four miles west of Beatrice:

■ **Distance Learning:** A distance learning link with Homestead National Monument will bring a park ranger into your classroom. Interactive distance learning programs allow students to experience Homestead without ever leaving school.

■ **Field Trips:** America's national parks are our country's largest classrooms. Homestead National Monument of America offers year-round field trip experiences for students and teachers featuring a variety of engaging, hands-on activities that capitalize on the place-based learning offered by a trip to the Monument. Homestead staff will help you build a field trip experience to meet the needs of your students.

■ **Special Programming:** Throughout the school year, Homestead National Monument of America hosts special events geared toward students. These events bring in special presenters and guest speakers allowing students to explore the stories of the Homestead Act through living history, crafts, demonstrations and more.

■ **Freeman School:** The Freeman School was one of the longest continually operating one-room schools in Nebraska when it closed in 1967. Now part of Homestead National Monument of America, the school can again be used as a place of learning. The school can be rented for the day and your students can learn from a qualified, country school teacher.

■ **Traveling Trunks:** Homestead National Monument of America offers several traveling trunks that can be sent right to your classroom! All trunks include curriculum material and hands-on activities to supplement classroom instruction.

All programs are free, with the exception of the Freeman School rental. Funding assistance for transportation may be available. For details, call the Monument staff at 402-223-3514, or email to:

home_education@nps.gov



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Principal of Fun to Highlight NSEA University

Great Professional Development Scheduled for First-Ever NSEA U in July

As the calendar moves past winter, the leadership and staff at NSEA have been cooking up a delicious schedule for the Association's first full summer conference in nearly 20 years. Attendees will be able to choose from a deep menu of professional development, will be able to get a taste of Association services and enjoy a dash or two of membership details.

They'll also get a heaping spoonful of sugar, in the form of celebrity elementary school Principal Gerry Brooks.

The quick-talking Brooks has parlayed his short, humorous videos into internet sensation status by drawing on his experiences as principal of an elementary school in Lexington, KY. His southern drawl and easy-going manner are an asset as he encourages and helps teachers improve their instructional abilities. He has spoken to educational groups across the nation about getting teachers to improve their instruction through personal climate and culture strategies.

Brooks will appear as keynote speaker during the July 15-18 NSEA University — NSEA U for short — conference. He will offer two of the nearly 180 breakout sessions planned over the three days. All sessions will be held at the University of Nebraska's sparkling new Innovation Campus.

'A Better Product'

The conference combines aspects of NSEA's annual fall membership meetings, the former Advocacy Conference held in September or October each year, and Leadership Institute held every summer.

"In rolling these events all into one, we believe we'll offer a far better product to our members," said NSEA President Jenni Benson.

Under the NSEA U umbrella members will find the best of Advocacy Conference, highlighting bargaining issues; Leadership Institute, featuring skills and knowledge development for up-and-



The Principal of Fun: Principal Gerry Brooks has made a name for himself as a speaker who puts a focus on teacher improvement — and makes the process fun.

coming leaders; and membership meetings, allowing local leaders and members to collect membership materials.

Attendees will also be able to select from some 180 professional development sessions to be offered. Many of those breakout session topics will fall under the five provisions of NSEA's strategic plan: bargaining and member rights, membership, political action, governance and social justice.

A training for local association presidents will take place on the Monday preceding the conference kickoff on Tuesday.

Registration Open in April

In addition to the serious side of his presentation, Brooks is also pretty funny.

For instance, Brooks has posted YouTube videos titled The Home Visit, Screaming Buttons, Teacher Apparel, Celebrity Beauty Routines and more. He will undoubtedly weave humor into his Nebraska keynote.

Brooks spent six years in the classroom, two years as an intervention specialist and the past 12 years as a principal in Lexington, KY. More than 500,000 people follow Brooks on social media.

Watch for registration details on the NSEA website beginning in April. That website is at:

www.nsea.org/nseau



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■ Attics for discoloration, stains or leaks

Let your insurance company know if you have new windows or a new roof. Those repairs may lower your bill.

Now that your home is ready for spring, make sure your auto, home or renters insurance is up-to-date. Call a California Casualty advisor for a free policy comparison or review at 1-800-800-9410, or visit:

www.neamb.com/autohome

The Key to Effective



Classroom Management

**A three-phase process helps
build strong teacher-student bonds,
which can reduce disruptive behavior.**

By Youki Terada. Originally published on Feb. 27, 2019, on Edutopia.org

It's a daunting but all-too-common sight for many teachers: A classroom full of rowdy students who are unable to focus on the lesson. Classroom management techniques may get things back on track, but valuable time has already been lost.

Many experienced teachers know that making meaningful connections with students is one of the most effective ways to prevent disruptions in the first place, and a new study set out to assess this approach. In classrooms where teachers used a series of techniques centered around establishing, maintaining, and restoring relationships, academic engagement increased by 33 percent and disruptive behavior decreased by 75 percent—making the time students spent in the classroom more worthwhile and productive.

“Strong teacher-student relationships have long been considered a foundational aspect of a positive school experience,” explains Clayton Cook, the lead author of the study and a professor at the University of Minnesota. When those relationships are damaged, student well-being may be affected, leading to academic and behavioral problems.

In the study, teachers used an approach called Establish-Maintain-Restore to build positive interactions with students — a total of 220 in fourth and fifth grade — and boost their sense of belonging. (A follow-up study with middle school teachers used the same strategies, with similar results.) Relationship-building was broken down into three phases: the first meeting, maintenance throughout the school year, and points when a relationship may suffer damage, with useful strategies for

‘The goal is to ensure all students feel a sense of belonging that is characterized by trust, connection, and understanding.’

*— Clayton Cook,
Professor at
the University of Minnesota*

each phase.

Since it can be easy for some students to fall through the cracks, a relationship reflection form can help teachers take notes on each individual student and highlight ones who need the most attention.

Starting on a Positive Note

At the start of the school year, the teachers in the study made time for establishing relationships. “The goal is to ensure all students feel a sense of belonging that is characterized by trust, connection, and understanding,” Cook and his colleagues explain. For students with learning or behavioral problems, cultivating positive relationships provided “protective effects” that helped them stay focused on learning.

To establish positive relationships, teachers can:

- “Bank time” with students. Schedule one-on-one meetings with students to get to know them better. The goal is to “make deposits into the relationship” to help ease conflict in the future if you have to give constructive feedback or address disruptive behavior.

- Encourage student-led activities. Students feel more invested in their learning if given opportunity to share their interests. Teachers can step aside, be supportive, and listen.

- Welcome students into the classroom. Activities such as positive greetings at the door and icebreaker questions help create a warm classroom culture.

