

The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association • April 2026



Incarcerated Youth

Members advocate for students in state custody amid proposed changes

- Association STRONG: 2026 Conference Locations Announced
- Plan Ahead for Summer Classes – Course Listings Inside
- Key Updates for the 2026 Delegate Assembly



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NSEA Celebrates Record Membership Campaign

Small efforts, one push at a time, led to big results statewide

The Nebraska State Education Association concluded its strongest membership campaign in 15 years, highlighting the power of educators standing together across the state. The effort reflected a shared commitment to advocacy and the collective strength of educators.

NSEA encouraged each local to recruit at least one new member between Jan. 1 and Feb. 28. In 2026, early joiners received added incentives. Those who signed up by Jan. 14 earned financial rewards, as did their local associations. Additional bonuses were offered to locals that gained enough members to by Jan. 15 to increase representation at the upcoming Delegate Assembly.

The effort included participation at all levels, including state governance, local leaders, NSEA professional and associate staff and management.

The campaign's success was driven by staff and members who signed

up, renewed and recruited colleagues. At its core, personal connections remained key to building a strong professional community.

While the campaign reflected strategic outreach, one-on-one conversations and recruitment events, it also highlighted the association's highly visible, collective work on behalf of its membership.

Over the past year, NSEA demonstrated how collective action and strategic advocacy produce meaningful results for educators—from mobilizing members to reducing retirement

contribution rates to supporting collective bargaining efforts that increased average base salaries by more than \$900. At the same time, NSEA continued to advocate for key priorities, including the push for paid family and medical leave.

The campaign reinforced that when educators stand together, their voice makes a difference.



Time to Make Plans for Summer Class!

Summer Coursework Options Found Inside

Nebraska colleges and universities offer the necessary summer classes to enable teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge base, add endorsements and to advance on their school district's salary schedule.

What is the best method for determining which courses might best meet your needs? Start by reviewing the informational

ads from Nebraska colleges and universities in this issue of *The Voice*.

Nebraska colleges and universities were invited to submit advertising. Those who chose to advertise offer details about programming, as well as contact details and information.

Let your college or university of choice know that you read about their course offerings in *The Voice*!

Would You Like to Write for The Voice?

Would you like to write an item for *The Voice*? Perhaps an opinion column or an article on what is working in your classroom? Submissions can be classroom-related, humorous, inspiring or otherwise teaching related. Submit your questions about the process, and your topics, to us at:

thevoice@nsea.org

On the Cover: A proposed overhaul of Nebraska's youth rehabilitation system is raising concerns about its potential impact on the education and care of youth in state custody. NSEA members who educate incarcerated youth are stepping up to advocate for their students. Read the full story and see photos on pages 7-8.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIM ROYERS

Together We Make Change

“To the countless members who worked to grow our ranks over the past several months, thank you. To those new members who joined NSEA this year, thank you for choosing to be part of our union. By adding your voice to our efforts, you are helping us live up to this year’s Delegate Assembly theme: Together we move forward, together we make change.”

With a few months still left in the school year, here at the NSEA we're already looking ahead to membership for the 2026-27 school year. Before we do, I want to pause and highlight what we just accomplished as an organization.

For the first time in 15 years, we grew our union across all membership classes—Aspiring Educators, Active and Retired. That was no small feat. We were only able to do that because of the hard work of our members and staff across the state.

Thank You

In January and February, we shattered our previous record for the most successful Just One membership campaign ever—not only in terms of total members who joined, but also in the number of local associations that gained a member.

To the countless members who worked to grow our ranks over the past several months, thank you. To those new members who joined NSEA this year, thank you for choosing to be part of our union. By adding your voice to our efforts, you are helping us live up to this year’s Delegate Assembly theme: Together we move forward. Together we make change.

Making Change

There are examples across the state of our ability to make change and strengthen the profession.

This past December, we held a roundtable discussion for higher education members to share their concerns. More recently, the

governor signed LB956 into law, a bill introduced by Sen. John Cavanaugh on behalf of NSEA. It provides needed data on salary and benefits for higher education institutions, making it easier for members to negotiate strong contracts.

At last year’s Delegate Assembly, a new business item directed NSEA to pursue legislation correcting an issue with how the state manages retirement payments for OSERS. As of this writing, that bill has advanced to Select File and has a strong chance of becoming law.

And that is only part of the story. If I included every recent win in negotiated agreements, this column would take up the entire issue of *The Voice*. The work is happening at every level—and we have to keep pushing.

The Work Ahead

Growing our membership across all categories is a major accomplishment, but it cannot be a one-year moment. The work now is to build a sustained streak of membership growth alongside continued advocacy success at every level.

We have the opportunity to start that work now. That is the challenge in front of us.

With early enrollment open, you can encourage colleagues who are not yet members to join their union. Those one-on-one conversations remain the most powerful way we grow.

It is through our collective efforts and our shared commitment to act that we ensure public education in Nebraska remains as strong as it can be.





