

The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association ♦ 2021-22 Member Guide

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

THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

REACH, TEACH AND INSPIRE.

You're never on your own. Your membership gives you access to some of education's most sought-after authorities who provide innovative programs you can use in your classroom. With resources that cover classroom management and supports, to more in-depth professional development provided by your local, state, and national affiliates—you have a team supporting you.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

As trusted professionals, educators are best equipped to make school and classroom decisions to ensure student success. It's our mission to ensure educators have a seat at the table when education policies are made. As members of the Association, educators have a powerful voice in creating the policies that affect our students, our schools, and our classrooms.

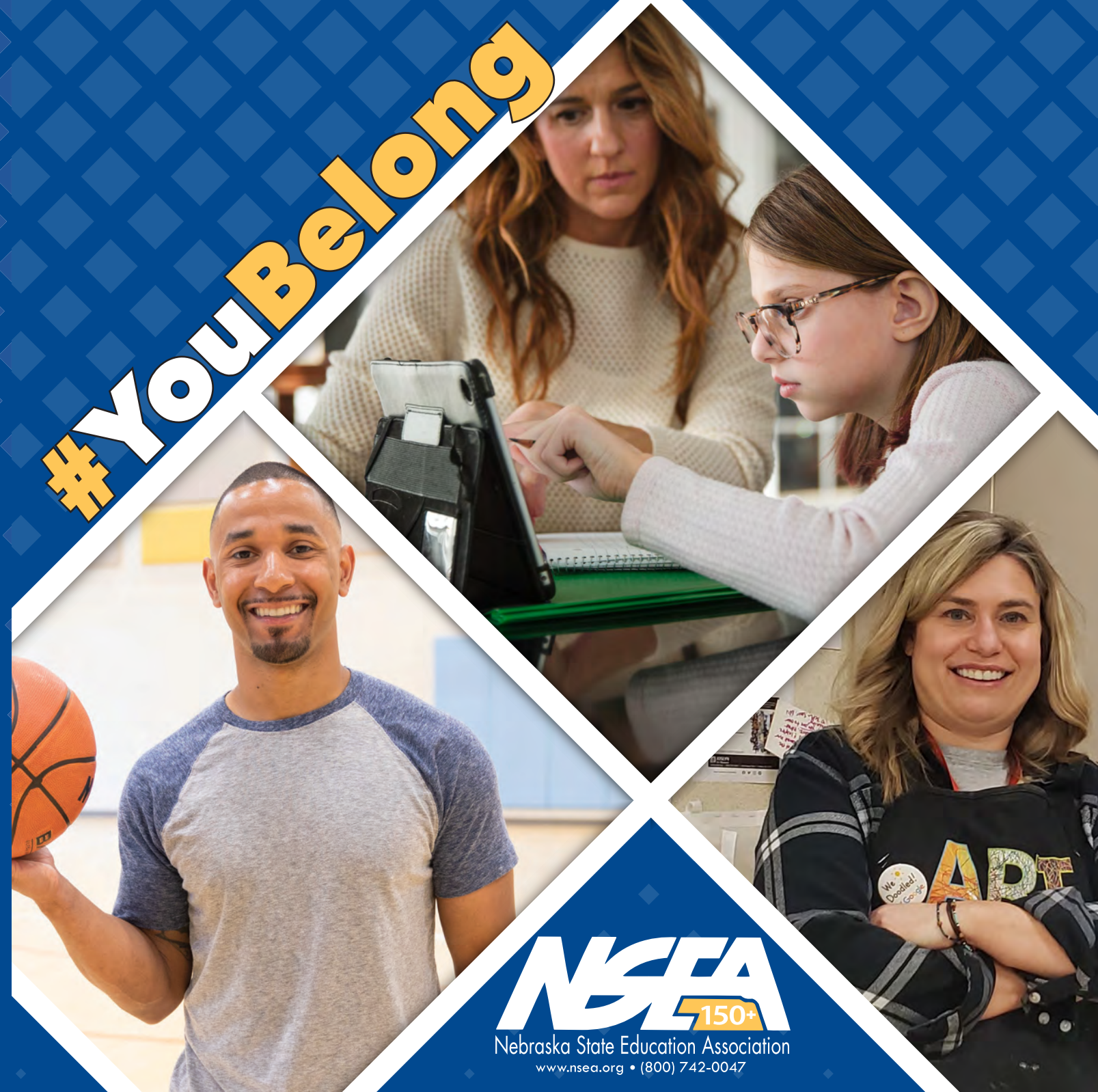
GROW YOUR NETWORK.

We're a community of experienced professionals. Through a variety of online and off-line tools, you enjoy access to valuable resources on classroom management, lesson planning, and a host of other topics. Plus, you'll make connections with the educators at your school, in your state, and among our more than 3 million members.

ENJOY WHAT MATTERS MOST.

Association membership means less worrying for you and more action from us. With representation at the bargaining table, liability insurance and so much more, NSEA provides advice and professional advocacy on the range of issues you face as an educator: salary, working conditions, evaluation support, contract compliance and enforcement, and retirement.

#YouBelong



NSEA 150+
Nebraska State Education Association
www.nsea.org • (800) 742-0047

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

NSEA

Toll Free (800) 742-0047
In Lincoln (402) 475-7611
Fax (402) 475-2630
NSEA Omaha (402) 731-0800
Lincoln Ed. Assoc. (402) 489-7500
Millard Ed. Assoc. (402) 731-0400
Omaha Ed. Assoc. (402) 346-0400
NSEA website www.nsea.org

National Education Association

Switchboard (202) 833-4000
Member Benefits (800) 637-4636

Nebraska Dept. of Education

Switchboard (402) 471-2295
Certification (402) 471-0739

State Government

Retirement Office (800) 245-5712
In Lincoln (402) 471-2053
State Capitol Info (402) 471-2311

NSEA-Endorsed Programs

BC/BS (claims) (877) 721-2583
Blue Cross nebraskablue.com
Educator's Health Alliance Plan
Advocate Greg Long (866) 465-1342
Cal. Casualty/A+ (800) 346-6840
Horace Mann (800) 999-1030
First Nebraska
Credit Union (402) 492-9100

Political Action

Governor's Office

Lincoln (402) 471-2244
North Platte (308) 660-9111

U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse

Lincoln (402) 476-1400
Omaha (402) 550-8040
Kearney (308) 233-3677
Scottsbluff (308) 632-6032
Washington, D.C. (202) 224-4224

U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer

Lincoln (402) 441-4600
Omaha (402) 391-3411
Kearney (308) 234-2361
Scottsbluff (308) 630-2329
Washington, D.C. (202) 224-6551

U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry

Lincoln (402) 438-1598
Washington, D.C. (202) 225-4806

U.S. Rep. Don Bacon

Omaha (402) 938-0300
Washington, D.C. (202) 225-4155

U.S. Rep. Adrian Smith

Grand Island (308) 384-3900
Scottsbluff (308) 633-6333
Washington D.C. (202) 225-6435

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NSEA 150+

2021-2022 Member and Education Professional





Night at the museum: Omaha Education Association Organizational Specialist Becca Dingwell (left) talks with members Diana Casey, Shannon Heng and NSEA Vice President Robert Miller at the Durham Museum's Teacher's Night in October. NSEA has been a part of the event, which draws around 1,500 Nebraska educators, for more than a decade.

Reliability in uncertain times

In a normal year, Association work runs full steam ahead. In a pandemic year, that work went into hyperdrive. Through it all, the Nebraska State Education Association was here to serve you, our members.

“We kept doing the normal things that are in line with our strategic plan, but just as your workload increased to meet the needs of your students during COVID, our workload increased to meet your needs,” NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell said.

The NSEA focused its efforts on five key areas, all while keeping its mission in mind: to advocate for all education professionals, empowering them to provide an excellent public education for every student.

Leadership and Governance

With 28,000 members, not everyone always agrees with every decision NSEA makes. Never was that more apparent with the quick closing of schools, the halting of extracurricular activities and the push for vaccines.

“When we make decisions in this association, no decision is ever made in isolation,” NSEA President Jenni Benson said. “It’s always a decision that’s made with lots of intention, lots of thought and deliberation with our staff and with NSEA governance, your elected leaders.”

In 2020-21, NSEA had a task force that worked on broadband and remote learning, and another on safety and learning.

The NSEA also ramped up its work related to social and racial justice, relying on its Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee to provide guidance to ensure the Association is operating with compassion and inclusivity for all.

Communication

A key piece of all of NSEA’s work is communication – with members, with board and committee leaders, and with state lawmakers.

When COVID-19 hit Nebraska, teachers had questions. As those questions rolled into the NSEA office at a rapid pace, leadership and staff switched gears and began offering a series of 15 Facebook Live events.

“We held Live events with the commissioner of education, with school boards, with superintendents, with people from the National Education Association, with people from the University of Nebraska Medical Center,” Benson said.

Those events reached more than 300,000 viewers in all.

A \$250,000 grant from the NEA allowed the NSEA to launch a fall social media campaign that showcased

What has NSEA done for YOU?

Since 1867, the Nebraska State Education Association has advocated for public education and better pay and working conditions for educators like you. Here are some highlights of what NSEA has gained on your behalf:

1890

Formed a political action effort with the election of a 25-member education committee to act on legislative and policy matters for the Association.

1909

Establishment of the Omaha Public Schools teachers retirement plan (OSERS).

1945

Pushed for 20-plus years to create the Nebraska School Employees Retirement System (NPERS) plan for all public school teachers (except those in the Omaha plan).

A story about a teacher and his family

Making the Switch to a Credit Union

Ryan and Laura Troxel have been FNCU members for just over four years. When Laura was 10, she opened her first account at the same big bank where her parents banked. After getting married, Laura and Ryan did all their banking there. When the Troxels' three girls became teenagers, the family had more financial needs to manage. Their girls were starting to get jobs and needed accounts, as well.

But they were not happy with the service they were receiving at the bank. It was hard to get a hold of someone, and the fees were starting to add up. Laura said they had so many rules, it was hard to do business with them.