- Use positive communication techniques. Open-ended questions, reflective listening, validation statements, expressions of enthusiasm or interest, and compliments help students—especially shy or introverted ones—ease into classroom discussions.

Maintaining Relationships

Without active maintenance, relationships deteriorate over time, the study authors point out. Teachers may focus too much on academics and not enough on supporting students’ emotional well-being, slowly using up the banked time they initially built up with students.

Teachers can maintain relationships by continuing to implement the strategies above, and in addition they can:

- Take note of positive and negative interactions with students. Teachers should aim for a five-to-one ratio.

- Regularly check in with students. Ask how

they’re doing and what support they may need. In an Edutopia article, Todd Finley explains how 5x5 assessment time helped him focus on a handful of students every day.

- Acknowledge good behavior. When teachers focus attention on positive conduct, disruptive behavior is stemmed before it becomes an issue.

Repairing Harm Before Things Get Worse

Eventually, negative interactions such as misunderstandings, conflict, or criticism can weaken a teacher-student relationship. If these negative interactions are left unaddressed, students may feel disengaged and be less willing to participate in activities. They may also

be more likely to misbehave, creating further damage. So it’s important for teachers to “intentionally reconnect” with students to restore the relationship to a positive state.

When relationships need repair, teachers can:

- Let go and start fresh. Teachers should avoid holding mistakes over a student’s head, instead giving them a chance to start each day with a clean slate.

- Take responsibility for their actions. Teachers can avoid blaming students when things go wrong, and think,

“What could I have done to avoid the problem in the first place?” They shouldn’t be afraid to apologize when that’s called for—doing so helps build trust with students.

- Show empathy. There are two sides to every story, and a teacher can acknowledge that students may have a different perspective about what happened.

- Focus on solutions, not problems. Teachers can work with students to find a solution that everyone feels is fair.

- Separate the deed from the doer. It’s important to criticize the behavior, not the person. If teachers label children as “problem students,” there’s a danger that they’ll internalize that label, making it more likely that they’ll repeat the behavior in the future.

The Takeaway

Effective classroom management starts with relationship building. When students feel a greater sense of belonging, they’re more likely to be academically engaged and demonstrate positive behavior.





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Spectrum Photo, Gering, NE

Keri Homan
Principal at Morrill Elementary School
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READ	635	DIAGNOSIS AND CORRECTION	4W2
SPED	532	SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUC	4W2
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COUN	535	MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING	8W1
COUN	541	COUNSELING THEORIES	8W2
COUN	629	COUNSELING CHILDREN	8W1
COUN	631	PRINC & PRACT OF MENTAL HEALTH	8W1
COUN	632	CAREER & LIFESTYLE DEV	8W2
COUN	636	FAMILY COUNSELING	8W1
COUN	637	ADV HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	8W2

Session key/legend

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1 - May 6 – July 26

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2019 DA Will be a Humdinger!

Professional Development Schedule is Finalized

Plans are nearly complete for the 157th edition of NSEA's annual meeting, Delegate Assembly.

Here, in a nutshell, are the key points you need to know about the event that longtime NSEA members affectionately call "DA":

- DA is NSEA's annual business meeting.
- DA is a lot more fun than it sounds!

In keeping with the new look of Delegate Assembly, the 2019 edition will include 30 sessions of professional development; networking; a keynote by a former National Teacher of the Year (Iowa's own Sarah Brown Wessling, pictured at left); networking; debate on education-related issues; and election of officers, among other details.



Wessling

Did we mention networking? Teachers from across the state have a chance to make friends and "talk shop" during DA.

"DA is always a great event, a wonderful place to talk about common issues, to meet colleagues and to begin to solve some of the sticky issues facing public education," said NSEA President Jenni

Benson.

DA will be held Friday and Saturday, April 26-27, at the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln.

'Mindsets for Learning'

Wessling was 2010 National Teacher of the Year.

She will keynote the 2019 NSEA Delegate Assembly on Friday evening, which will be sandwiched between 30 breakout sessions (see page 21 for details).

Her breakout sessions are entitled Mindsets for Learning: Elevating Everyone to the Status of Learner and Talking Their Way to Knowing: Creating Discussions that Teach Thinking.

Wessling is a 20-year veteran of the high school English classroom, and teaches at Johnston, IA, a suburb of Des Moines. She maintains a hybrid classroom that keeps her in the classroom and allows her to write, speak and work on teacher leadership initiatives around the country.

"We are simply thrilled to have Sarah on the agenda this year, both as the keynote and as a presenter," said Benson.

Non-Delegates Welcome

While non-delegates may attend the breakout sessions, they will be required to show valid, current identification as a teacher.

Among the topics on the Friday night agenda will be trauma-informed classrooms; challenging racism; concussion return to the classroom protocol; self-care and resiliency for teachers; and Delegate Assembly 101.

Sessions are also scheduled for Higher Education, for retired members, the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee, student members and Education Support Professionals.

A hotel-sponsored reception and mixer will close Friday evening activities in the General Assembly hall.



Norfolk Smiles: Norfolk Education Association members Kimberly Erickson and Sarah Eymann peek into a treasure chest of goodies placed at each table for delegates at the 2018 NSEA Delegate Assembly.

Traditional Model

The Saturday morning and afternoon sessions follow a more traditional model, with delegates considering NSEA business.

Beginning in the morning, delegates will discuss and debate changes to Bylaws and any proposed new Resolutions or New Business Items. Dues for 2019-20 will be set.

For the uninitiated, Bylaws are the rules that guide the Association's operation. Resolutions state the Association's collective beliefs on issues ranging from class size to teacher certification to teacher competency testing. New Business Items are tasks assigned for completion by the Association in the coming year.

Proposals for amendments to Bylaws were due by March 28.

New Business Items or amendments to Resolutions may be introduced in the Saturday morning, April 27, session. However, in order to be included in the printed delegate workbooks, these proposals must be submitted by Friday, April 5, to Benson.

Elections Planned

Delegates will also select a Nebraska representative to the NEA Board of Directors, as well as the NSEA Board of Directors at-large representatives for the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee, Higher Education and Education Support Personnel.

To make your interest in serving as a delegate known, contact your local association president, your local association building representative, or your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

Order of Business: NSEA Delegate Assembly 2019

Grand Ballroom, Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln
NSEA President Jenni Benson, Lincoln, Presiding

Registration: Cornhusker Marriott Hotel Atrium

Friday, April 26: 4-7 p.m.

Saturday, April 27: 6:30-8:30 a.m.