Turn to the NSEA Children's Fund

Every NSEA member knows of children in heartbreaking conditions. Whether the child is in need of season-appropriate clothing, new eyeglasses or a good meal, the Children's Fund is here to help. Educators often give of their own cash to help, knowing that they can't help every child. That's why NSEA created the Children's Fund in 1994. As an NSEA member, you can use the Children's Fund, and you'll find it quite simple: just call NSEA. No red tape, no forms needed.

Contributions are tax deductible—and it's important to note that every penny contributed goes to help children. NSEA picks up the administrative expenses.

The generosity of Children's Fund donors has helped to pay for glasses, warm clothing and medical and dental needs of children; provide assistance to a family whose home and belongings were destroyed by fire; and more.

Rain or shine, turn to the NSEA Children's Fund for help. A call to Karen Hunt at the NSEA (800-742-0047) is usually all that is needed. For more information, visit nsea.org/childrensfund.

School Retirement Planning Seminar Dates Set

If you are nearing retirement, it may be time to review your benefit options.

Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems will offer seminars throughout the spring and summer, with in-person sessions statewide and virtual options available. Omaha School Employees' Retirement System members may also participate. Seminars are open to school plan members, OSERS members and their spouses age 50 and older. Eligible employees may receive paid leave to attend up to two sessions, with one per

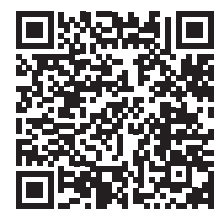
fiscal year. Additional sessions may be attended at the employee's expense with employer approval. Registration is required at www.npers.ne.gov. NPERS and OSERS members must complete the appropriate form when signing up.

If you have questions, contact the NPERS Education Services department at npers.seminars@nebraska.gov or call 402-471-9671.



In-Person Seminars (Location/Dates)
BEATRICE: April 29
COLUMBUS: April 9
HASTINGS: May 8
KEARNEY: May 5
LA VISTA: May 19
LINCOLN: April 2*, April 16, May 14*, May 21
MCCOOK: April 21
NORFOLK: April 8
NORTH PLATTE: April 22
OMAHA: May 12

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OSERS: June 2
June 3



* Indicates the session is a half day.

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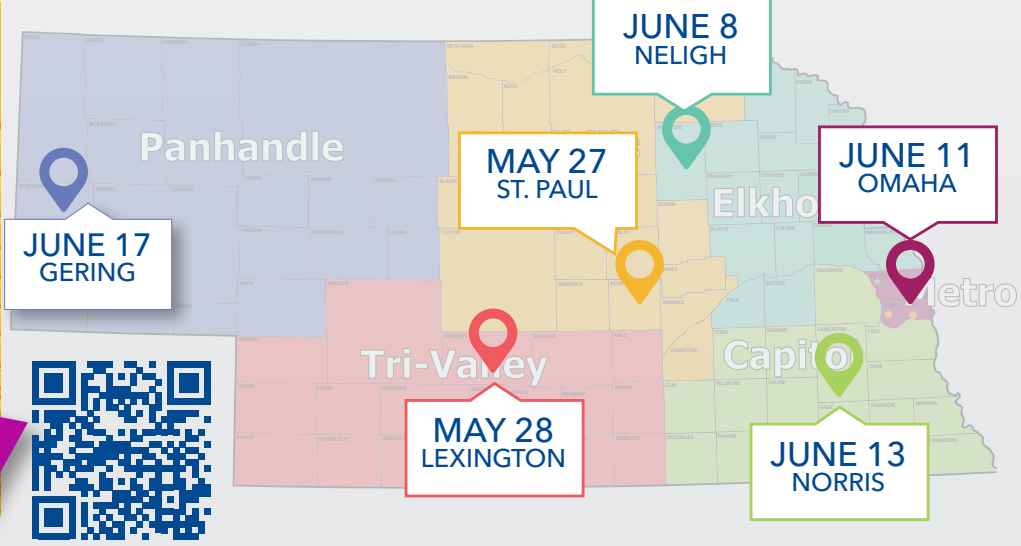
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Lisa Irwin



Tricia Jacobsen

INCARCERATED YOUTH: Members advocate for students in state custody amid proposed changes

Standing in the Capitol rotunda in early March, NSEA President Tim Royers, along with representatives from Voices for Children in Nebraska and the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, held a news conference raising concerns about Nebraska's plan to reshape youth corrections facilities under LB867—a bill that would relocate more than 100 youth, disrupting their education and critical supports for rehabilitation, and has now been given priority status as the legislative session continues.

A System in Flux

What began as a narrow proposal related to gender designation policies in youth facilities has since expanded into a sweeping restructuring of Nebraska's youth rehabilitation system. LB867, a Health and Human Services Committee priority bill, was significantly broadened through an amendment that added provisions from another measure.