They started searching for a new way to bank. Ryan has been a teacher for Omaha Public Schools for 27 years, and Laura is a nurse at Bergan Mercy Hospital. Ryan had seen a First Nebraska Educator's Credit Union flyer on the bulletin board in the school's mailroom. They didn't really know what the difference between a credit union and a bank was, so Laura asked her cousin, a bank examiner, about credit unions. She heard good things, and decided to meet with Erin Kershner at our 120th branch.

Laura was apprehensive about switching accounts after being with the same bank for 35 years. She didn't want to deal with new account numbers and passwords. They also had two paychecks automatically deposited and their house payment automatically paid through their bank account, which needed to be switched over. But she knew it was time to switch.

Their story is one we hear often.

When Laura and Ryan met with Erin (Branch Manager at 120th branch at the time), they found Erin to be patient, calm and understanding. Erin helped set everything up – checking and savings accounts for Ryan and Laura and their three daughters, as well as direct deposits, automatic payments, and online banking! Laura also helps her mom with her banking needs, and wanted a simpler solution for them, so she helped her mom move her accounts, as well. With all these accounts and changes, Laura said Erin was non-judgmental and made her feel like they were doing the right thing.

"We love the online banking app to help us keep track of everything, but my mom is older, and isn't comfortable with that technology, so she just calls in and gets her balance, and everyone is very kind and helpful." – Laura



"We like that there is a limit to the amount our daughters can spend on their account. Someone else tried to use our daughter's card, and we were alerted, so we are thankful of that." – Ryan

"It was a very smooth transition. We should have done it a long time ago!"

And after four years of being members at FNCU, they haven't regretted it for a moment. The Troxels tell us the staff at 120th are always friendly and feel like family. They like that it is a convenient location and they don't have to stand in line to get helped. Laura said, "We love the small-town atmosphere. They know us by name when we stop in."

As a bonus, the Troxels are enjoying lower fees, and are saving money. Their oldest daughter just opened a vacation savings account, and Ryan said they'll be coming in for a car loan in the near future.



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the incredible work teachers and education support professionals were doing to make sure students kept learning.

“Whether that was learning in their kitchen, their living room, their bedroom, or your classroom – wherever you were, wherever they were – we wanted the public to know the great work our members were doing,” Fennell said.

The NSEA also partnered with members and News Channel Nebraska to broadcast Teacher TV: lessons across different subject areas for different grade levels in two languages so students could continue learning while school buildings were closed.

“It was so exciting to give so many of our fantastic educators an opportunity to reach kids across the state,” Benson said. “That was a tremendous achievement by you, our members, that we are so proud of.”

Since March 2020, NSEA leaders were consulted for more than 90 television, radio and newspaper interviews. The Association was quoted in 134 news articles and published eight editorials in newspapers statewide to keep members and the public abreast of everything from COVID-19 situations in schools to legislative advancements that would affect classrooms.

Member surveys played a large role in NSEA’s work during the pandemic, allowing organizational specialists and leaders to learn what members needed most.

Member rights

As new issues arose during the pandemic, NSEA worked with its legal team to provide resources and explain problems that could affect educators all over Nebraska. Guidance for issues such as how to access medical leave



Teaching never stops: Fremont third-grade teacher Cindy Stollberg was part of NSEA’s Step Up TV campaign, showing that teaching never stopped and learning never ended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

for COVID-related illness, how to ensure you’d still earn service credit toward retirement and how to get a vaccine came in the form of videos, mailings, emails, social media and *The Voice* magazine.

“We were trying to get information out to you in the quickest and best format using not just one way to communicate, but we’ve really been very careful about layering levels of communication to reach all of our members across the state,” Fennell said.

Building coalitions

The NSEA Children’s Fund and NSEA-Retired donated a collective \$60,000 to food banks reaching all 93 counties in Nebraska in 2020. This helped feed children when they couldn’t get hot lunch because their schools were closed. It helped feed families when a parent was laid off because of COVID-19 shutdowns.

The Association worked with the Children’s Health Alliance, UNMC, Children’s Hospital, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Association of School Administrators and the Educators Health Alliance to reopen schools safely when the time was right.

“We have more than 240 school districts across Nebraska. We have college campuses. Every one of them looks different, and the needs of all of those places were different,” Benson said, “so for us to work with all of these different coalitions was really important to get you the information that you needed.”

Legislature and government

NSEA is active during Nebraska Legislature sessions and with elections, recommending candidates and bills that will impact public education in positive ways. In the middle of COVID-19 came the November 2020 General Election, and NSEA’s work on members’ behalf remained vigilant.

Members, leadership and staff testified on bills ranging from teacher and ESP pay during an epidemic to surreptitious recording in the classroom, from student loan forgiveness for student teachers to improving internet connectivity in rural areas. More than 700 bills were introduced in the 2021 session, and NSEA reviewed every one of them to determine its potential impact on educators, students and families.

With the implementation of federal coronavirus relief packages, money continues to roll into Nebraska to be used to enhance education and make up for lost learning caused by the pandemic. NSEA is working to ensure educators are part of the conversation around how that money is spent.

1954

NSEA hired its first legal counsel, former Nebraska Gov. Robert B. Crosby, on retainer for \$100. The Association has retained legal counsel on behalf of member educators ever since. Its current legal counsel, the firm of Norby and Welding, LLP, offices inside the NSEA headquarters in Lincoln.

1967

Caused the introduction and passage by the Nebraska Legislature of the NSEA-created Professional Negotiations Law, making collective bargaining a reality for Nebraska educators. Not only did the bill allow salary schedules that equalized salaries paid to male and female educators, it was the first of its kind in the nation to be enacted.

1967

NSEA caused the introduction of a health care plan that today insures nearly every Nebraska teaching professional in the Educators Health Alliance.



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Doane offers education degrees in:

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Doane's Doctorate of Education (EdD) prepares candidates for leadership roles while allowing students to focus in a specific discipline or field of study. Doane's Ed. D. will include 57 hours of post-graduate level coursework, seminars, and stand-alone courses culminating in a dissertation. Doane offers two emphasis options.

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Leadership: Based in Lincoln, the Leadership emphasis prepares students for roles as scholastic leaders who utilize, analyze and produce data which helps inform decisions and practices. This program is a seamless continuation of Doane's Education Specialist degree (EdS), but available to students from outside institutions as well.

Now accepting applications!

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Liability policy now available online

In your work as an educator, you are frequently exposed to situations that may make you personally liable. If a student or a student's parents file a lawsuit against you, your Educators Employment Liability Insurance through NSEA and the National Education Association will protect you in the majority of cases. It also reimburses you for damage to your personal property in assault-related incidents and for attorney fees.

If you are an NSEA member, you're automatically covered by the EEL policy, with no monthly insurance premium required.

The policy offers \$1 million in liability insurance per member per occurrence for non-civil right issues or claims; \$300,000 per member per occurrence for civil rights issues or claims; \$3 million per member per occurrence for legal defense costs in non-civil rights claims; \$35,000 in attorney fee reimbursement for criminal proceedings; \$1,000 for bail bond; \$500 for assault-related personal property damage; and \$1 million per member per occurrence for claims involving medical and related arts.

Full EEL policy and details may be found at www.nsea.org/members-only.

The following occurrences should be reported immediately to the NSEA: any allegation or incident involving the death or injury requiring medical attention to a student arising out of a school activity; the receipt of a notice of claim, lien letter from an attorney, or service of a summons or lawsuit; or any situation you believe to be covered by the policy. Do not contact an attorney to represent you before contacting Trish Guinan, NSEA Director of Advocacy, at (402) 475-7611.

Law firm ready to serve you

NSEA is the only education association with legal counsel located right here in Nebraska. The attorneys at Norby and Welding LLP are retained by the NSEA to help association members with legal issues that may arise from their employment.

The firm specializes in education, employment and labor law. It has represented clients in thousands of administrative and judicial proceedings. With a statewide presence and a combined six decades of experience, Norby and Welding attorneys Scott J. Norby, Nicholas J. Welding and Jonathan C. Hunzeker serve as strong advocates for association members. Norby and Welding is recognized as one of USA Today's Best Law Firms in Education Law.



Norby



Welding



Hunzeker

Dues dollars working for you

Each year, delegates to NSEA's member-driven Delegate Assembly set the dues for the following Association year. For 2021-22, dues for full-time certificated staff are \$421, and less for Education Support Professionals based on salary.

NSEA dues have increased little over the past decade, with some of those years carrying less than a 1% increase over the year before.

Dues to the National Education Association will be decided in July and are proposed at \$204 for 2021-22.

NEA dues are used to increase educator voice and influence on education issues, recruit and engage new and early career educators, advance racial justice in education, support professional excellence and secure the political environment to ensure success for educators and students, for legal and insurance support and more.

NSEA dues history

Budget Year	NSEA Dues	Percent Increase
2021-22	\$421	1.20%
2020-21	\$416	0.72%
2019-20	\$413	1.4%
2018-19	\$407	0.002%
2017-18	\$406	1.75%

1968

NSEA won implementation of a formula factor to provide teachers with an enhanced retirement benefit that is based on the number of years taught, the employee's salary and the formula factor.

1971

Caused introduction and passage of a Fair Dismissal Law by the Nebraska Legislature that today provides educators with due process rights in contract termination cases.

1972

NSEA successfully led the effort to amend the Nebraska Constitution to permit cost of living increases for retirees.

1982

Pushed for the introduction and passage by the Nebraska Legislature of a Continuing Contract Law that protects employment rights of Nebraska's professional educators.

Working for you in the legislature

A major part of NSEA's mission is serving educators affected by state legislation, which happens to be every educator in the state.

Since most of the legislature's committee work, hearings and debate happen during school hours, it's difficult for educators to visit the Capitol to voice their opinions on proposed bills. That's where NSEA's Government Relations team steps in.

In the 2021 legislative session, NSEA staff and leadership sifted through 700 bills and submitted in-person or written testimony on 77 bills that affected education in some way. Several teachers and education support professionals also testified and hundreds wrote letters in favor or opposition of education-related bills.

Here are just a few key bills NSEA worked on in 2021.