Friday, April 26, 2019

6 p.m.-6:45 p.m.: Early Professional Development Breakouts

6:15 p.m.: Audit Committee

7 p.m.: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem

Keynote: Sarah Brown Wessling, 2010 National Teacher of the Year

7:35-7:45 p.m.: Move to Professional Development Sessions

7:45-8:30 p.m.: Professional Development, Round 1

8:45-9:30 p.m.: Professional Development, Round 2

9:30 p.m.: Budget Hearing, Garrat Room

9:30 p.m.: Marriott Cornhusker Hotel Reception, Hotel Atrium

Saturday, April 27, 2019 ♦ 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast: Cornhusker Marriott Renaissance Room, 6:30-8:15 a.m.

7:30 a.m.: Elections Committee

8:30 a.m.: Call to Order

Report of Credentials Committee

Adoption of Standing/Procedural Rules

Adoption of Order of Business

Nominations for At-Large Candidates to the NSEA Board: EMAC, ESP, Higher Education

Candidate Remarks

New Educator Team Report

Report and Debate on Proposed Bylaws Amendments

Voting on Candidates and Bylaws

Submission of Additional New Resolutions and/or Amendments to Continuing Resolutions (by 10 a.m.)

Submission of New Business Items (by 10 a.m.)

Report of the Auditing Review Committee

President and Executive Director Report to Delegates and Members: Jenni Benson, Maddie Fennell

Remarks by Special Guests

Horace Mann Awards Luncheon

Budget Presentation for 2019-2020

Elections Committee Report (when available)

Report and Actions on Resolutions

Committee Reports to the Assembly

Action on New Business Items

Action on the Dues Proposal for 2019-2020

Adjournment

Parliamentarian: John Heineman

DA Professional Development

Thirty Offerings Include Safety, Child Trauma, Compassion Fatigue

NSEA members at Delegate Assembly will be able to select from a menu of professional development sessions. These sessions, all scheduled for Friday, April 26, are open to delegates, non-delegates and even non-members. Non-delegates who plan to take part must register their intent to participate (see box).

Early Session: 6-6:45 p.m.

■ **Overcoming Stress Through the Use of Mindfulness Techniques, with Tonya Vyhldal.** Learn how Mindfulness can be applied to your work and home life to help you overcome your stressors and achieve improved wellbeing.

■ **The Mind Inside, Bekah Bauman & Brittany Mascio.** *The Mind Inside*, an I Love Public Schools docuseries, explores mental health issues in Nebraska schools.

■ **An Introduction to Child Trauma, with Jack Bangert & Kathie Garabrandt.** Explore the definition and scientific evidence for child trauma/toxic stress and the affect of this trauma on students.

■ **Education Support Professionals, with NSEA Organizational Specialist Judy Roach.** For NSEA ESP members to learn more about the ESP program and opportunities.

■ **DA/RA 101 & Parliamentary Procedure with the NSEA Executive Committee of Jenni Benson, Paul Schulte, Tracy Hartman-Bradley & Linda Freye.** An overview of Delegate Assembly with the NSEA leadership team. New delegates are encouraged to attend.

■ **BCBSNE Healthcare Resources, with Courtney Ray.** Learn how to use BCBSNE resources to access your plan, estimate costs for procedures and services and the value of telehealth.

■ **Let's Get Blended, with NSEA Organizational Specialist Isau Metes.** The Four types of Blended Learning Environments and an introduction to hyperdocs.

■ **Navigating the Student Program, with London Bercey, Kristen Sedlacek, Heather Fritz.** SEAN President London Bercey will guide you through the student program and what is going on at the state, local and national levels.

■ **Higher Education: Issues and Concerns with NSEA Organizational Specialist Rich Wergin.** Explore a number of issues and concerns shared by our new hires and members in Higher Ed.

■ **Retired Educator? How to be an Effective Advocate, with De Tonack and Jason Hayes.** Learn how to lobby your state senator to help create positive change in the classroom and the profession.

■ **Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, Eddie Ventura & NSEA Organizational Specialist Michelle Raphael.** The annual meeting of EMAC.

Keynote Speaker: 7 p.m.

Keynote: Sarah Brown Wessling, 2010 National Teacher of the Year.

Session I: 7:45-8:30 p.m.

■ **An Introduction to Child Trauma, with Jack Bangert & Kathie Garabrandt.** Repeat of 6 p.m. session.

■ **Estate Planning Basics with Kramer Lyons.** This session will cover basic issues the average person should think about when developing an estate plan.

■ **A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Legislature, with NSEA Director of Public Policy Jason Hayes.** The latest statutory changes in education and school finance law.

■ **The GIFT of Social Emotional Learning, with Tom Whisinnand.** Learn about Sanford Harmony and how you can use

this FREE curriculum at your school, and in your classroom.

■ **And Still They Persist: Native American Indian Mascots... a Nebraska Tradition, with Jose Soto.** A look at evolving discussions of the racial/cultural/ethnic insensitivities surrounding some Nebraska high school sporting events and programs.

■ **Challenging Racism Through Stories and Conversation, with Palma Joy Strand.** An intro to the Challenging Racism conversations in which teachers gain skills needed to talk about race and racism with students, colleagues and communities.

■ **Motivation with Complex Text, with Beckie Tuttle.** By building background knowledge, going back into the text, and having a choice of what is read, reluctant and regular readers will gain reading skills.

■ **Mindsets for Learning: Elevating Everyone to the Status of Learner, with Sarah Brown Wessling.** One of the most powerful ways to engage learners is to be transparent about our own learning. Explore the mindsets that matter to learning and how to transfer our own experiences to the classroom.

■ **The Evolution of Safety and Security in the K-12 Environment, with Joseph Wright.** What are reasonable and actionable best practices that can keep students and staff safe at school?

■ **When A Concussion Isn't Mild: Surviving Concussion in the School Setting, with Rachel Kluthe.** A middle school math teacher, Kluthe suffered a life-changing "mild traumatic brain injury." Hear her story as well as how to accommodate students or teachers facing such challenges.

Session II: 8:45-9:30 p.m.

■ **President's Parlor, with NSEA President Jenni Benson.** Visit with NSEA President Jenni Benson.

■ **The Mind Inside, with Bekah Bauman & Brittany Mascio.** Repeat of earlier session.

■ **Us vs. Them to We.....Collaboration with Our Administrators and School Board, Deb Lyons.** How the Hastings Education Association went from facing

a school board attorney negotiator and hard feelings on both sides to becoming a team working together for student success.

■ **Talking Their Way to Knowing: Creating Discussions that Teach Thinking, with Sarah Brown Wessling.** Explore what to do before, during and after a discussion to help students take ownership over both the conversations and their learning.

■ **Bargaining in Public, with Molly Davies & Bobby Miller.** The Omaha Education Association held public bargaining sessions for two years, with benefits and pitfalls. Learn from OEA and consider this strategy to help your members see why they pay dues.