The plan would set off a series of relocations across the state's youth facilities. Boys currently housed at YRTC-Kearney would be moved to the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility in Omaha, while girls from YRTC-Hastings would be relocated to Kearney. Youth receiving treatment at the Whitehall campus in Lincoln

would be transferred to Hastings, and some youth currently in Omaha would be moved into a renovated unit at the state's Reception and Treatment Center in Lincoln, an adult correctional facility. What is being proposed is not a single policy change—it is a system-wide disruption affecting where youth live, learn and receive treatment.

On the Front Lines

Among those raising concerns on behalf of her students was NSEA member Lisa Irwin, a media specialist at West Kearney High School, part of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center in Kearney, who testified before senators about the potential impact of the proposal. Irwin and fellow educator Tricia Jacobsen are members of the State Code Agencies Teachers Association (SCATA), whose members are state employees working under the Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition to reporting to school leadership, these educators must also operate within state regulations and facility-level rules, navigating multiple layers of oversight while serving students with complex needs. Educators in these settings

are not only teachers—they are part of a highly regulated system where education, treatment and state policy intersect.

Education vs. Screens

She also raised concerns about limited classroom space at the Omaha facility expected to serve youth relocated from Kearney.

“A reduction in certified teaching staff and limited instructional space would significantly restrict access to in-person, teacher-led instruction,” Irwin said. “As a result, instruction would rely on online learning platforms.”

Irwin warned that a shift to primarily online instruction would not meet students' needs.

“Youth will spend extended periods working independently at computers, progressing through lessons by passively scrolling through screens,” she said. “Our youth require direct human interaction, not instruction limited to prerecorded video.”

“They achieve success with clear, scaffolded instruction, guided practice and frequent real-time feedback,” Irwin added. “They thrive through consistent, trusting relationships, like those they build with our teachers.”

For students with significant

On the Cover

academic gaps, disabilities and emotional needs, education is not content delivery, it is relationship-driven and requires consistent, in-person support.

Rehabilitation & Stability

YRTC students are already undergoing treatment to address behavioral, mental health and substance use needs. Therapists use an integrated care model to support co-occurring issues, making consistency across environments critical.

Tricia Jacobsen, a teacher at YRTC-Kearney, testified in opposition, urging lawmakers to consider both the educational and economic impacts of the proposal.

“Budget decisions reflect values,” Jacobsen said. “In this case, the burden of ‘doing more with less’ is being placed on vulnerable youth and smaller communities rather than shared equitably across the state.”

Jacobsen raised concerns that the proposal, alongside broader budget cuts, could reduce teaching positions and weaken educational programming.

“Asking incarcerated youth to receive less education and treatment raises serious questions about how we are defining necessity,” she said.

LB867 would roll back Rule 10 accreditation at facilities. This change would likely lower educational quality, reduce accountability and disrupt credit transfer creating a separate, lower-tier education system for youth in state custody.

“Education is a critical component of treatment,” she said. “Cutting teachers in Kearney while attempting to recreate educational programming elsewhere undermines rehabilitation and increases the likelihood of recidivism.”

When education, treatment and environment are disrupted simultaneously, rehabilitation outcomes are placed at risk.

Jacobsen also pointed to logistical and financial challenges tied to relocating youth.

“The NCYF facility does not currently have enough classroom space to educate an additional 90 to 110 youth,” she said, noting that expansion would require costly renovations and additional staffing.

Additional concerns have been raised about safety, staffing and whether



News conference held March 10 in the Capitol rotunda



receiving facilities have the capacity to serve youth without disruption. Educators warn that these unanswered questions further underscore the risks of moving forward with a plan that could destabilize both learning environments and rehabilitation efforts.

The state would need to relocate more than 100 youth while hiring and training new staff, as many current employees may not relocate. They warn the disruption could delay graduation and interrupt services for students with special needs.

Relocation at this scale is not just logistical—it introduces compounding risks to safety, staffing and continuity of care.

Outcomes Over Optics

Royers also raised concerns about whether the proposal would improve student outcomes, saying the plan fails the most basic test.

“At the end of the day, we should be able to say that any proposed plan would strengthen our ability to educate and rehabilitate,” Royers said. “And yet

it has been readily apparent that this proposal will not improve outcomes, it’s to balance a spreadsheet.”

Policy decisions that prioritize cost over outcomes risk undermining both education and rehabilitation.

Jacobsen also challenged assumptions behind relocating youth closer to Omaha.

“Youth come from all across Nebraska,” she said, noting Kearney’s central location supports families statewide.

She added that distance from harmful environments can aid rehabilitation.

“Moving youth does not fix operational issues,” Jacobsen said. “Investment, accountability and program improvement do.”

With debate expected soon, NSEA is urging members to contact their state senators and oppose the bill and its relocation provisions. The path forward is not relocation—it is investment in the systems that support education, treatment and long-term success for Nebraska’s youth.

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LEGISLATURE

Protecting Public Education in Nebraska

Advocacy effort key in voucher funding fight over budget bill

Voucher Funding

The Legislature's main state budget adjustment bill, **LB1071**, stalled on Select File on March 19, when pro-voucher senators blocked its advancement. A cloture motion to end debate and move the bill forward failed dramatically, receiving only 19 “yes” votes—well short of the 33 required—with 10 “no” votes and 19 senators present but not voting. This marks the first time since 2019 that a budget bill has stalled at this stage and raises serious questions about the path forward, particularly as the Legislature must pass a balanced budget by day 50 of the session. At the time of publication, a compromise had not yet been reached.