Approved by Governor

LB64 phases out the state tax on Social Security over a 10-year period, allowing retired, elderly and disabled

citizens to keep more of these benefits and retire with dignity.

LB154 requires school districts to track student discipline by type of offense, type of discipline and demographic information.

LB388 adopts the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act, giving up to \$20 million in matching grants annually to expand internet connectivity services across the state.

Defeated

LB364 would have given dollar-for-dollar income tax credits to corporations or individuals that contribute to scholarships for private schools. It would have diverted millions of tax dollars from the general fund, which helps pay for public schools.

LB408 and **LR22CA** would have placed a 3% lid on property tax revenue for schools and all other local political subdivisions unless otherwise allowed by a vote of patrons.

Politics in the Classroom?

Members may wonder why the NSEA is involved in politics — working with senators, recommending candidates and supporting or opposing issues.

The truth is, every decision in education is a political decision. How you receive your teaching certificate, the standards you teach to, the number of students in your classroom, your curriculum, the resources you can access and the amount on your paycheck are just drops in the bucket of political decisions that affect public education.

Educator voices must be part of the decision-making process on issues affecting public education students and employees.

The NSEA candidate recommendation process is run by NSEA members from across the state. NSEA members interview candidates about their education-related views. NSEA works closely with candidates from both parties who support public school students and employees.

Learn more about NSEA's work in the Nebraska Legislature and issues that affect your classroom by subscribing to the Capitol Update, sent weekly to your inbox during each legislative session, at www.nsea.org/subscriber.



Tax-free Social Security: NSEA President Jenni Benson speaks at a May press conference at the State Capitol after LB64 passed, phasing out the state income tax on Social Security benefits. Accompanying Benson were, from left: Todd Stubbendieck, Nebraska State Director for AARP; Roger Rea, vice president of NSEA-Retired; Al Mumm, president of the Alliance for Retired Americans; De Tonack, president of NSEA-Retired; Sen. Brett Lindstrom of Omaha, who introduced the bill; and Sen. Mark Kolterman of Seward, chair of the legislature's retirement committee, who designated LB64 as a priority bill.

1986

NSEA advocated for legislation that now provides a required 30-minute duty-free lunch break for Nebraska teachers.

1988

Pushed for higher benefits for retired teachers with 25 years of service; with an increase in benefits for the Omaha retirement system in 1989.

2004

NSEA won legislation that guarantees teacher representation on the Public Employees Retirement Board.

2009

Won the passage of a Loan Forgiveness Program for teachers earning a master's degree and for college students becoming teachers.

2014

State increased its 1% contribution to 2% of school employee salary into both the NPERS and OSERS school retirement plans.

Level up your skills through NSEA

Opportunities abound in NSEA professional learning offerings

Learning something new was a big part of every teacher's job in 2020 and 2021. Remote teaching didn't come easily to all, and NSEA was here to help make the transition from the classroom to remote or hybrid a little easier for our members.

Before COVID-19 was even a factor, NSEA supported our members with professional development opportunities to build their skills and take their teaching to the next level.

As the pandemic recedes, NSEA plans to continue some of our most well-received learning sessions while adding some new ones to meet teachers' ever-evolving and ever-growing needs.

Listed here are just a few of NSEA's professional development offerings.

New sessions will be planned and publicized throughout the year, so watch *The Voice*, NSEA's Facebook page and other social media channels for the latest registration information.

NSEA University

What has come to be known as "NSEA U" is three days in July at the University of Nebraska's Innovation Campus, with nearly 180 breakout sessions on classroom and Association topics. It combines aspects of the Bargaining Conference held in the fall in past

years, area membership meetings that kick off each school year and a broad schedule of professional learning. In 2021, the event includes a night for families at the Lincoln Children's Zoo and two nationally acclaimed keynote speakers, as well as dozens of professional development sessions geared toward educators. Find out more at nsea.org/nseau.

Conversations on Race and Belonging

Over the past three years, nearly 75 Association members explored, discussed and learned of the systemic and institutional racism that affects students and teachers. Educators learned how to build stronger relationships with students of color and gain a deeper understanding of race, racism and equity. An alumni group from previous cohorts meets regularly on Zoom.

Six-week sessions are offered in the spring and summer. Learn more at nsea.org/conversations.

Mentoring, instructional coaching

Every new teacher needs a high-quality mentor! NSEA's mentoring plan matches teachers early in their careers with a more experienced teacher from outside their school district, offering new teachers the support to be successful via an impartial and non-judgmental voice to provide tips, guidance and support. Learn more at nsea.org/mentoring.

Professional Development Catalog

NSEA offers members a way to access web-based training and in-person workshops through a Professional Development Catalog.

View the list of workshops and request sessions to be presented at a local association meeting or member event using the form at nsea.org/professional-development-catalog.

Webinar series

Professional teachers lead skill development webinars from August to April each year, and even throughout the summer months. Featured in 2021 were 58 sessions ranging from knowing your paycheck, financial planning for retirement and student loan forgiveness to Google Classroom basics, trauma-informed teaching and building relationships at a distance.

Session videos and resources are available at nsea.org/webinars. Log in with your NSEA member ID.

Governance training

NSEA's Strategic Plan (see the back of the room card inside this issue's cover) addresses support for Association governance. NSEA leadership provides training and support through in-person and online resources. President Jenni Benson hosts seven local leader Zoom video conferences each year to update and assist local leaders.

District and state leaders work with staff to update bylaws, give relevant officer training and support the needs of a local association.

2021

Increased the number of days to eight per month that a retired school employee can provide intermittent substitute or voluntary service to a school district in the 180 days following their date of retirement without violating IRS limitations and risking the possibility of paying back their retirement benefit.

2021

LB64 passed, phasing out the state income tax on Social Security benefits over a five-year period.

2021

Pushed for legislation that provided for the transfer of management of the Omaha retirement system to the Public Employees Retirement Board, with the creation of a new seat on the PERB to be filled by a teacher member of OSERS.

Personal email account a must

School accounts should be separate from Association business for your protection

The line between personal and professional life gets blurred sometimes. In the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life as an educator, it is convenient to communicate with just one email account. By doing so, however, you may be trading convenience for personal protection. You need to think twice before casually chatting over school email, and here's why.

Subject to review

■ Your school email is district property. That means no one from the school district needs to ask your permission to review any emails you have sent or received, and it could mean a parent could obtain copies of your emails through an open records request under the Freedom of Information Act.

■ Also, association business must be kept separate. Let's say you're involved in a dispute with an administrator (something NSEA experts can help with). You wouldn't want that administrator to have access to your association emails on your school-issued email account. That could hurt you in the long run during a hearing or other means of conflict resolution.

■ Don't save or store personal documents on your work computer, as they are subject to the same access as an email account. Anyone from the school district can view them at any time. The district owns any district-issued technology such as laptops or tablets for use in the classroom, for coaching, or for any other school-related purpose.

■ Further, email and technology are not subject to work day hours. It does not matter whether you are "on" or "off-the-clock" when sending an email. The district owns the property and your activity on that property 24/7.

Your personal email, cell phone or computer, on the other hand, are not district property. The district *does* need your permission to access these accounts and devices. You should



Learn to create a personal email account at nsea.org/email.

always use these personal devices — not school-issued ones — for association business, to share your vacation pictures with family or to access your social media accounts.

Finally, depending on your school board policy, negotiated agreement and/or staff handbook, the use of personal communication and personal devices may be restricted to outside the contract day, so only use your personal devices when you're off the clock. Avoid bringing personal computers and tablets into the school building.

Considerations on school email

Even before you begin typing a message on your school computer or email account, consider your motives and all possible outcomes.

■ Are you saying anything disparaging about students, colleagues, administration or the school board? If so, use your personal email on a personal device, and do it on your own time, not during the school day.

■ Make sure you are sending your personal message to the *recipient's* personal email, as well, especially if they are a work colleague or fellow association member.

■ Are you saying something political? Refrain from sending

anything promoting or disparaging about ballot measures or political candidates (anyone from city council to the U.S. president).

■ Are you saying anything you would want to be private? Be aware that at any time someone can review and read all communications from your school email.

NSEA encourages all members to create a personal email account through a non-school platform, such as Gmail or Hotmail, to conduct personal and association business.

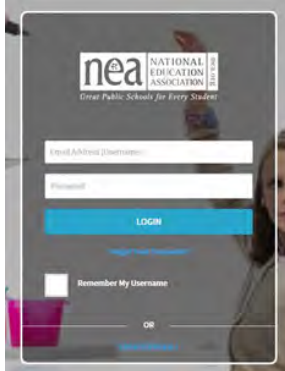
If you have questions or concerns about personal communication and your rights, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Update your information

NSEA is here to serve you, and we can only do that well when we can stay in touch. If you're a new member or if it's been awhile since you last logged in, take a moment to update your information on the MyNEA360 portal.

Go to myNEA360.org and use the instructions on the next page to create or update your profile. This will help ensure you receive important communications and member information from your association. Be sure to include your *personal* address, phone number and email, not the school's.

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION



- Go to www.myNEA360.org
- Click **CREATE PROFILE** (if you are new to edCommunities) or
- **LOGIN** (if you already have an edCommunities profile)

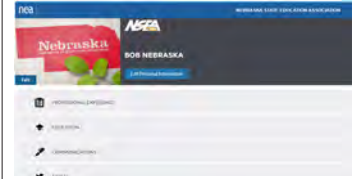
- Enter your information
 - Click **CREATE PROFILE**
- Skip this step if you have already created an edCommunities profile.*



- A verification message will be sent to your email.

- Click [MyNEA360 Profile](#)

[MyNEA360 Profile](#)



- Click Edit Personal Information to access your personal data
- Ability to review and update your own record as necessary.
- Quick links to resources
- Help Desk – Get answers on your time.

If you experience technical difficulties with the myNEA360 website, you can send your updated information by email to membership@nsea.org or call NSEA at (800) 742-0047.