■ **Continuing Excellence in Evolution of EHA Health Care Benefits, with Greg Long.** Your EHA advocate will give an in-depth explanation of health care plan designs while focusing on individual's needs. There will also be a Q&A.

■ **What is Compassion Fatigue; Do You Have It? with NSEA Organizational Specialists Mandy Faripour & Judy Roach.** This will help you identify whether you have compassion fatigue and offer tools to care for yourself.

■ **Supporting Beginning Teachers Through Union and Member-led Mentoring, with NSEA Organizational Specialist Cindy Copich.** Learn of NSEA's virtual mentoring and instructional coaching program and how it supports beginning teachers. A panel of mentors and mentees will offer a Q&A.

■ **Boosting Attendance for Student Success, with Lisa Utterback & Alan Bone.** Learn of the connection between school attendance — especially in early grades — and lifelong success. Learn of challenges related to chronic absence and how metro districts work together to get kids to school every day.

■ **NGEN: Engaging Early Career Educators in your Local and Statewide, with Organizational Specialist Heather Fritz.** Learn how to engage early career educators.

Registration Details

Registration for professional development sessions **does not** count as registration as a delegate to Delegate Assembly. However, non-delegates can register for professional development at: www.nsea.org/2019pd

2019-20 NSEA Dues Recommendation

Dues for Certificated Staff

The NSEA Board of Directors has recommended the following annual fee structure for Association membership by certificated staff. Delegates to the NSEA Delegate Assembly on April 26-27 will consider and act on this proposal. For the 2019-20 Association year, the NSEA Board of Directors recommends the dues for these certificated classes of NSEA membership be as follows:

Active: \$413 Half-time Active: \$206.50 Active Substitute: \$206.50 Non-Active Sub: \$103.25

The total NSEA dues and assessments for 2018-19 were \$407. The total NSEA dues and assessments for the current year and the proposal for next year are summarized below:

	2018-19	2019-20	Change (%)
General Fund Dues	\$382	\$388	\$6 .. (1.57%)
Ballot Contingency Fund.....	\$10	\$10	\$0 (0%)
State PAC.....	\$15	\$15	\$0 (0%)
Total	\$407	\$413	\$6.. (1.45%)

The Ballot Contingency Fund is used when proposed ballot initiatives or referenda affect public education. The NSEA Political Action Fund (PAC) supports member-recommended pro-education candidates.

All amounts listed are for state dues only. NEA dues for 2019-2020 have been proposed at no more than \$196, a \$4 increase.

As noted, the 2019-20 dues amount for full-time, active members of NSEA includes a voluntary contribution of \$15 to NSEA's Political Action Fund and \$7.50 for half-time active members and active substitute members. This contribution is refundable upon receipt of a written, individually-composed request. A reminder of the opportunity to seek a refund is published in the January issue of the NSEA Voice.

Dues for Educational Support Professionals

Delegates to the 2001 Delegate Assembly approved a separate dues structure for Educational Support Professionals (ESP). That action created four levels of dues for ESP members, and the NSEA Board of Directors modified the ESP dues structure to a six-tiered structure. The ESP dues structure is motivated by an effort to establish equity between the wide range of ESP salaries, while taking into consideration the fact that beginning teachers or teachers in lower-paid school districts are still paying full NSEA dues. In this model, the ESP member's total base salary, regardless of the hours or number of days worked, establishes the state dues for that member. The percentages are based on the lowest starting teacher salary in the state, which was \$32,250 in 2018-19.

ESP Dues Tier

NSEA Dues

Active ESP (salary of \$32,676 or more)	\$413.00 (100 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$26,140 to \$32,675)	\$371.70 (90 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$19,606 to \$26,139)	\$289.10 (70 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$13,070 to \$19,605)	\$206.50 (50 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$6,535 to \$13,069)	\$123.90 (30 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$6,534 or less)	\$41.30 (10 percent of teacher dues)

2019-20 Dues Comparison

Membership dues for the Nebraska State Education Association rank below the average of adjacent states.

State	17-18	18-19	Proposed	NSEA Dues History		
				Budget Year	NSEA Dues	Percent Increase
Wyoming.....	\$512	\$513	\$519	2019-20	\$413	1.45
Iowa	\$499	\$499	\$499	2018-19	\$407	0.002
South Dakota....	\$415	\$415	\$427	2017-18	\$406	1.75
Nebraska	\$406	\$407	\$413	2016-17	\$399	3.10
Colorado	\$395	\$402	\$NA	2015-16	\$387	0.78
Kansas.....	\$389	\$394	\$400	2014-15	\$384	1.05
Missouri	\$392	\$392	\$382	2013-14	\$380	1.06
				2012-13	\$376	1.08
				2011-12	\$372	4.20
				2010-11	\$357	2.00
AVERAGE	\$433.66	\$435.83	\$445.40			

2019-20 Proposed Bylaws Revisions

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1

■ Article I: Membership

SECTION 1. There shall be eight classes of membership in NSEA: Active Professional, Active Education Support Professional, Substitute, Reserve, Special Services, Student, Retired and Staff.

(a) Active membership shall be of two types, Professional and Educational Support Professional (ESP). Active Professional membership shall be open to any person who is engaged in or who is on a leave of absence from the profession (teaching, administering or substituting) or is serving as an elected officer of NSEA or a chartered local association, or whose employment status is in dispute and for whom NSEA is providing legal services. Active Professional members shall hold or shall be eligible to hold a baccalaureate or higher degree or the regular teaching, vocational or technical certificate required by their employment. Active Professional members regularly employed 50% or less of the normal schedule for full-time faculty members (as verified by the local association) are eligible to join NSEA as half-time Active members. Active Professional members shall be eligible to be voting delegates to the NSEA Delegate Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly. Educators employed on a regular basis under contract to an educational employer as a substitute teacher holding at least a baccalaureate degree are eligible for Active substitute membership. The Active substitute receives all the benefits of Active membership. Dues for Active substitutes employed full-time are 100% of Active Professional dues; for substitutes employed less than full-time, the dues are 50% of NSEA Active dues. Where no local association is available, an Active Professional may join NSEA/NEA directly.

(e) Student membership shall be open to any student enrolled in or preparing for a program of study in an accredited institution of higher learning that qualifies the student for a career in education, or serving as an elected officer of Student-NEA NEA Aspiring Educator officer or an officer of one of its affiliates. A student who is eligible for NSEA membership in both Student and Active membership categories may, with the approval of the NSEA Executive Committee, join NSEA as a Student member.

Remaining Section 2 stays the same.