The impasse centers on a controversial \$3.5 million “bridge” voucher provision, along with \$150,000 in administrative costs. On March 18, Appropriations Committee Chair Sen. Rob Clements removed the funding through amendment **AM2748** in an effort to avoid a filibuster and secure sufficient support. The move reflected strong bipartisan opposition to the provision, including from Sens. Tom Brandt and Merv Riepe, who indicated it did not have the votes to pass.

However, conservative, pro-voucher senators pushed back forcefully. In response to the funding's removal, they launched a filibuster and withheld support for cloture, effectively halting the bill's progress. They argue the “bridge” funding would provide temporary assistance to students currently enrolled in private schools until a federal tax credit program begins in 2027. It's not stop-gap funding—it's continuing a program overwhelmingly repealed by voters.

The standoff highlights a deeper divide: public dollars should support public schools, as voters decisively affirmed, not divert funds to private institutions with less accountability. This kind of policy insertion into the budget creates exactly the chaos and tension we're seeing now.

LB1071 is set to be taken up again. A path forward remains uncertain, but to advance the bill without the voucher provision (or to resolve the impasse), four more senators would need to switch their positions and support cloture to cease debate. Despite the record vote on Thursday, 29 senators have indicated they will support a cloture motion with the voucher money removed from **LB1071**.

NSEA will continue closely monitoring developments on **LB1071** and any further attempts to insert voucher programs. Sign up for the Capitol Update to follow the latest developments at nsea.org/subscriber. NSEA members and their ongoing advocacy and engagement will continue to be crucial in upholding the will of Nebraska voters.

Transparency Faculty Compensation

Governor Pillen signed **LB956** into law on March 12, following its unanimous passage by the Nebraska Legislature on Final Reading. Introduced by Sen. John Cavanaugh, the bill advanced swiftly through the Education Committee and floor process, culminating in a 46-0 vote on March 6. This measure directly results from the NSEA-supported interim study **LR228**, which Senator Cavanaugh introduced and which featured a key roundtable discussion with postsecondary educators on Dec. 12, 2025, to gather input on compensation challenges in higher education.

LB956 requires all Nebraska public postsecondary institutions to submit standardized annual reports on salary and benefits data to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, with the first reports due beginning July 1. The data covers three main employee groups: administrators (including executives, managers, and supervisors), full-time instructional faculty, and adjunct or other part-time instructional staff. Reports will include aggregated averages broken down by academic rank or position, institution type (two-year and four-year), full-time versus part-time status, and year-over-year changes, ensuring consistency and comparability across the state.

The Coordinating Commission will collect, standardize, and make this information publicly available in searchable formats, while protecting individual privacy by prohibiting the identification of specific employees. Institutions must provide the data electronically in a format prescribed by the commission, which is also authorized to adopt rules and regulations to implement the reporting system effectively. This creates the first comprehensive, statewide data set on postsecondary compensation practices in Nebraska.

For NSEA members teaching at the postsecondary



level, **LB956** represents a powerful advocacy tool. It equips educators, unions, and policymakers with reliable, transparent data to assess the competitiveness of faculty salaries and benefits, identify disparities, and address recruitment and retention issues. By highlighting trends and inequities—particularly for adjunct and part-time instructors—this law strengthens efforts to secure fair compensation, improve working conditions, and support high-quality instruction that benefits students across Nebraska's colleges and universities.

The long-term impact of **LB956** will enhance accountability and data-driven decision-making in Nebraska higher education, fostering a more sustainable and equitable system. NSEA postsecondary members played a vital role through their participation in **LR228**, and this victory underscores the value of collective advocacy. Please email Sen. John Cavanaugh at jcavanaugh@leg.ne.gov to thank him for his leadership in introducing both **LR228** and **LB956**—actions that will positively influence Nebraska education for generations to come.

Education Priority Bill

The NSEA is closely tracking **LB937**, the Education Committee's priority package bill. The bill initially aimed to update various education statutes, including enhanced option enrollment reporting and notices (with details on rejections, students with disabilities, and reading deficiencies like dyslexia), annual summaries on reading deficiency and dyslexia, the Nebraska Teacher Apprenticeship Program, teacher recruitment and retention efforts under the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act (including grant adjustments for high-need areas), the College Pathway Program Act (emphasizing grants for underrepresented students), harmonized reporting deadlines, repeal of obsolete provisions (such as certain grants, learning community levies, solar/wind funding agreements, and the Junior Mathematics Prognosis Examination), and other technical adjustments.

In early March, the Education

Committee filed **AM2454**, a comprehensive amendment that struck the original sections of **LB937** and inserted new provisions. This "white copy" amendment was advanced Tuesday during General File debate, where debate will continue on Select File likely next week. **AM2454** incorporates core provisions from multiple individual bills—often as previously amended—into this omnibus package, with refinements to definitions, procedures, reporting, and implementation details.