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE FILE CHECKLIST

Every school employee should keep the following documents on hand:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profession-related certificates and licenses | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of commendations, awards and honors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Negotiated Agreement | <input type="checkbox"/> Record of non-college job-related seminars, workshops and conferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of all evaluations, with signatures | <input type="checkbox"/> Record of disciplinary techniques and methods used in handling student problems (note date and witnesses involved) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transcripts of higher education credits and degrees | <input type="checkbox"/> Record of employment-related incidents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of appointment or hire | <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly school calendar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee contracts, including supplemental pay | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone numbers for your NSEA Organizational Specialist and local association president |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly salary notice supplied by employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Association/Building Representative contact information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record of accumulated sick leave | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal record of use of sick and personal leave days | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly retirement statements | |

Always keep a hardcopy or digital folder with these documents *at home*. In case of an employment-related problem, you may need some of these records at a moment's notice without access to your worksite.

Protect yourself. Join NSEA now at nsea.org/joinnow

COVID coverage one less worry

BCBS plan paid COVID-19 costs for EHA members in 2020-21 year

Having health insurance through the Educators Health Alliance meant NSEA members and their families had one less thing to worry about when the coronavirus outbreak hit Nebraska in the spring of 2020.

The EHA Board of Directors decided member cost-sharing for the testing and treatment of COVID-19 would be waived through June 2021.

That meant members with symptoms or those who had been exposed to others who tested positive for COVID-19 paid nothing for medically appropriate testing and treatment through their Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska policy through the Educators Health



Educators
Health
Alliance

Alliance.

This included services received via telehealth, at a doctor's office or in an urgent care facility or emergency room, as well as inpatient hospital stays related to the virus.

"I think this is a wonderful benefit. I was in the hospital for a week in November with COVID, and my total bill was around \$35,000," one NSEA member on the EHA plan shared in April. "It was very nice to not have to worry about those expenses while I was still recovering at my home and working only part time."

"Most Nebraska school districts are part of the EHA network, and use our Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska plan. This is a wonderful

move by Blue Cross," NSEA President Jenni Benson said.

The EHA is a non-profit corporation created to procure quality, affordable health insurance for Nebraska educational employees. The rates set by the EHA Board are used by more than 325 affiliate groups in Nebraska, including public schools.

The EHA plan evolved from a statewide health care plan NSEA founded in the 1960s. Today's 12-member board has six NSEA representatives and three each from the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. NSEA Associate Executive Director and Comptroller Sheri Jablonski chairs the EHA board. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska administers the plan.

More than 80,000 Nebraskans are covered by the plan, making it the largest health plan in the state. Learn more at ehaplan.org.



Educators
Health
Alliance

Proud to be here *for you*

Thank you for all you do for
students across Nebraska, and
for letting us be part of your
story for more than 30 years.

NebraskaBlue.com



BlueCross BlueShield
Nebraska

Health benefits for EHA are provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Your NSEA membership yields benefits

From liability insurance to bargaining your salary, from retirement planning to protecting your rights, NSEA provides so many services to make life easier as a busy educator. For details on these benefits and others, call your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047. Here is a small sample of services, each a reason why it pays to be a member.

Protection of your employment rights

When a member's job is endangered by an unfair evaluation, a poor relationship with an administrator or other threat, your first action should be to call the NSEA organizational specialist assigned to your school district (see pages 14-15). Depending on the circumstances, the issue may be resolved with the help of the organizational specialist, or it may be forwarded to NSEA's Director of Advocacy. NSEA also works with the firm of Norby & Welding, LLC, Attorneys at Law, for the most serious cases.

Bargaining aid

The 18 organizational specialists advise local association negotiation teams in each of the state's 250-plus school districts, educational services units, state and community colleges and the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Salary, benefits and contract language issues are frequently resolved by these teams.

NSEA owns the Navigator software program that gives K-12 locals a way to compare contract costs with those of other similar-sized and nearby associations, ensuring that no district lags in regional salary standings.

The NSEA's concerted push on salaries over the past 20 years has lifted Nebraska teachers from 46th in the nation for average salary ranking in 2003-04 to 30th in 2019-20, according to NEA figures.

Retirement plan protection

Your state-managed retirement plan is a worthwhile asset for professional educators. NSEA actively works to maintain, improve – and defend, when needed – your retirement benefits. The goal is for career educators to retire with dignity.

Longtime association member and former Bellevue Education Association President Janis Elliott chairs the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System (NPERS) Board of Directors. NPERS disburses funds to retired educators, as well as to state employees.

NSEA monitors NPERS and the Omaha School Employees' Retirement System and works to preserve and enhance those plans.

Maintaining standards

The Nebraska Council on Teacher Education is a committee of nearly 80 members of the Nebraska education family advising the State Board of Education and the Nebraska Department of Education. The board appoints NCTE members who then develop and recommend standards to the board. NSEA leadership was active in founding the NCTE in the 1940s.

An NSEA committee supporting NCTE is the Teacher Education and School Accreditation Committee, comprised of the NSEA members who serve on NCTE. Members represent Nebraska State Board

districts, various grade levels and many content areas.

Partnership with the NDE

NSEA monitors each State Board of Education meeting, working to ensure that best practices are advanced by the board. In 2020, NSEA worked to resolve concerns that a new NDE teaching certificate renewal portal was not delivering certificates in a timely fashion.

NSEA also worked with the NDE Office of Legal Services to distribute a survey to members as the NDE considered changes to the standards of professional conduct for teachers.

Certification elections

More than 70 of Nebraska's 250-plus K-12 local associations have attained status as the permanent bargaining agent for their members. That status is reached through a certification election managed by the Nebraska Commission of Industrial Relations. Under state collective bargaining statutes, local associations are required each year to formally ask that the school board recognize the association as the bargaining agent for members. Recognition requires a vote of the school board. With permanent certification, a local association

can forego that request every year and instead work with the board to set dates to commence bargaining. NSEA assists in arranging certification elections.

Retirement 'how to'

NSEA staff offer retirement seminars designed to give an overview of state NPERS pension benefits members will earn at retirement. The seminars cover benefit calculation, payment options and the application process. They also explain how to use the NPERS website to estimate benefits. NSEA also helps you find details on retiree health insurance, Social Security and other issues.

Pre-Medicare health insurance

Educators who are age 50 or older, retire before Medicare age and have been on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska health care plan for the past five years can continue coverage until age 65 on a direct bill basis. Rates are posted on ehaplan.org.

Added coverage for nurses

Until 2018-19, nurses, athletic directors and others in the medical arts area could purchase additional liability insurance through the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program for just \$13. In 2019, that fee dropped to zero. That's right: no extra cost.

Grants from NEA

In recent years NSEA has had more than \$1 million in NEA dues returned in the form of grants that target needed issues to the benefit of educators and students. Those grants have promoted the success of public schools, encouraged high schoolers to consider a teaching career, promoted social justice and more.



Work that matters: Southeast Community College blood science instructors and NSEA members (from left) Leah Stamps, Ahmad Tumei and Lynnett Paneitz talk about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the benefits of their NSEA membership.



Andrea Longoria
High Plains
Unit
308-641-8606



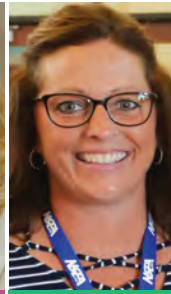
Kim Story
West
Central Unit
308-469-1025



Mike Wiesen
North
Central Unit
402-432-9528



Kristen Sedlacek
Tri-City
Unit
402-430-7389



Jen Dubas
South
Central Unit
308-550-0545



Megan Lyons
Southeast
Unit
402-613-0754



Todd Tystad
Lincoln Education
Assoc. & Malcolm
402-450-0129



Mandy Faripour
Lincoln Education
Assoc. & Waverly
402-580-1645



Matt Pittman
Metroplex
Unit
402-805-7867

Experts working all across NE to assist YOU

NSEA Organizational specialists help with bargaining, employment disputes

The day will come when you have a question about an evaluation, your teaching license or your contract.

That's when you can pick up the phone and call your NSEA organizational specialist — one of 18 experts on staff who can help answer these and many other questions educators face. Questions about:

- Plan time and extra duty pay
- Salary schedule placement
- Reduction in Force notices and contract cancellations
- Evaluation responses
- Teaching assignments and certificate renewal
- District policy questions
- Grievances
- Personal leave
- Personal, sick, family and medical leave
- Much more!

NSEA's organizational specialists are each assigned to a different region of the state. That means you have an expert dedicated to serving the needs of your local education association in your school district. This person has probably been in your school building and knows your administrators and the details

of your negotiated agreement.

These specialists are experienced bargainers, and they understand contract comparability, which will help you and your colleagues when it comes to securing increased salary and benefits.

Your organizational specialist has advocacy skills, knowledge of Nebraska's school laws and the ability to address issues and resolve disagreements with administrators.

NSEA staff members are ready and able to represent teachers in grievances and dismissal hearings. They have the knowledge, experience and ability to deal with superintendents, principals and school attorneys.

Your steady and experienced NSEA organizational specialists spend many nights on the road, meeting with individual members and local associations, providing training and representing the members they serve.

Whatever questions you may have about your employment issues, classroom, bargaining situations or more, know that you can call your organizational specialist in complete confidentiality.