Rationale: The first change is for clarity; the second change reflects the new name of the NEA student program.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 2

■ Article III: Board of Directors

SECTION 1: The NSEA Board of Directors shall consist of the President; the Vice President; the NEA Directors for Nebraska; the at-large representatives of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), the Higher Education Academy, and Education Support Professionals (ESPs); elected representatives of NSEA-Retired and the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN); and representatives of each NSEA district association. The Board shall be apportioned on the basis of one person-one vote. Each NSEA district association shall be entitled to at least one member on the NSEA Board of Directors. Each district association member of the Board must represent the same number of constituents (with variation not to exceed plus or minus 10 percent). The representation ratio of NSEA Board of Directors members to constituents shall be determined by the NSEA Board of Directors.

District associations shall elect representatives to the NSEA Board of Directors. Representatives must be Active members of NSEA in accordance with NSEA policy to insure open nominations, ballots and a system for run-off vote. Representatives may be elected for no more than two consecutive terms of three years and shall assume office on August 1 following their election. No person shall hold simultaneously more than one seat on the NSEA Board of Directors, either as a general officer or as a district association Representative or President.

The President of NSEA shall inform the president of the district when the district qualifies for an additional representative. Insofar as possible, an equal number of members shall be elected each year. The length of the initial term of new members shall be determined by the Board rotation. A vacancy on the NSEA Board of Directors shall be filled by the district affected. Such appointments shall extend to the end of the unexpired term of the position being filled.

(a) A vacancy on the NSEA Board of Directors shall be filled by the district affected. Such appointments shall extend to the end of the unexpired term of the position being filled.

(b) If a vacancy occurs in an at-large representative position on the NSEA Board of Directors during the first or second year of a term, such vacancy

shall be filled by the NSEA Board of Directors, which shall elect a successor to serve until the next meeting of the Delegate Assembly. The Delegate Assembly shall then elect a successor for the remainder of the term. In the event a vacancy occurs during the third year of a term, the NSEA Board of Directors shall elect a successor for the remainder of the term.

Districts losing a seat on the NSEA Board of Directors as of the membership count on January 15 shall drop a member at the close of the NSEA year by not electing a representative for the vacant post. Districts gaining a seat on the NSEA Board of Directors shall add a member at the beginning of the next NSEA year.

If a county or local association is transferred to another NSEA district by action of the NSEA Board of Directors, district association representative(s) who are members of a local in that local association or county will continue to serve on the NSEA Board through the next July 31. Any vacancy created by this action will be filled by election or appointment by the respective district association.

SECTION 5. The position of any director shall be declared vacant immediately after the second absence, during a term, from any regularly scheduled NSEA Board meeting unless the individual has given prior notice to any member of the NSEA Executive Committee.

After the second unexcused absence from any regularly-scheduled NSEA Board meeting in an Association year, the position of the director shall be brought before the Board of Directors to determine if the position shall be declared vacant.

The resignation of any Board member during their term shall be accepted and memorialized through action of the Board at their next meeting or through electronic voting. Vacancies shall be filled as outlined in the Bylaws.

SECTION 8. The NSEA Board of Directors shall, on its own initiative or as directed by the Delegate Assembly, appoint committees deemed necessary to achieve the purposes of NSEA, and shall perform other duties prescribed or implied by the Bylaws and policies of the Delegate Assembly deemed necessary for the welfare of NSEA. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner of the original appointment.

SECTION 9. Members may be appointed to committees for a term not to exceed three NSEA years. Absence from two consecutive meetings, except for approved reasons, shall constitute grounds for declaring the position vacant. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner of the original appointment.

All other remaining Sections stay the same.

Rationale: These changes smooth the process for filling vacancies.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 3

■ Article VII: Local Associations

SECTION 1. Local association membership groups may, upon application and approval by the NSEA Board of Directors, be chartered as affiliated local education associations. Chartered local associations shall be continuous unless the charter is revoked by the NSEA Board of Directors or the local association terminates its affiliation with the NSEA and the National Education Association as provided by these Bylaws.

SECTION 7. A charter of a local association may be suspended, revoked or reinstated by the NSEA Board of Directors as provided herein. A local association whose charter has been suspended or revoked may appeal the decision of the NSEA Board of Directors to the Delegate Assembly. Local affiliates that are subjected to such action shall be guaranteed a due process hearing.

This proposed amendment on the disaffiliation process continues at length. To see all the language, go to nsea.org/delegateassembly

Rationale: Routine language to assist in the event of a local choosing to disaffiliate.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 4

■ Article XII: Amendments

SECTION 1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Delegate Assembly. Amendments shall be proposed in writing at least 30 45 days prior to the Assembly and referred to the Bylaws Committee for study and report.

Remaining Sections stay the same.

Rationale: This change assists the Bylaws Committee by allowing more time to review proposed amendments.



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Speaking to Members: Omaha Central High senior and Educators Rising member Kaelynn Caldwell presented a firm endorsement of Educators Rising to Association members at NSEA in March.

‘There is So Much Change That Can Happen’

This statement was read to 50 members of the Omaha Education Association and the Lincoln Education Association at NSEA prior to a joint effort to lobby members of the Legislature. Kaelynn Caldwell is a senior at Omaha Central High School and a member of the Educators Rising Chapter there. Her parents, Todd and Raquel Caldwell, teach for the Omaha Public Schools.

I would like to start by saying that I am so excited to be a part of a community of educators that continually fight for their rights in the workplace and make a difference in the lives of their students and community.

You could say that I practically grew up in the classroom. Being raised by two Omaha Public School teachers shaped my outlook on education and made school feel like a second home. Riding to school with my mom every day to watch her set up her room and get her lesson plans ready became a part of routine just like brushing my teeth. Helping my dad on teacher work days to clean up his classroom and get new books ready for his students became a hobby. Over family dinners I would listen to my grandparents, aunts, uncles and parents talk about their classroom and different funny experiences they had, and this became part of our holiday tradition. Teaching was in my blood.

While I entertained the idea of becoming an interior designer or a cardiothoracic surgeon, in the back of my mind I knew that it was my fate to become an educator.

I started working with students more directly in middle school when I would

come back to Dundee to help with their after school programs. When I got to high school my love for the classroom and my desire to help students grow continued to get stronger. At Central I have participated in cheerleading, volleyball, student officers and even yearbook. But one of the best decisions I have made at Central was joining Educators Rising.

Being a part of the Educators Rising program, and more specifically, the Educators Internship at Central, has validated my dream of becoming an elementary school teacher. Every day I had the opportunity to help teach in a first-grade classroom and really learn the ins and outs of what it takes to become an educator.