NSEA continues to monitor several of these measures neutrally while expressing strong concerns about others:

- **LB1146** (Monitor): Adjusts school district reporting requirements to county attorneys for unexcused student absences, raising the threshold to 20 or more absences while clarifying that certain absences (e.g., those with physician notes, related to IEPs/504 plans, homelessness, or illness) do not count as unexcused. NSEA is monitoring **LB1146** to ensure balanced accountability for students without undue burdens on districts or families.
- **LB1164** (Monitor): Adopts the Prior Learning Act,

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enabling postsecondary students—including those pursuing educator preparation pathways—to earn college credit for prior knowledge and skills acquired outside traditional classroom settings through approved examinations, cut scores set by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, and institutional policies (with priority for degree requirements and annual reporting). This supports broader teacher recruitment goals by recognizing experiential learning, and NSEA continues to watch its implementation within the package.

- **LB1224** (Monitor): Strengthens child protections by prohibiting transfers to exempt (non-accredited) schools during active child abuse or neglect investigations, requiring notifications between DHHS, schools, and the Commissioner of Education, and barring individuals convicted of specified serious crimes (such as sexual assault or abuse) from monitoring or instructing in those exempt settings.
- **LB1241** (Oppose): Imposes extensive new employment application requirements on public and private schools, mandating that applicants for positions involving student contact disclose seven years of employment history (including all prior schools and any child-contact jobs), along with authorizations for record releases, verification processes, prohibitions on suppressing misconduct investigation information, provisional employment options (up to 90 days), and civil penalties for noncompliance. Teachers are concerned that this creates burdensome privacy intrusions, complicates job mobility for educators, adds unnecessary administrative hurdles for school districts, and lacks clear due-process safeguards to protect applicants.
- **LB1243** (Oppose): Alters school board policies on part-time enrollment and extracurricular participation, easing access for students from private, denominational, or non-accredited schools (with credit-hour guidelines, minimum participation standards, and transportation limits to ensure equity). Educators worry that this will strain already limited public school resources, increase classroom loads for teachers without additional support,

dilute per-pupil funding mechanisms, and introduce accountability gaps without corresponding provisions to ensure equitable treatment or adequate funding for full-time public school students.

- As debate proceeds on Select File, NSEA remains vigilant about **LB937**'s progress, any further amendments, and their potential effects on public education in Nebraska. NSEA will provide updates as the bill advances through the legislative process.

NSEA LEGISLATIVE DINNER

The NSEA Legislative Dinner was held March 10 at the Champions Club in Lincoln. See page 13 for photos of members with the senators who attended the event.

1. Left to right: Sen. Margo Juarez (Dist. 5) with NSEA-Retired member Doreen Jankovich and Omaha Education Association (OEA) member Sasha Cervantes.
2. Sen. Victor Rountree (Dist. 3) with NSEA Board representative Megan Simsic.
3. Left to right: Sen. Dunixi Guereca (Dist. 7) with NSEA-Retired Member Pat Etherton and Westside Education Association member Teresa Franks.
4. NSEA-Retired member and Omaha Public School Board President Jane Erdenberger with NSEA-Aspiring Educators Anton Goodwin and Owen Elsasser.
5. Sen. Stan Clouse (Dist. 37) with NSEA-Retired Vice President Roger Rea.
6. OEA member Wes Jensen with Sen. Merv Riepe (Dist. 12), NSEA-Retired member Mark Schulze and NEA Director Ed Ventura.
7. Left to right: Lincoln Education Association (LEA) members Michele Geswein, Nora Lenz, Gina Boltz and Natalie Yosten.
8. Sen. Dan Quick (Dist. 35) with Hastings Education Association President and Tri-Valley District President Ben Welsch.

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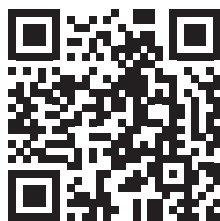
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NSEA President Tim Royers, Millard, Presiding
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All times listed are Central Time.

Friday, April 24: Registration, Vendors and Special Meetings (5 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.)
Parliamentarian Ryan Foor

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. — EMAC, NSEA-Retired, Higher Ed, ESP, and New Delegates sessions

6:15 p.m. — Audit Committee

7 p.m. — Call to Order

- Pledge of Allegiance: Kathryn Koehler, NSEA-Aspiring Educator President
- National Anthem: Amanda Kloke
- Report of Credentials Committee
- Adoption of Standing/Procedural Rules
- Adoption of Order of Business
- State of the Association Annual Report: Isau Metes, Executive Director
- Introduction of NSEA Board of Directors
- Political Update
- President's Report: Tim Royers, NSEA President
- Adjournment
- Reception Sponsored by First National Bank of Omaha: Hotel Atrium

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

6:30 - 8:15 a.m. — Breakfast: Cornhusker Marriott Lower Lobby Level, Lancaster Ballroom