Tamra Mick
Org. Specialist
Assoc. Staff



Becky Scherbring
Org. Specialist
Assoc. Staff



Rebecca Smith
Org. Specialist
Assoc. Staff

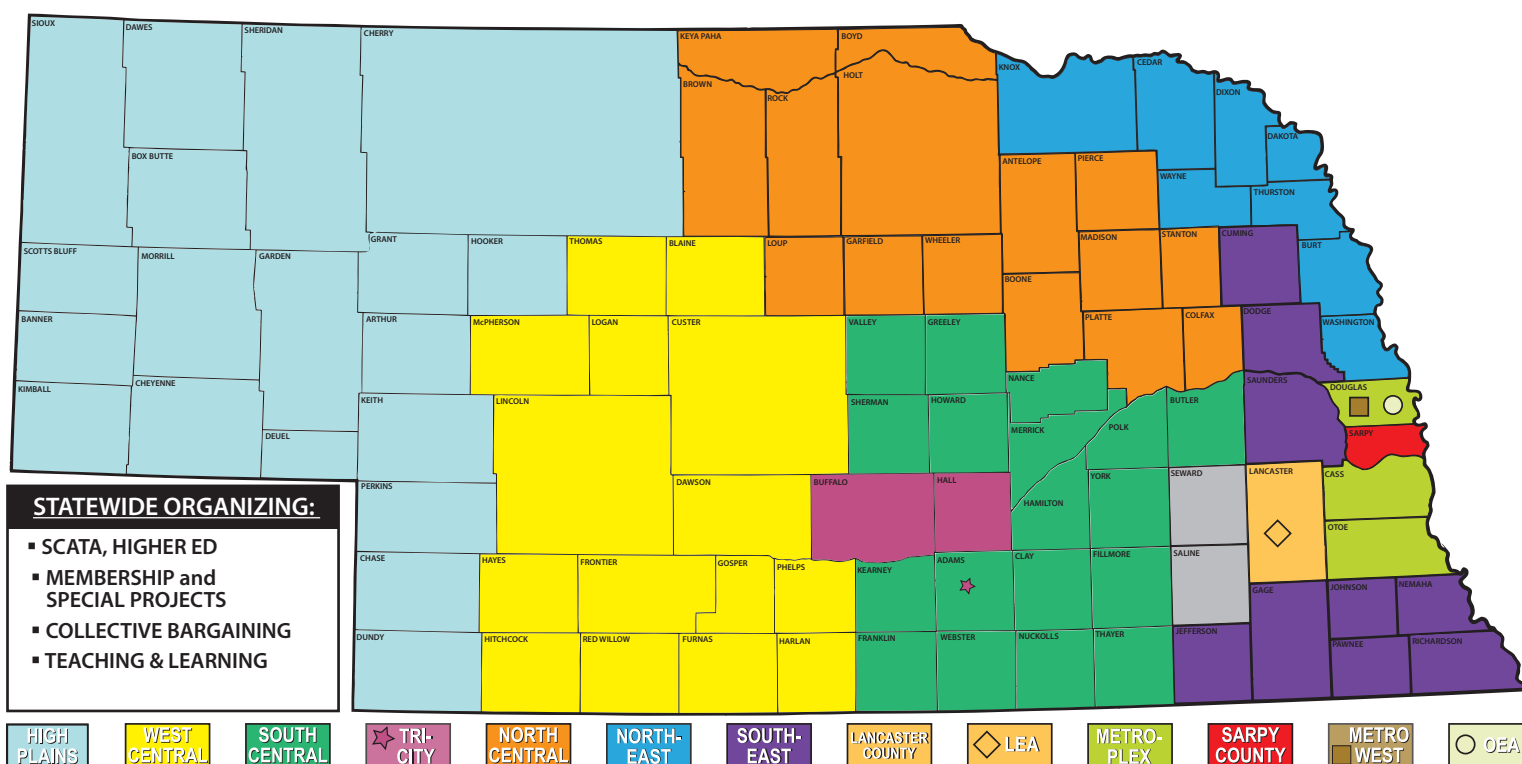


Emme Grafton
Org. Specialist
Assoc. Staff

Call your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047, or send your question through the 'Contact Us' feature of the NSEA website at www.nsea.org/contact-us.



Judy Roach Sarpy County Unit 402-660-0949	Cindy Copich Northeast Unit 402-875-2123	Andy Isaacson Metro West & Omaha Admins. 402-713-9169	Becca Dingwell Omaha Education Association 402-412-4762	Elizabeth Figueroa Omaha Education Association 402-651-4287	Rich Wergin Higher Education & SCATA 402-875-2058	Heather Fritz Membership & Special Projects 703-409-7018	Randy Gordon Coll. Bargaining & Saline & Seward 402-429-4898	Isau Metes Teaching & Learning 531-207-4063
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NSEA field staff are assigned to units as displayed on this color-coded map corresponding with the color displayed in each of their photos. Call them at NSEA Headquarters at 402-475-7611 or 1-800-742-0047 or email them at: firstname.lastname@nsea.org

Retirement seminars help map out next steps

Retirement for an educator often seems far away. Is it time to evaluate your decision about leaving your career in education? How do you prepare for retirement and what do you need to know? The NSEA Retirement Seminar Team is here to support your transition to retirement by explaining the NPERS retirement plan. For 2021-2022, virtual retirement presentations are pre-set on the second Monday in odd months and

the second Tuesday in even months. All virtual presentations will begin at 7:30 p.m. CT. Local leaders and governance districts also may request to host an in-person seminar. Though seminars are offered free of charge, NSEA membership and pre-registration are required for all seminars. To register for a seminar or to request consideration for your local to host an in-person presentation, go to nsea.org/retirement.

Seminar Dates

Choose any of the following dates. All sessions start at 7:30 p.m. CST and last one hour.

Mondays, Sept. 13, Nov. 8,
Jan. 10, March 14

Tuesdays, Oct. 12, Dec. 14,
Feb. 15, April 12

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We are dedicated to helping educators make informed financial decisions so they can stay in the job they love. Our representatives offer no-cost financial wellness education on a variety of topics important to educators.



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Michael Croker
Omaha
402-991-7260

Scott Driver
Minden
308-832-0816

Scott Rabourn
Shelby
402-527-5215

Brandon Roberts
Omaha
402-480-1785

Kevin Scheiding
Omaha
402-639-0865

Rhonda Schledewitz
Scottsbluff
308-633-8297

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NSEA Management, Staff Support Your Work

The support NSEA provides to members every day doesn't just happen. It takes a skilled and adept management team, supported by professional and associate staff with distinct and important skills.

Leading day-to-day work behind the scenes at NSEA are Executive Director Maddie Fennell, Associate Executive Director and Comptroller Sheri Jablonski, and Field and Special Projects Manager Michelle Raphael, in addition to the governance team.

NSEA's program directors and associate staff provide expertise in member rights, bargaining, instructional advocacy, communications and government relations. Skills provided in each of those areas are vital to pushing forward the cause of public education and the support of Nebraska students and teachers.

An elementary teacher and literacy coach, Fennell is past president of the Omaha Education Association. She was Nebraska's 2007 Teacher of the Year and was a Teaching Ambassador Fellow at the U.S. Department of Education.

Jablonski has been a certified public accountant and manages the Association's finances and membership details. Raphael was an organizational specialist for four years. She is a certified treasury professional and past president of the Nebraska Association of Financial Professionals.



Supporting All Members: NSEA Staff Associate Becky Scherbring (left) and Field and Special Projects Manager Michelle Raphael assist the NSEA-Retired affiliate with counting ballots in April 2021.



Maddie Fennell
Executive Director,
5 years



Sheri Jablonski
Associate Exec.,
Comptroller,
29 years



Michelle Raphael
Field & Special
Projects Manager
6 years



Kami Beaty
Assistant
Comptroller,
4 years



Martha Livingston
Assist. to President
& Exec. Director,
4 years



Patty Schroer
Assist. to Field,
Sp. Projects Mgr.,
30 years



Karen Kilgarin
Dir. Public Affairs,
Communications,
27 years



Kristi Capek
Visual Comms &
Digital Engagement,
21 years



Kelsey Foley
Communications
Associate,
3 years



Emily Hemphill
Assist. Director,
Communications
7 months



Trish Guinan
Director
of Advocacy,
25 years



Karen Hunt
Advocacy,
Membership
Assoc., 15 years



Roger Kucera
Network
Administrator,
16 years



Jason Hayes
Dir. Public Policy
& Leg. Research,
9 years



Brian Mikkelsen
Director, Political
Field Operations,
24 years



Cathy Schapmann
Govt. Relations,
Political Field Ops
Assoc., 28 years



Jan Anderson
Conference Coord.
Associate,
15 years



Teresa Greve
Membership,
Ele. Funds Transfer,
12 years



Brandon Langlois
Special Issues
Organizer,
5 months

Members take lead in Association work

Your Association operates as a representative democracy. Every member has an equal voice, and every member has equal representation within the Association.

Every Nebraska school building has an appointed or elected Association/faculty representative. Those representatives work with members in their building and connect to the elected officers of the district-wide local Association. Each local Association is found in one of the six NSEA governance districts (see map, page 19). Each governance district has a board of directors, and each district is represented on the NSEA Board of Directors, with each board member representing a roughly equal number of members. NSEA board members are chosen in online elections in late winter each year. Any Association member in good standing is encouraged to seek election to either their NSEA district board or the statewide board of directors.

NSEA also elects, to three-year terms, two representatives on the National Education Association Board of Directors. Along with NSEA President Jenni Benson and Vice President Robert Miller, Nebraska NEA Directors Linda Freye and Tracy Hartman-Bradley comprise the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

In addition, members from every local association are eligible to seek election to serve as a representative to the NSEA's Delegate Assembly. At that annual April business meeting, more than 300 delegates from across the state elect officers, set the Association's agenda for the coming year, craft the As-



Executive team: NSEA is lead by President Jenni Benson (front left), Vice President Robert Miller (back left), and two directors on the National Education Association Board, Tracy Hartman-Bradley (front right) and Linda Freye. All are classroom teachers.

sociation's foundational Resolutions, and review and update the Bylaws, which guide Association operations.

In every effort, members lead and pave the way forward – all on behalf of the children who attend our schools in support of quality public education. For details, email Benson at jenni.benson@nsea.org.