My four years at Central High School have provided a world of opportunities for me and I have been able to see how teachers and schools really affect the community. For example, each year Central students volunteer to spend a day cleaning up the downtown area. We walk from Central all the way down to TD Ameritrade gathering all the trash we can find. After this event, our principal, Dr. Bennett, always receives emails from businesses about how grateful they are for the Central students.

Additionally, my time as a National Honors Society member has given me multiple volunteer opportunities. One volunteer activity that had a big effect on me was my experience with the Nebraska Children’s Home Society. Central students and faculty worked with the program to set up a free carnival for all the kids in their neighborhood. All families were able to have fun, win prizes, eat hot

dogs and play games with their kids for no cost. While it may seem insignificant to some, these events help build partnerships between schools and communities that are so valuable.

When I tell my friends what I want to do after college, they often ask me “Why would you want to be in a classroom the rest of your life?”

What they fail to realize is teaching is so much more than that. It goes beyond the classroom and into our communities. Education is the foundation every student needs to dream and gives them the tools to become what they’ve always wanted. So, when asked why I want to be a teacher I respond by saying “There is so much change that can happen inside of that one classroom.”



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Emergency Funds Can Reduce Stress

Your Savings Can Bail You Out of Situation You May Not Think of as an Emergency

By Miriam Cross

According to a 2018 report from the Federal Reserve, 40 percent of adults in the U.S. would not be able to cover an unexpected expense of \$400 without scrounging up the cash by, say, borrowing from friends or family or selling something.

If I lost my job tomorrow, I would be devastated. But I know I could survive for a few months without a paycheck. Over the past few years, I've accumulated a stash of cash in a savings account—and left it alone. I haven't had any financial disasters serious enough for me to drain my cache. But I feel calmer knowing the money is there.

Get Started

An emergency fund can come to your rescue not only if you lose your job but also if you have an unexpected medical bill or an urgent home or car repair. It can also bail you out of a situation that you may not think of as an emergency but affects your mental health or professional growth. For example, you may decide to break the lease on an apartment because of a bad roommate situation or quit a toxic job even though you have nothing else lined up.

Get started. Millennials who are juggling everyday expenses, student (or other) debt and retirement-account contributions may be hard-pressed to see the importance of preparing for some unknown future plight. But without an emergency fund, when a sudden expense does crop up, you may need to deplete your retirement savings or investments, skip bill payments, or carry a balance on your credit card to pay for it—and any of those could ding your financial future.

Financial planners usually recommend setting aside from three to six months' worth of essential living expenses, including rent or mortgage payments, health insurance, transportation, and groceries. If you have a stable job, are debt-free and could move in with friends or back home in a pinch, you might be comfortable saving less. A spouse or

partner's income is another safety net. If you have children, a mortgage or lots of debt, or you earn an irregular income as a freelancer or small-business owner, you should lock down enough capital to last six months or more.

Work on Debt

Of course, this may mean that your emergency fund should have thousands of dollars. But you don't need to stockpile that amount all at once, especially if you are simultaneously paying down loans or beefing up your 401(k). Pam Capalad, a certified financial planner in New York City and founder of Brunch & Budget, recommends focusing on a smaller amount, such as one month's

worth of living expenses. After that, work on debt while gradually contributing to your emergency fund. If you're feeling really stretched, keep at least \$1,000 in your emergency fund at all times to bail you out of minor crises. "Otherwise, the cycle of debt will continue," Capalad says.

The easiest place to keep your emergency fund is in an FDIC-insured high-yield savings or money market deposit account. Kiplinger's best banks for millennials, Ally Bank and Discover Bank, both offer savings accounts that recently paid 2% or more and have no monthly fees or minimum-balance requirements.

Need more motivation? "Save for a feeling, not for a thing," says Capalad. "Having this fund means that if something unexpected comes up, you can grieve or be emotional without stressing about the financial side or feeling stuck." If it helps, rename your emergency fund something more positive, such as a yes fund or an opportunity fund, says Capalad. "It gives you the ability to say Yes, I can buy new tires for my car, or Yes, I can take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

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NEAMB Offers New Program to Cut Loans

Average User Reduces Yearly Repayment Cost by More Than \$1,500

Student loan debt now averages more than \$30,000 per borrower.

That's a very difficult obligation to meet — especially for someone beginning a career in education.

Now, NEA Member Benefits announces a new, game-changing solution for Association members struggling with student loan debt: the NEA Student Loan Forgiveness Navigator.

Created by Savi, a student loan policy and advocacy company, the Navigator tool takes the guesswork and paperwork out of an extremely complex process as borrowers navigate the maze of federal teacher loan forgiveness programs. By entering their information in the Navigator tool, borrowers can find out — at no cost — whether they're eligible for loan forgiveness and, if so, how much they could potentially reduce their student loan debt.

The Loan Forgiveness Navigator checks member loans against free federal repayment and forgiveness programs. The average user finds more than \$1,500 per year in new savings. Educators may also be eligible for special teacher forgiveness programs.

When completing the Loan Forgiveness Navigator, members will be asked to enter basic, personal information, tax information and to sync your student loans. It is recommended to have a recent tax return and student loan statement hand as you register.

You'll also need your Social Security number in order to register.

Registrants are asked to pick a repayment plan and easily enroll. Savi will provide ongoing advice, tools and information.

As an NSEA and NEA member, you can also take advantage of the premium version of the Navigator, which includes enrollment and analysis support for one year. The program is offered to members at a 66 percent discount, for only \$29.99.

For details, go to:

neamb.com/loanforgiveness



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We've Got Your Back



**Executive
Director Maddie
Fennell**

“

*...the
devastation was
matched equally
by one story
after another of
people
taking care of
each other...*

”

It's been a rough few weeks to be a Nebraskan. The floodwaters have been devastating. It is hard to come up with words to express how bad things are, but there are lots of photos and videos to tell the story. NSEA member Dawn Hackworth made national news as her family was rescued off their roof by helicopter!

In western Nebraska, drifts of blown snow were up to the roof. Cattle were dug out of a drift three feet above their backs. A state trooper dislodged a calf frozen to the ground. Roads were shut down from Grand Island west. Snow days piled up, too!

But the devastation was matched equally by one heartwarming story after another of people taking care of each other: pilots flying in from other states to provide help to folks stranded in Fremont, homes offered, pets rescued, donations collected... truly the worst of situations bringing out the best in people.

NSEA Relief

Educators know that when disasters strike, children are often traumatized and need help from families and educators to cope and heal.

The NSEA Children's Fund can help your students who are in need. NSEA members can call 800-742-0047 or email Sally.Bodtke@nsea.org and she will find out what is needed. Sally will get needed funds to you, usually within 48 hours.