7:30 a.m. — Elections Committee

8:30 a.m. — Call to Order

- Legislative Update
- Land Acknowledgement: Dr. Calvin Krogman
- Credentials Committee Report
- Report and Debate on Proposed Bylaws Amendments
- Voting on Bylaws
- Keynote: Sarah Hardin, 2026 Nebraska Teacher of the Year
- Horace Mann Awards Luncheon
- Report of the Auditing Review Committee
- Budget Presentation for 2026-2027
- 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 2026-2027
- Adjournment

2026-27 Dues Recommendation

NSEA Active, Certificated Full-Time Staff Dues Summary

The NSEA Budget Committee has recommended a \$3 dues increase for 2026-27. NSEA dues and assessments for the current year and the proposal for next year are summarized below:

	2025-26	2026-27	Change	%
General Fund Dues	\$414	\$417	\$3	0.68%
Ballot Contingency Fund	\$10	\$10	\$0	0%
State PAC	\$15	\$15	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$439	\$442	\$3	0.68%

Dues for Educational Support Professionals

The 2001 Delegate Assembly approved a separate dues structure for Educational Support Professionals (ESP). 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 pay 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 NSEA Board of Directors voted to freeze ESP dues for 2026-27. ESP dues are summarized below:

ESP Dues Tier	NSEA '26 Dues	% of teacher dues
Active ESP (Salary of \$38,165+)	\$434.00	98.2%
Active ESP (\$30,532 to \$38,164)	\$390.60	90%
Active ESP (\$22,899 to \$30,531)	\$303.80	70%
Active ESP (\$15,266 to \$22,898)	\$217.00	50%
Active ESP (\$7,633 to \$15,265)	\$130.20	30%
Active ESP (\$7,632 or less)	\$43.40	10%

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 25 will consider and act on this proposal. For the 2026-27 association year, the NSEA Board of Directors recommends the dues for certificated classes of NSEA membership as outlined below:

Certificated Class	Dues
Active	\$442
Half-Time Active	\$221
Substitute	\$106.75

State Dues

All amounts listed are for state dues only. A \$5 increase for NEA dues has been proposed for 2026-27.

As noted, the 2026-27 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 *The Voice*.

NSEA Dues History

Budget Year	Dues	Increase
2026-27	\$442	0.68%
2025-26	\$439	0.48%
2024-25	\$437	1.16%
2023-24	\$432	1.41%
2022-23	\$426	1.19%
2021-22	\$421	1.20%
2020-21	\$416	0.73%
2019-20	\$413	1.47%
2018-19	\$407	0.25%
2017-18	\$406	1.75%
2016-17	\$399	3.10%
2015-16	\$387	0.78%
2014-15	\$384	1.05%
2013-14	\$380	1.06%
2012-13	\$376	1.08%

2026-27 Proposed Bylaw Revisions

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1

■ Article V: Delegate Assembly

SECTION 5. The Delegate Assembly shall be the legislative and policy-forming body for carrying out the purposes of NSEA. In performance of the functions, the Delegate Assembly shall receive and act on items of business officially submitted. **The Delegate Assembly is responsible for approving the annual audit.** The Delegate Assembly shall have the final authority in all matters not otherwise specified in these Bylaws.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment: 2

■ Article V: Delegate Assembly

SECTION 6. The Delegate Assembly may adopt proposed Resolutions and amendments to Continuing Resolutions. A Resolution is a statement of belief or position that establishes a continuing NSEA policy until changed by a subsequent Delegate Assembly. Proposed Resolutions and amendments to Continuing Resolutions must be submitted no fewer than 14 days prior to the Delegate Assembly. The Resolutions Committee will have the authority to edit, for clarification, any resolution or amendment.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment: 3

■ Article V: Delegate Assembly

SECTION 7. The Delegate Assembly may adopt proposed New Business Items. A New Business Item may establish, alter, or abolish a substantive policy or program of the NSEA, but no proposal may be in direct conflict with the bylaws or an existing Resolution. A New Business Item will be in force for a maximum length of one year but may be renewed at the discretion of the Delegate Assembly. New Business Items must be submitted no fewer than 14 days prior to the Delegate Assembly to be printed in the Delegate Handbook.

SECTION 68. The Delegate Assembly shall elect the General Officers of NSEA and the at-large representative of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), the Higher Education Academy and the Education Support Professionals (ESPs). All elections shall be by ballot except when there is only one candidate for the position. In this case, the Chair shall declare such candidate elected. Nominations for General Officers and the at-large Board representative positions must be filed in writing with the NSEA Executive Director no later than February 15 of the year in which the election is to take place. All candidates who file during the nominations window will be provided the NSEA Election Guidelines. Any candidate who wishes to have campaign information included in the Delegate Assembly digital packet must submit the information to the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director no fewer than 21 days prior to Delegate Assembly. To have their name placed on the ballot, the candidates for General Officers and the at-large Board representatives must be nominated by February 15. If a vacancy occurs after February 15, or if no nominations are submitted prior to the filing deadline, candidates for General Officers and at-large Board representative positions must be nominated from the floor during the Delegate Assembly to have their name placed on the ballot.