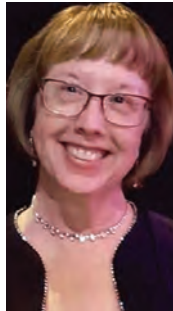
Jenni Benson
President
Lincoln, '23
402-890-3169



Robert Miller
Vice President
Omaha, '23
402-515-4882



Tracy Hartman-Bradley
Omaha
NEA Director, '22
402-740-6991



Linda Freye
Lincoln
NEA Director, '23
402-540-3746



Marsha Edquist
Millard
Metro President, '22
402-660-4282



Sasha Cervantes
Omaha
Metro, '23
402-216-3906



Sarah Dragon
Omaha
Metro, '23
402-612-1736



Jordan Burns
Papillion-LaVista
Metro, '24
605-661-2386



Kathie Garabrandt
Millard
Metro, '22
402-676-3245



Dr. Tanishia Jacobs
Bellevue
Metro, '22
402-981-7434



Lisa Hanson
Neligh-Oakdale
Elkhorn Pres., '24
402-640-7465



Kimberly Erickson
Norfolk
Elkhorn, '22
402-750-4399



Denton Beacom
Logan View
Elkhorn, '23
402-720-9881



Vanessa Brand
Oakland-Craig
Elkhorn, '24
402-377-1580



Mary Gregoski
Palmer
Sandhills Pres., '24
308-754-4321



Emily Tobias
Sargent,
Sandhills, '24
308-214-1085

District Officers

These members have been elected to lead NSEA at the District level:

■ Metro District

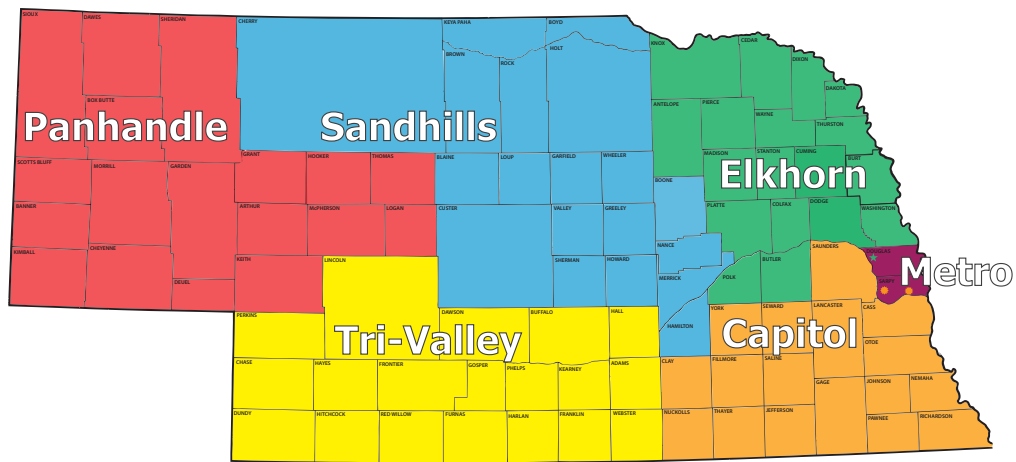
President Marsha Edquist, Millard
 Vice Pres..... Vacancy
 Treasurer Vacancy
 Secretary Julie Adams, Bellevue
 Exec Comm..... Lee Perez, Omaha
 Molly Davies, Omaha
 Diana Casey, Omaha
 Chris Janovec-Poehlman, Millard
 Stacy Kester-Pearson, Millard
 Andrew Bowen, Bellevue
 Sarah Davenport, Westside
 Three vacancies

■ Elkhorn District

President Lisa Hanson, Neligh-Oakdale
 Vice Pres..... Katherine Lederer, Fremont
 Treasurer Jill Anderson, Walthill
 Secretary Lanette VonSeggern, Pender
 Exec Comm..... Gary Loftis, Lyons-Decatur
 Marsha Silver, Scribner-Snyder
 Kristi Rastede, Northeast CC
 Sandi Cannon, S. Sioux City
 Manni Belfrage, Tekamah-Herman
 Pamela Anderson, Hartington-Newcastle

■ Sandhills District

President Mary Gregoski, Palmer
 Vice Pres..... Whitney Hake, Palmer
 Treasurer Marcia Smith, Wheeler-Central
 Secretary Vacancy



In order to comply with NEA guidelines, the ● Gretna Education Association and ● Springfield/Platteview Education Association will be included in Capitol District, and * Metro Community College Education Association is included in Elkhorn District.

Exec Comm...Megan Helberg, Loup County
 Lynette Svenson, Callaway
 Two vacancies

■ Capitol District

President Burke Brown, Palmyra/OR-I
 Vice Pres..... Jen Yoder, Lincoln
 Treasurer Nora Lenz, Lincoln
 Secretary Megan Pitrat, Lincoln
 Exec Comm..... Jake Jolliffe, Lincoln
 Gina Bolz, Lincoln
 Michael Cobelens, Waverly
 One vacancy

■ Tri-Valley District

President Ben Welsch, Hastings
 Vice Pres..... Jade Bartunek, Hastings
 Treasurer Angie Dickey, Chase County

Secretary Holly Ortega, Grand Island
 Exec Comm..... Judy Henning, UNK
 Abby Hansen, Lexington
 Janet Sheaffer, Chase County
 Robin Henrichs, McCook
 Two vacancies

■ Panhandle District

President Renae Noble, Chadron
 Vice Pres..... Vacancy
 Treasurer Matt Chrisman, Mitchell
 Secretary Shannon Kinsella, Alliance
 Exec Comm..... Amanda Reilly, Bayard
 Allie Peters, Leyton
 Bryan Regier, Stapleton
 Four vacancies



Ben Welsch
 Hastings
 Tri-Valley Pres., '24
 402-826-9687



Stacie Blackmore
 Cozad
 Tri-Valley, '24
 308-325-7324



Melissa Boutwell
 Lexington
 Tri-Valley, '23
 308-991-0509



Deb Lyons
 Hastings
 Tri-Valley, '22
 402-469-0595



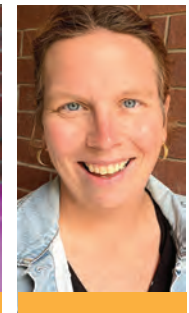
Renae Noble
 Chadron
 Panhandle Pres., '23
 308-430-1904



Dashiell Rohan
 Sioux County
 Panhandle, '22
 402-646-5381



Burke Brown
 Palmyra Dist OR-1
 Capitol Pres., '22
 402-432-1081



Mindy Diller
 Lincoln
 Capitol, '23
 402-217-2333



Deb Rasmussen
 Lincoln
 Capitol, '22
 402-202-6268



Julie Colby
 Lincoln
 Capitol, '22
 402-890-5913



Megan Simsic
 Lincoln
 Capitol, '24
 402-314-7363



De Tonack
 Lincoln
 NSEA-R Pres., '23
 402-525-4264



Adam Fette
 Chadron State College
 Higher Ed, '24
 402-826-0776



Eddie Ventura Jr.
 Omaha
 EMAC, '24
 402-210-1655



Madison Witulski
 Peru State College
 Aspiring Ed Pres. '22
 402-806-6673



Travis Vo
 Westside Dist. 66
 ESP, '22
 402-937-9198

Newcomers, veterans make NSEA thrive

Members lead the way statewide

Under the NSEA membership umbrella are six membership groups that broaden and enhance your Association’s mission, value and membership. Each has become an important part of the Association family over the years, starting with the formation of the student organization in 1955. Input and participation by members from these groups offer critical perspective to Association policy decisions and adds to the stability of the profession in their own way, and are one of the many reasons **#YouBelong**.

NSEA is 100% member-driven and member-led. Members decide the direction of the organization, which issues to work on and who they want to represent them. Members elect their local association representatives. Members choose a state president, officers and Board of Directors who listen to the needs of members across the state. Members can choose many opportunities for leadership and involvement. Here are details on each membership group.

Ethnic/Minority Affairs Committee

For more than 40 years, the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee has represented minority members on the NSEA Board of Directors. EMAC promotes respect and understanding of minority groups and seeks to maintain compliance with NEA and NSEA goals for increased minority participation, training and leadership.

The EMAC Executive Committee consists of officers and two representatives each from these groups: Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native; and Asian/Pacific Islander. More than 1,000 NSEA members have identified as a person of color. All members, regardless of ethnicity, are eligible for EMAC membership and may attend committee meetings. If interested, reach EMAC Chair Eddie Ventura Jr. at venturaomaha@gmail.com. Officers in 2021-2022 are:



A helping hand: Eddie Ventura, chair of NSEA’s Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, welcomes new teacher Marissa Heckerson to the profession at a Finders Keepers event hosted by the Omaha Education Association in June. Heckerson joined the staff at Chandler View Elementary, where Ventura is a teacher-librarian.



Member-led: Millard Education Association’s Alicia Laufenberg testified during the 2021 legislative session, asking senators to approve a bill that would forgive \$1,000 of student loans for student teachers in the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program. Laufenberg is a former president of NSEA Aspiring Educators and now teaches in her own classroom.

- Chair**Eddie Ventura Jr., Omaha
- Vice Chair**Nora Lenz, Lincoln

NSEA Aspiring Educators

Members of NSEA’s student affiliate have been busy. Formerly the Student Education Association of Nebraska, the organization recently changed its name to NSEA – Aspiring Educators. The name now aligns with the National Education Association student program, which adopted Aspiring Educators several years ago.

The mission for the organization’s nearly 1,100 members is unchanged. Through Aspiring Educators, teachers-to-be receive resources, training and an understanding of NSEA support and benefits. They receive liability insurance while student teaching, plus many of the same benefits active members receive.

Along with local chapter meetings at 16 Nebraska colleges and universities, yearly highlights are the fall and spring conferences, a Delegate Assembly modeled after the NSEA Delegate Assembly, and the NEA Aspiring Educators conference.

Combined state and NEA annual dues are \$30. In their first year of teaching, past members may apply for a full rebate for every year of dues. Officers for 2021-22 are:

- President**.....Madison Witulski, Peru State
- President-Elect**Payton Schelin, Doane

Higher Education Affairs Committee

Since 2006, the NSEA Higher Education Affairs Committee has facilitated communication between NSEA higher education associations and members; supporting and promoting NSEA in a comprehensive and unified way, and developed outreach and recruitment efforts for higher education faculty, academic professionals and higher ed educational support professionals across Nebraska.

This past year, leaders surveyed members regarding workplace climate and need and their comfort levels teaching within the constraints of COVID-19. Chairs for the 2021-22 Association year are:

- Chair**Adam Fette, Chadron State
- Vice Chair**Kristi Rastede, Northeast CC



Governance in action: A few NSEA board representatives from across the state listen in on discussion at the June Board of Directors meeting. Pictured are (from left) Justin Potts, Metro District; Dashiell Rohan, Panhandle District; Deb Lyons, Tri-Valley District; Renae Noble, Panhandle District; Lisa Hanson, Elkhorn District; and Dave Herbener, Metro District.