We are also researching the best way to offer resources to our members. The FEMA declaration will allow us to access aid from NEA Member Benefits. We have been in contact with other state associations to find out how to best handle wide-scale natural disasters such as this. As soon as we have plans in place, we will notify members via email and text message.

In the meantime, see the box on this page for immediate resources.

In the Legislature

As you work to teach kids and clean up your communities, NSEA has been advocating for you at the legislature.

When I began my job as NSEA Executive Director, our field staff brought to me a very troubling trend: they identified an increasing number of performance improvement plans for teachers that were not really improvement plans. Instead, lists of books and other tasks that were burdensome and not supportive of best

practice in adult learning were demanded by supervisors. Many of these plans weren't personalized to the needs of the educator; they were "cookie cutter" plans. Administrators were using these poor plans not as a way to improve teaching but as a method to drive out teachers without exercising their due diligence and following dismissal practices.

Why would an administrator do this? Because performance plans have no means of appeal or grievance. If a teacher is given a bad improvement plan that really won't help them improve, they have nowhere to appeal. If they "utilize the administrative chain" to voice concern, they can be considered insubordinate.

Sen. Steve Lathrop introduced LB537, which would require every school district to adopt or negotiate a grievance procedure for performance improvement plans. The members of the Education Committee asked insightful questions, indicating that they understood that teachers were simply asking for relief when plans really weren't written to help them.

As Lathrop stated so succinctly in his closing when discussing performance improvement plans, "That's all the teachers hope for: clarity, reasonableness and their (plans) tailored to whatever their shortcomings are."

We are also pleased to see LB619 advance to Select File. LB619 is Sen. Rick Kolowski's bill to require insurance companies in Nebraska to pay for covered behavioral health services that are delivered in schools. Testifying in favor of LB619 was Eric Dunning of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska. BCBS actually began paying for these services as of Jan. 1.

To stay up to date on all legislative happenings, sign up to receive our weekly Capitol Update at:

www.nsea.org/subscriber

Quality Professional Development

Last year's professional development at Delegate Assembly was a *huge* hit, so we are doing it again!

Three rounds of sessions will be offered from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Friday, April 26, at the Cornhusker Marriott in Lincoln.

You can see page 21 in this edition for session details. Those who want to attend but who are not delegates can sign up at:

nsea/2019pd

We hope to see you in Lincoln on April 26!

Flood, Trauma Resources

Natural disasters like the flooding and blizzard that hit Nebraska in March can result in substantial loss and lingering trauma. Here are resources for dealing with those issues:

NSEA Children's Fund:
1-800-742-0047

**NEA's School
Crisis Guide:**
bit.ly/2Ju0xZG

**American School
Counselor Association:**
bit.ly/2FhpGTy

**National Child Traumatic
Stress Network:**
bit.ly/2JoMzCY

**U.S. Department
of Education:**
bit.ly/2CsGLO2

Continuum:
bit.ly/2Fod3qR

Boy Scouts and Aging Brains on Agenda

Spring Conference Agenda is Nearly Done; Registration Underway

Your NSEA-Retired team has been working diligently on the Spring Conference, and it promises to be another top-notch program.

The conference returns to Mahoney State Park near Ashland. Members are encouraged to save Thursday, April 25, to attend the conference.

As always, the morning will begin with registrations, refreshments and introductions. The opening general session will start at 9 a.m., and will feature NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn presenting on his long work and history with Boy Scouts in a presentation titled Scout Me In.

Clayburn is an Eagle Scout and is active in both regional and national leadership for the Boy Scouts of America.

Two rounds of breakout sessions will follow Clayburn.

The breakout sessions will include presentations on these topics: The Power of Storytelling, Staying in Balance with Tai Chi, Mental Health is an Issue: Understanding At Risk Children, Saving with Your NEA Member Benefits, and Connecting with SEAN Student Members. There will also be an opportunity to visit with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska representatives.

Lunch will follow the breakouts, and



Pillow Fashion: Retired Hastings Education Association member Mary Ann Niemoth has joined members at the Regency Retirement Residence to transform pillowcases into dresses for children in Tanzania. Niemoth and her brother John made another mission trip to that country in January to deliver the dresses, Dr. Seuss pencils and other goods. “To see them select a dress and put it on — their faces would just light up,” she said. “Many wore the dress over their uniform for the remainder of the school day, then stopped by our home on their way up the mountain to their own homes to say ‘thank you!’”

a business meeting will convene at 1:15 p.m.

The afternoon general session will feature Why Aging Brains Stay on the Sunny Side by the University of Nebraska’s Dr. Maital Neta.

At the end of Neta’s session, a dessert reception, wrap up and door prize giveaway will conclude the event.

The conference is free to all members with only a \$10 cost to guests.

One-day entry fee to Mahoney Park will be covered for participants. To register, go to nsea.org/retired and select Calendar, Events & Registrations. Deadline for registration is April 18. For additional questions, contact Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047 or at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

— De Tonack, President
NSEA-Retired



Members in Action: Retired Lincoln members John Heineman and Jan Stamper, left, enjoyed a day judging competitions at the Educators Rising State Leadership Contest in Bellevue. Joining them were Ann Quinlan and Bev Westerburg, also of Lincoln. Above right, Omaha Education Association Retired member Tamara Bailey shared a book with Karen Ashby’s second grade room at Chandler View Elementary in Omaha as part of Read Across America. She read “Stop Teasing Taylor” telling the story of a young man whose father has lost his job, forcing the boy to wear last year’s clothes to a new school. Students tease him but his best friend stands up for him. Ashby then addressed the issue and started a “Tree Tribe” in the classroom, encouraging students to look for the good in everyone.



Fisher is New NSEA Advocacy Associate

NSEA has hired Becky Fisher to fill a vacancy in the Association's Advocacy Department.

Fisher has a wealth of experience in office management. She has managed medical doctor's offices for many years, and also managed a physical therapy clinic for several years.

More recently, she worked for the State of Nebraska Department of Corrections, where she was the business manager for health services division. That division manages medical and behavioral health services for corrections across the state.

Fisher is an avid traveler, and with her sister has been to nearly every country in the European Union including Ireland, England, Austria, Scotland, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy. She has also visited Mexico.

She is an active reader and enjoys time with rescue dogs Oliver and Otis.



Fisher

Juvenile Services Conference in April

The Heartland Juvenile Services Association conference is scheduled for the Omaha Hilton in April.

Keynote speaker Ross Szabo is an author who has spent more than half his life looking for ways to make mental health approachable for everyone. His keynote will look at Creating a Life-Changing Connection.

He also wrote "Behind Happy Faces: Taking Charge of Your Mental Health."

Also on the agenda is Dr. Matt Bel-lace. He is a contributing author for the National Geographic Kids book series *This or That*. He brings a humorous focus to how educators can help foster skills such as self-control and resilience.