SECTION 79. The Delegate Assembly shall adopt its own procedural rules.

SECTION 810. A quorum of the Delegate Assembly shall be a majority of the delegates registered as attending, with at least four separate NSEA governance districts having a quorum present.

SECTION 911. In the event of an emergency, the NSEA Board of Directors may postpone the annual meeting known as the Delegate Assembly for a period not to exceed six months. In the event of such postponement, all officers, members of the NSEA Board of Directors and committees shall remain in office until the Delegate Assembly next convenes.

Find Article V on pages 6 and 7 in the **2025-26 Bylaws & Resolutions** booklet





Message from the Executive Director

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When an organization must obscure its position rather than stand clearly in it, that raises an important question about its purpose. Educators deserve transparency. They deserve honesty about what an organization stands for. That is the difference. NSEA is built on collective action.

”

Know the Difference

This year, NSEA will host its 165th Delegate Assembly—part of a tradition that dates back to our founding in 1867. I find myself reflecting on what that represents. It is more than a number. It is generations of educators choosing to come together, to lead and to protect public education in Nebraska.

That legacy is built through trust, shared purpose and a commitment to standing together—even when the work is difficult.

Recently, I have been thinking about what it means to be part of an association grounded in that history. In that reflection, I could not ignore a shift from the Association of American Educators (AAE) that quietly removed language stating it does not engage in collective bargaining.

That change did not reflect a shift in values. It reflected something else—an awareness that educators are paying attention.

When an organization must obscure its position rather than stand clearly in it, that raises an important question about its purpose. Educators deserve transparency. They deserve honesty about what an organization stands for. That is the difference. NSEA is built on collective action.

In Practice

I have seen firsthand what happens when educators turn to AAE and are met with silence.

One educator reached out to AAE after a serious incident in their building. The guidance they received was to write a letter and wait. There was no follow-up, no advocacy, no resolution.

Another educator sought support from AAE while navigating an unfair

evaluation. They experienced delays, repeated handoffs and ultimately learned they did not qualify for meaningful support. Weeks passed with no clear path forward.

In both cases, they were left to navigate complex situations on their own.

At a certain point, we have to be honest about what that means. That is not a competing organization. That is a scam. They do not stand on service—they stand on profit.

Both educators eventually found their way to NSEA. What they found was different.

They found local support—people who understood their contracts, their districts and their day-to-day realities. They found experienced staff who could step in, provide guidance and help move issues toward resolution. They found an organization that followed through.

That difference matters.

What We Stand On

NSEA is a community of educators committed to public education and to one another. Our work is guided by members who serve at every level of the association. That structure ensures decisions are made by educators—and that when we speak, we do so with the strength of collective experience behind us.

Why It Matters

Support through collective bargaining strengthens local associations in their pursuit of improved contracts and working conditions. That support shows up when educators need it most.

It is that same commitment that fills the room at Delegate Assembly—educators coming together to speak, to lead and to carry this work forward.



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Special Education K-6, 7-12, K-12

Special Education Supervisor

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The online master's degree in school administration is designed to prepare you for a career in an administrative position, such as principal, director, department head, or supervisor, and may include an extra focus area in Athletic Administration or Special Education Supervision. If you already have an MSE, you may be eligible to add this as an endorsement to your existing degree.

Master of Science in Education: Special Education (Online)

The master's degree in special education is designed to help professionals and districts meet the needs of students with exceptionalities and their families. This program also offers options for those with a bachelor's degree to earn certification or add an endorsement to their existing degree.

Other Online MSE Options:

We offer several fully online emphasis areas in our Curriculum and Instruction-Instructional Leadership program. They include Business Education, Elementary Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Skilled and Technical Sciences Education, Mathematics Education, Music Education, and Social Science Education.

Master of Arts in Teaching Degree (MAT)

The MAT program is designed for those who hold a non-education bachelor's degree and are looking to transition to a teaching career. The program provides a clear path to initial (first-time) teacher certification in Nebraska. For information: www.wsc.edu/mat

MSE Counseling: Low Residency Format

Complete the foundation courses for your master's degree in counseling in only four semesters! Classes meet two weekends per semester. Summer courses are completely online. Weekend residencies are interactive and involve small and large group processes, discussions, and experiential skills-building activities. For information: 402-375-7389 or visit www.wsc.edu/mse-counseling

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We offer a variety of graduate, content-specific courses that will qualify you to teach dual credit. Please contact us for more information.

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Visit www.wsc.edu/mse to learn more about our MSE programs.



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NSEA-Retired celebrates Read Across America

Lincoln Education Association-Retired members returned to the classroom during the first week of March as guest readers in local elementary schools. The effort, organized by NSEA retired member Lesa Christiancy, included 22 classroom visits across five Lincoln schools: Huntington, Hill, Everett, Zeman and Rousseau. Thanks to the members whose volunteer efforts

helped make the event a success and brought a love of reading to students.