NSEA-Retired

The nearly 5,900 members of NSEA-Retired have answered every call when your Association needs an extra voice to make phone calls, talk to legislators or pen letters to the editor. They assist with many tasks at NSEA Headquarters, and reliably attend NSEA-Retireds' fall and spring conferences.

Founded in 1985, NSEA-Retired has been instrumental in lobbying the Nebraska Legislature. The continual reduction of state income tax rates – and now the phasing out of those taxes – on Social Security income in Nebraska is a direct result of the work of NSEA-Retired members.

Membership is open to members 55 or older who are eligible to receive benefits under a school-employee retirement plan. Active members who are not yet 55, or who may not yet qualify for school-employee retirement benefits, may join as “pre-retired.”

For details, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047. Lifetime or Pre-Retired Lifetime dues are \$500; annual dues are \$60. The officers for 2021-22 are:

President..... Dr. De Tonack, Lincoln
Vice President..... Roger Rea, Omaha



Speaking out: Travis Vo, a technology support professional at Westside Community Schools, spoke in favor of pay for all education support professionals if schools close during an epidemic – a bill the Nebraska Legislature ultimately passed in 2021. Vo chairs NSEA's ESP Committee.

Education Support Professionals Committee

The ESP Committee represents paraprofessionals, sign language interpreters, secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and other non-certificated education employees. The committee seeks to improve the standing of those school employees and works to improve membership and opportunities for these employees through the

NSEA board and statewide conferences.

In 2021, the committee worked to ensure continued pay for ESPs during times of school closure related to an epidemic. Thanks to their work, the Nebraska Legislature passed such a law in the spring of 2021. Committee chairs for 2021-22 are:

Chair Travis Vo, Westside
Vice Chair Jenny Wood, South Sioux City

New Generation of Educators in Nebraska

NSEA's NewGEN organization represents the New Generation of Educators in Nebraska. The group is comprised of early career educators who are in their first seven years of teaching. NewGEN believes in the power of uniting and supporting early career educators through Association membership and engagement. Its mission is to drive early career educators toward success through professional development and mentoring opportunities.

NewGEN focuses on creating a network of educators who are facing the same challenges and providing resources and connections to help them find solutions for time management, stress, lesson planning, classroom management, teacher-parent interaction and honing their teaching skills.

For more information or to participate in NewGEN, contact NSEA Organizational Specialist Heather Fritz at (402) 475-7611 or heather.fritz@nsea.org.

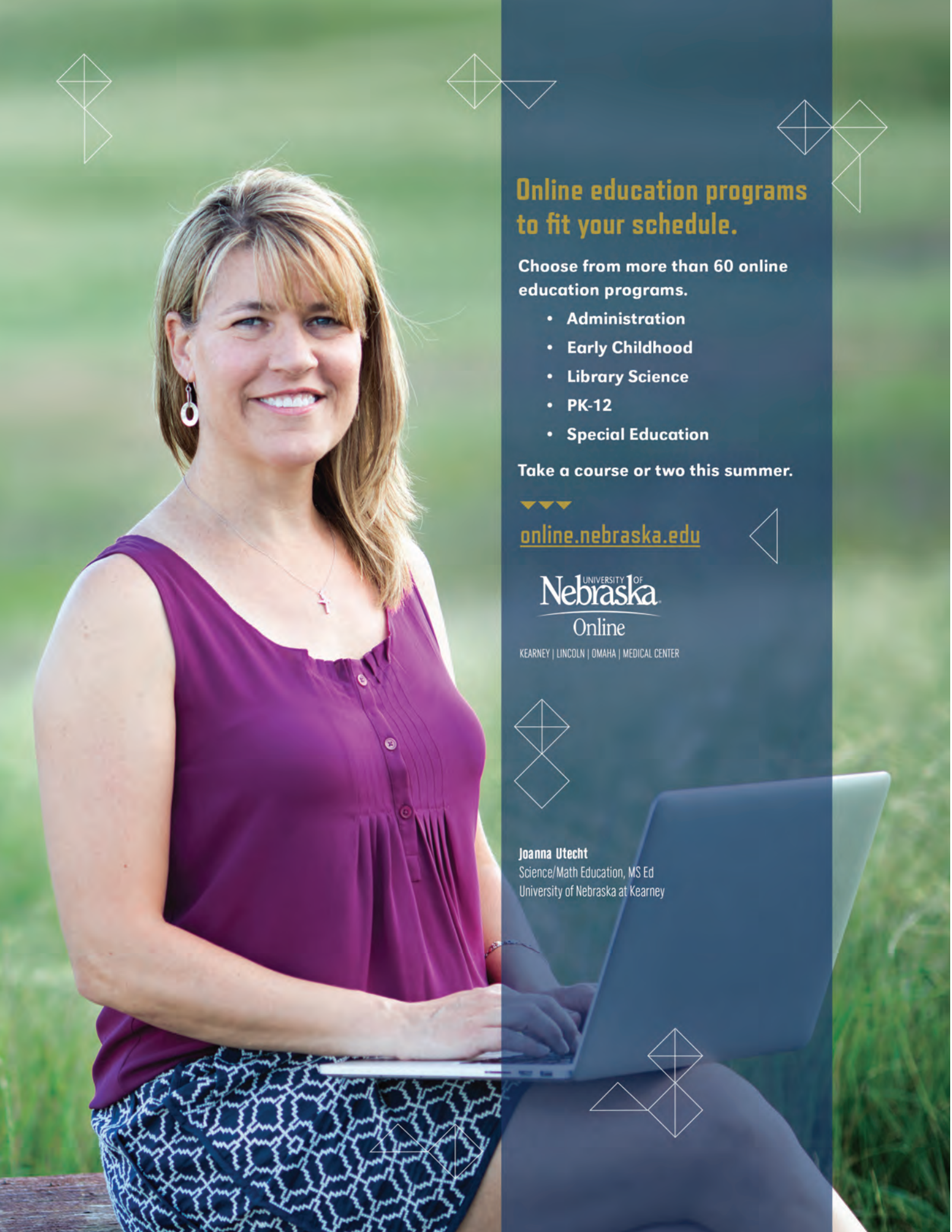
Lane serves as policy fellow

Jacqelle Lane has been released from her teaching duties at Omaha Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year to participate in the National Education Association's Teacher Quality Professional Practice and Policy Teaching Fellows program.

Lane will use improvement science to organize and plan around professional learning to build affiliate membership and capacity. She will work to design equitable policies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion, create professional learning opportunities for members to become association, professional practice and policy leaders, learn about policymaking at the local, state and national levels, and build a network of cross-country professional colleagues.



Lane



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Joanna Utecht

Science/Math Education, MS Ed
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Teacher pay on the rise, but barely

Nebraska ranks 30th in educator pay, says NEA Rankings and Estimates

The National Education Association in the spring released its Annual Rankings and Estimates research on teacher pay and school spending in the United States. View the full NEA Rankings and Estimates report for 2020-21 at nea.org/resource-library.

In Nebraska...

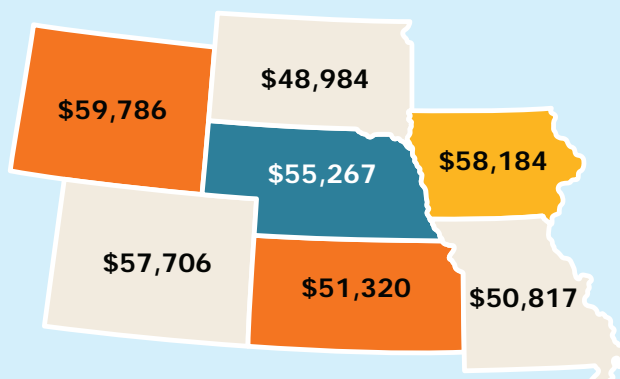
- The average starting teacher salary is \$35,820, ranked 47th in the nation.
- The average teacher salary is \$55,267, ranked 30th in the nation.
- Per-student spending by school districts is \$12,208, ranked 31st in the nation.
- The educator pay gap is 82¢ on the dollar compared to other professionals with the same education and years of experience.

Nationwide...

- The average top salary for teachers is \$75,913. Though a maximum salary of at least \$100,000 is available in nearly 1,200 school districts, nearly 2,100 districts still offer a top salary that is less than \$60,000, even for teachers with doctorates.
- U.S. public schools employed 3,214,673 teachers in 2019-20. The number of teachers is not expected to change significantly from 2019-20 to 2020-21.
- The national average per-student expenditure in 2019-20 based on fall enrollment was \$13,597, a gain of 4% from \$13,078 in 2018-19.

At right: From the 2009-2010 school year to 2019-20, inflation grew 20.6% (an average of 1.7% year-over-year). Consequently, adjusting for inflation, starting salaries are effectively down 1.3% compared to what they were during the 2009-2010 school year.