The pre-conference is Wednesday, April 10, at 6:30 p.m., with the full conference on Thursday, April 11. Bel-lace will present on Friday morning, April 12. For details, go to:

www.hjsaonline.com

Streff Earns Milken Honor 'Oscars of Teaching' Prize to North Bend Member

In an Oscar-worthy acceptance speech, North Bend Central Education Association member Becky Streff said she was "humbled" and that her work was no more deserving than that of her colleagues.

Streff received one of just 33 Milken Educator Awards given nationally this year by the Milken Family Foundation. The Milken awards are often referred to as the Oscars of Teaching. Streff was the only Nebraskan recognized with a Milken, which comes with a \$25,000 unrestricted prize.

A second-grade teacher at North Bend Elementary, Streff taught in Lincoln for three years before joining the North Bend Public Schools 14 years ago. Husband Ken teaches social studies at North Bend Central High School.

In a gym packed with students and teachers, only a few knew of the recipient's award. Her husband was asked to attend as a member of the city council – a ploy to make certain he was on hand. A Milken representative told the assembly that a teacher would receive the award, and then called Streff as the recipient.

She told the Fremont Tribune that she was deeply humbled.

"I wanted to become a teacher because when I was in elementary school, I had some really awesome second- and third-grade teachers," she said. "They did hands-on learning. They made me feel like I could learn anything and be anything. They made learning fun. I loved coming to school, and right away, I knew at a very young age I wanted to become a teacher."

According to the Milken Family Foundation, the future belongs to the educated and Streff "prepares her students for that

future every day with a smorgasbord of options and learning opportunities.

"An eager learner herself who thrives on collaborating with peers, Streff mentors first-year teachers, promotes professional development in her building and has upgraded the school's STEM curriculum. She is a strong proponent of project-based learning, technology integration and savvy data deployment, using data and technology to improve student outcomes wherever possible. She employs apps to increase parent involvement and also promotes social cohesion through old-school analog activities like coaching school teams and leading field trips."

North Bend Central Superintendent Dan Endorf praised Streff's work.

"Mrs. Streff provides sound instructional practices, exhibits a strong knowledge of the subject matter, and displays passion for the teaching and learning process," he said.

Endorf said Streff is confident in her ability. "An example of her self-confidence is the development of a classroom project for the district entitled Writer's Café, in which adults visited school to hear the personal writings of her students. Mrs. Streff continually develops grant proposals, introduced a fifth-grade graduation ceremony, and presents student achievement data to her colleagues on her own volition."

Attending the ceremony were Nebraska Commissioner of Education Matt Blomstedt and Lt. Gov. Mike Foley.

The Milken Educator Awards provide public recognition and individual financial rewards of \$25,000 to educators from around the country who further excellence in education. For more, go to:

milkeneducatorawards.org



Streff

Russell D. Bowker

Russell D. Bowker, 67, a long-time NSEA member at Northeast Community College in Norfolk, died at his home on Feb. 21.

A graduate of Neligh-Oakdale High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1973. He then worked for Westinghouse Electric as a field engineer/startup engineer. He traveled the country working on nuclear power plants. He began his tenure at Northeast Community College in 1981, where he taught electronics technology, math and physics. He retired in 2008, but volunteered since his retirement tutoring students at Northeast. In addition to his NSEA membership, he was a member of the Mensa Society. He is survived by three step-children, eight step-grandchildren and a brother and his family.

Anti-Union Group Targets Metro CC

In March, faculty and staff at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha received an unsolicited email announcing eligibility for “Professional Liability Coverage.” The email said the policy “is crafted to meet and exceed the plans offered by the largest unions and organizations.”

As always, the devil is in the details and in this case a very troubling detail is the source of the email. The Metropolitan Community College Education Association leadership team contacted NSEA staff for information, then sent this note to MCCEA members:

Dear MCCEA Colleagues –

As a faculty or staff member here at Metropolitan Community College, you recently received an email from an outside vendor touting that vendor’s liability insurance coverage.

Do not be fooled.

The email offering liability insurance from the “National Public Employee Alliance” is a ploy to weaken public sector unions. The NPEA is linked to a group called the Concerned Educators Against Forced Unionism, which is a “special project” of the National Right to Work Legal Defense and Education Fund, a decidedly anti-union organization. The NPEA website lists no officers, no staff, just addresses in Chicago and Cincinnati – and very little other information.

Meanwhile, more than 3 million educators across the country utilize the NSEA policy, through the National Education Association. Along with the membership, Nebraska educators get the peace of mind that comes with 18 NSEA field staff employees across the state, ready to step in and support members when needed. They perform that work every day of the week.

With NSEA membership, you also have a staff of three attorneys, on the ground, here in Nebraska, who are well-versed in the intricacies of Nebraska education law.

With NSEA membership and coverage, you get paid staff working with state senators and other policymakers to insure the best interests of public education are met when new statutes or policies are discussed.

So you make the choice: Buy local, through your Nebraska State Education Association, or buy from a company in Illinois – or is it Ohio? – with no staff in Nebraska and with a goal of tearing down your employee union.

We’ll put our trust in NSEA.

Speaking of Education

“You don’t have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great.”

— Zig Ziglar,

Motivational speaker, salesman, author, 1926-2012

**Mailed By: The Nebraska State Education Association
605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742**

‘Balanced’ Behavior

From Pam Carroll, a third-grade teacher from North Carolina:

“I use a balance scale, along with the small blocks that come with our math kit, to reinforce positive group behavior. When students receive a compliment from another teacher, or when I see them following directions, I give them a positive block on the left side of the balance scale. When students misbehave as a group, I drop a negative block on the right side of the balance scale. When the positive side touches the table, we have a Positive Party.

“Recently my students voted to have a Teddy Bear party. I was surprised that the boys voted for this type of party, but it was a hit! To make sure this party was not a distraction to the curriculum, I had the students read to their Teddy Bear during reading, make flash cards for their bear during math, and write a letter to their bear during writing.

“When the negative side hits the tabletop, we just empty the bucket and start again. It does not take the students long to see that when they misbehave, it takes longer to make the bucket drop the positive side all the way down to the tabletop.”



Sign up for Works4Me messages at: nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html



Educators Rising! Bellevue West High School students Raven Boyland, left, and Josie Nelson, center, joined NSEA President Jenni Benson at NSEA’s table during the annual Educators Rising State Leadership Conference in Bellevue in February. More than 300 Educators Rising members from chapters as far away as Scottsbluff and South Sioux City attended. A National Education Association Great Public Schools Grant has helped NSEA grow the number of Educators Rising chapters in Nebraska from about 15 to more than 30 over the past two years.