Pictured: 1. Carol Mack reading to Hill students. 2. Norma Daberkow reading to students. 3. Pat Etherton reading to Hill students. 4. Lesa Christiancy reading to Hill students. 5. Pam Cassel reading to Hill students. 6. Shelley Clayburn reading to Rousseau students. 7. Sheri Paden reading to Hill students.

Lincoln Children's
APRIL 23 ZOO
Save the Date
NSEA-RETIRED
SPRING CONFERENCE

The NSEA-Retired Spring Conference will be held Thursday, April 23, at Lincoln Children's Zoo, offering retired educators an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues while engaging in meaningful professional and personal enrichment. This annual gathering highlights the lasting impact of Nebraska's retired public education professionals, creating space for thoughtful conversation, shared experiences and continued advocacy for public education.

The day will include engaging sessions, opportunities to network with fellow members and time to enjoy the unique setting of the zoo. Whether participants are returning longtime attendees or joining for the first time, the conference is designed to celebrate the wisdom and contributions of retired educators while strengthening connections across generations.

Registration is available at www.nsea.org/retired. The event is free for all members and \$10 for guests. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

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Aspiring Educators Membership Surge

Membership in the NSEA Aspiring Educators program has grown significantly over the past year, with an increase of 90 members bringing total participation to more than 700.

Association leaders said the growth expands opportunities for aspiring educators across the state to connect, collaborate and share ideas as they prepare to enter the profession.

“With more members, we have greater opportunities to connect with aspiring educators across Nebraska and share ideas and insight,” AE Underclassmen Representative Makenna Benson-Berger said in a newsletter to members.

The student-led organization is encouraging members to continue outreach efforts to build on the growth and further strengthen its statewide network of future educators.



UNL-AE Chapter President Emily Schmer reads to students at Brownell Elementary in celebration of Read Across America.

Nebraska Delegates Needed for NEA RA in Colorado

NSEA Aspiring Educators interested in serving as delegates to the National Education Association Representative Assembly are invited to submit their intent to run.

Selected delegates will have the opportunity to represent Nebraska Aspiring Educators at both the Aspiring Educators National Conference while the President of AE goes on to represent AE at the NEA

Representative Assembly, the largest democratic gathering of educators in the country.

The Aspiring Educators National Conference will be held June 28 through July 1, followed by the NEA Representative Assembly July 3-7 in Denver. Hotel and travel expenses will be covered for elected delegates. Return travel to Nebraska

is scheduled for July 8. This is an opportunity to engage in national-level advocacy, contribute to decision-making that shapes the future of public education and connect with Aspiring Educators and professionals from across the country.

Interested candidates should complete the intent-to-run process online at www.nsea.org/RAIntent or by scanning the QR code.

RA DENVER 26



SCAN TO SUBMIT

APRIL

15

What to Do if You Receive a RIF Notice: Call NSEA.

Notification Deadline: April 15

It happens every year: Some K-12 Nebraska teachers receive Reduction in Force (RIF) notices informing them that their teaching contract may not be renewed for the coming year. The statutory deadline for school districts to hand out RIF notices is April 15.

The best way to deal with a RIF notice is to be prepared. The moment you receive a RIF notice, a countdown begins. To preserve your rights when facing a RIF you must always request a hearing. The hearing must be requested within seven days of receiving the RIF notice (five days for community college faculty). While your situation may never reach an actual hearing, immediately calling NSEA will give you and NSEA's Advocacy department time to determine what steps are in your best interest.

Email a copy of the notice to your NSEA Organizational Specialist. Once a copy of the RIF notice is received at NSEA headquarters, members will be encouraged to request a hearing to preserve their rights.

If you have questions concerning the RIF process, contact your NSEA Organizational Specialist or NSEA Director of Advocacy Jason Wiese by calling 1-800-742-0047.

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



Are You Nebraska's Next Teacher of the Year?

In 2027, one teacher will represent the good work of all the teachers in the state as the Nebraska Teacher of the Year (TOY).

Application forms will soon be available through your school administration or at the website listed below. Teachers may self-nominate or nominate a colleague for the honor.

A panel will review applications, and up to five finalists will be selected for interviews in August. The 2027 recipient will be recognized at an awards luncheon.

Since 1972, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year program has recognized outstanding certified teachers in a pre-K-12 classroom setting who plan to continue in active teacher status in a state-approved or accredited school.

The application seeks information on educational background and

personal development, community involvement, philosophy of teaching and learning and commentary on the teaching profession.

The Teacher of the Year will maintain a regular teaching schedule while also participating in a year of professional learning through the National Teacher of the Year Program.

The TOY Review Committee also selects up to five Award of Excellence Teachers.

The NSEA, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska Association of School Boards, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, Data Recognition Corporation, as well as the State Board of Education, present cash awards or grants to the Teacher of the Year and other finalists. For additional details, visit www.education.ne.gov/toy.