2019-20 Average Salaries of Public School Teachers

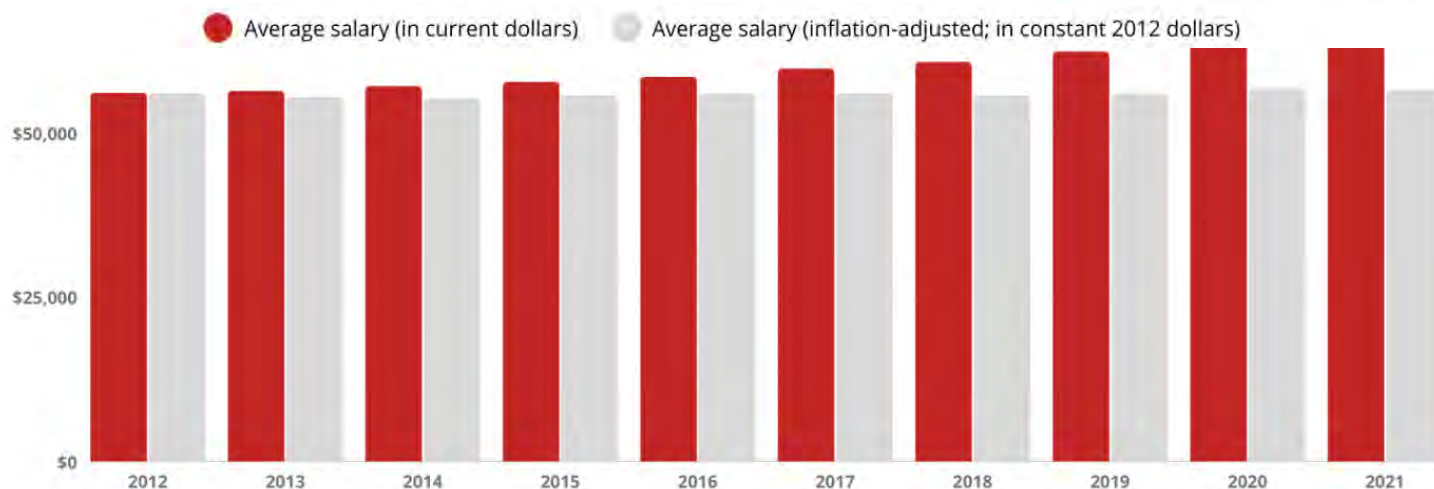


National average: \$64,133

Real salary growth



Adjusted for inflation



While teacher salaries have grown slightly since 2012, when adjusted for inflation, earnings have remained relatively flat.



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Instructional Technology	

*(Blended, Mostly Online)



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Board approves funds for bond issues

Sometimes it takes a few extra dollars to push a little harder on getting a ballot measure passed.

The NSEA offers matching funds and grants for local associations to promote the passage of school bond issues and levy overrides and for school board candidate elections.

The matching funds program is one of the many ways the NSEA gives back to members. In most cases, dollars must be matched by the local association members and can be used for expenses like advertising, printing informational brochures, mailings, yard signs and other promotions.

The NSEA Board of Directors also approves grants, which do not have to be matched by the local association.

In 2020-21, NSEA matched \$15,500 for bonds and awarded \$1,500 in grants.

Candidate elections

Omaha D1 – \$1,000, candidate Marque Snow

Metro Community College D2 – \$500 grant, candidate Alex Garrison

Metro Community College – \$500 grant, candidate Cliff McEvoy

Lincoln – \$3,500, candidate Don Mayhew

Lincoln – \$4,000, candidate Kathy Danek

Omaha D9 – \$3,000, candidate Tracy Casady

Levy override

Nebraska City – \$500 for a levy override to pay off local loans

Bond issues

Springfield Platteview – \$1,000, bond to build a new elementary school

Ashland Greenwood – \$1,000, bond to build a new elementary school and a new middle school

Stapleton – \$500, bond to build an addition and remodel parts of the school

Gretna – \$1,000, bond to build a second high school, a middle school, an elementary school and an indoor pool

Winside – \$500 grant, bond to renovate portions of the elementary and high schools

NSEA Children's Fund helps students thrive

Where there is a child in need, there is likely a teacher willing to help by opening their wallet. With many teachers already on limited budgets, filling each and every student need just isn't possible.



When schools closed because of COVID-19, educators found creative ways to get food to their students who rely on hot lunch as their primary source of nutrition.

Our members see children who go without coats in winter weather, who come to school in the same clothes every day and who can't see the whiteboard because they lack much-needed vision care.

That's why the NSEA Children's Fund was created. Since 1994, donors to the Children's Fund have provided close to \$1 million to help children in need – to buy them clean clothes, mittens, warm hats and shoes without holes in them, or to pay for eye doctor and dentist appointments. Donors have even purchased public bus passes for students when they had no other way to get to school.

During the pandemic in 2020, the NSEA Board of Directors, along with NSEA-Retired, directed a combined \$60,000 to food banks serving all 93 Nebraska counties to help reach students and families who needed meals.

Contributions to the Children's Fund are tax-deductible, and every penny goes to help children. NSEA covers the administrative costs out of its own budget.

Local associations are encouraged to host fundraisers and challenge other associations to contribute to the fund. For more information, to make a donation or to request help for a child in need, call 1-800-742-0047 or go to nsea.org/childrensfund.

Life insurance coverage free with NSEA membership

One of the most vital benefits of your NSEA membership is the no-cost life insurance available to all members through NEA Member Benefits. Here are details on the plans:

NEA Complimentary Life Insurance

The NEA Complimentary Life Insurance is part of membership at no cost to Active, Reserve and Lifetime NEA members. Eligible members can take advantage of up to \$1,000 in term life insurance and:

- Up to \$5,000 in accidental death/dismemberment coverage;

- Up to \$50,000 in accidental death insurance for covered accidents occurring on the job or while serving as an Association leader; and



- Up to \$150,000 in accidental death benefits for eligible members who are victims of death by homicide while at work.

All members should register a beneficiary at neamb.com/teachers-insurance.

NEA Introductory Term Life Insurance

At no cost, this NEA Introductory Term Life plan is offered to new Association members only:

- For 12 months, eligible new Association members are given complimentary \$15,000 of term life insurance.

- After the complimentary period, members may continue coverage at low, members-only rates.

- No evidence of insurability is required for the first six months.

For details, visit neamb.com/teachers-insurance.

USEFUL PROGRAMS

from NEA Member Benefits

IDEAS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

- **7 Habits of a Healthy Educator**

Keep your mind and body strong by adopting these helpful habits.

www.neamb.com/healthy-habits

- **Vision Insurance Plans**

Affordable vision care, hassle-free benefits and choice of providers.

www.bit.ly/GetVision



- **Be Your Own Personal Trainer**

Use these features of your gym membership to save money while you shed pounds.

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- **Family and Wellness**

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www.neamb.com/family-and-wellness



TOOLS TO IMPROVE YOUR FINANCES

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- **NEA® Retirement Program**

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NSEA will advance a culture of racial and social justice by improving educational opportunities for ALL students and building respect for the worth, dignity and equity of every individual in our diverse society.



1. Establish and promote an ongoing legislative agenda that advances human and civil rights
2. Recruit and retain a diverse population of educators.
3. Engage members in an awareness of racial and social justice issues and provide opportunities for professional development in cultural proficiency

NSEA will partner with national and local affiliates to strengthen our organizational capacity.



1. Grow Association membership
2. Strengthen member engagement
3. Provide opportunities for professional growth in the Association and Profession

NSEA will advance the economic well-being and secure the contractual rights of our members.



1. Protect collective bargaining rights
2. Collaborate with and train members of local associations regarding bargaining
3. Increase the capacity of staff and members to promote member rights

The NSEA supports a political environment that promotes and protects public education



1. Build and strengthen partnerships with external stakeholders.
2. Improve educator effectiveness in their political engagement.
3. Be active in the election of pro-public education candidates

The NSEA will support governance structures that are responsive to the needs of our membership.



1. Monitor and adjust governance structures across the state to increase member representation
2. Increase member engagement in leadership and governance
3. Develop a governance structure that is responsive in meeting 21st century challenges.

How NSEA Works on Your Behalf



Member Led

Association work is governed by members elected by their peers – educators like you – to serve at the local, district, state and national levels.



Professional Development

NSEA offers professional development opportunities throughout the year on topics ranging from child trauma to stress reduction, and more. A growing number of those opportunities offer college credits.



Teaching, Learning

NSEA monitors and works with the State Board of Education as it develops rules and policies that affect your teaching certificate and your classroom.



Health Care

More than 50 years ago, NSEA formed a statewide health insurance plan. Today, NSEA is a managing partner of that plan, the Educators Health Alliance, providing health care coverage for educators, public education employees, and their families.



Advocacy, Bargaining

Established rules govern bargaining and teacher dismissal processes. When schools stray from those rules, NSEA intervenes.



Negotiations

NSEA provides training and research for your local association negotiators to better equip them in their pursuit of improved contracts and working conditions that benefit you and your students.



Friends of Education

NSEA works with members to recruit and elect pro-education candidates for elected positions. From school board members to state senators, elected officials set policies that affect you and your classroom.



Retirement

Teachers deserve to retire with dignity. Attempts have been made to change the current defined benefit retirement plan to a more costly, less beneficial defined contribution plan. NSEA works to ensure your retirement plan is well-funded and secure.

A Message From Your NSEA President

Living in community the past two years has been more important than we ever could have imagined. It's tough to do anything in life without a community by your side, and living through a pandemic is no exception.

Communities look different all across this great state. Our communities are large and small. They're made up of people from all backgrounds and all walks of life. For some, they're where our roots run deep, and for others, where we've chosen to start new. But all of our communities have one thing in common: we belong to them.

The NSEA is no different. We are a community of educators from all parts of the state. We come from large schools and small schools. We teach preschool and graduate school (and all grades in between). We provide meals and transportation. We help kids learn and thrive. Our NSEA colleagues are the people who are always there to celebrate successes and lend a shoulder in tough times. We welcome you, because you belong here.

Even though the coronavirus threatened to break our communities apart — taking us out of our school buildings, putting screens between us and our students, and causing us to isolate ourselves in our homes — our NSEA community was still here.

It truly took a community effort to fight through the COVID-19 pandemic. From recreating lesson plans for remote learning to making sure our students were safe in the classroom, educators relied on each other, working together to make the best decisions possible. We shared resources and information to help every school and higher education institution work toward its goal of safely and effectively educating students.

In many communities across Nebraska, schools are the glue that hold everything together. Friday night football unites the whole town in cheering for the home team. In some places, the school library is the only library. In others, the community's vitality depends on families moving into the school district to positively affect local businesses.

Community shows itself in all these areas of our lives. As we look forward to a new school year—and hopefully a more normal one—take a moment to reflect on all of the different communities to which you belong: your city, your school, your classroom, your church, your sports team, and your family to name a few. I hope the NSEA will continue to be at the top of your list of communities to whom you reach out for support and with whom you want to celebrate your successes. When we all work together in community, we all belong.

Sincerely,

Jenni Benson

Jenni Benson
NSEA President



In your community: NSEA President Jenni Benson hits the road to meet with members across Nebraska. Don't hesitate to reach out to Benson if you'd like her to visit with your local association.



THE VOICE

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