

THE

VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ April 2018

MENTOR & SUPPORT

*Grant received will assist early career educators
to improve their practice and enhance student learning.*

Also inside: 2018 Delegate Assembly,
Professional Development:
Find Details and Register Now!



NSEA New Member Campaign Open Now

Beginning April 1, first-time, never-before members who sign up for NSEA through the Association's 2018-19 Early Enrollment Campaign will be eligible for half-price dues.

This is an opportunity for local associations to build membership and strengthen both the local and state associations.

The campaign makes those who sign up immediately eligible as "insureds" in the NEA Educators Employment Liability (EEL) program. It also allows access to NEA Member Benefits Programs.

The early enrollment offer is limited to recruits for the 2018-19 membership, including individuals who sign up and pledge to pay unified Active membership dues as a first-time Active member beginning Sept. 1, 2018, or new NEA Student Program recruits who sign up and fully pay NEA Student Program dues for the 2018-19 membership year at the time of enrollment.

For details, contact your local association president or your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

Dyslexia Association will Host Free Movie

"The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia" will touch hearts and clear up misunderstandings about dyslexia and related reading, spelling and writing difficulties.

In a free showing of the movie, Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz from the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity discuss how dyslexia is a language-based learning disability in a "sea of strengths."

The movie will be shown Saturday, April 21, at Faith Westwood United Methodist Church, 4814 Oaks Lane, Omaha, at 2 p.m. It is open to the public, especially teachers, parents and youth dealing with dyslexia. For details, call the Nebraska Dyslexia Association at 402-434-6434, or go to:

www.ne-da.org

NSEA-Retired in Action: These six retired Kearney educators read to more than 100 pre-kindergarten through second grade students to celebrate NEA's Read Across America in early March. From left are Barb Muth, Margaret Smith, Lana Stickney, Cathy Vogt, Wanda Glanzer and Karen Roper.

'Youth Legislature' Dates Set Registration Now Open; Scholarships Available

Registrations are now being accepted for the annual Unicameral Youth Legislature set June 10-13 in Lincoln.

High school students, as "senators," will sponsor bills, conduct committee hearings, debate legislation at the State Capitol and discover the unique process of the nation's only one-house legislature.

The camp gives behind-the-scenes access to students who have an interest in public office, government, politics, law, public policy, debate or public speaking. Students will learn about the inner workings of the Legislature directly from senators and staff. Bill topics are based on legislation considered during the most recent legislative session. From driving laws to the death penalty, topics selected for the legislature are diverse and engaging.

The registration deadline is May 15. Registrants are encouraged to apply for the Speaker Greg Adams Civic Scholarship, which covers the cost of admission. Applicants must submit a short essay. Other full and partial scholarships also are available.

Legislative activities are conducted at the Nebraska State Capitol Building in the historic Warner Chamber, which was home to the Nebraska Senate until the state consolidated to a one-house legislature in 1937.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Extension 4-H Youth Development Office coordinates housing and recreational activities for the camp as part of their Big Red Summer Camps program. To learn more about the program, call 402-471-2420, or go to:

NebraskaLegislature.gov/uyl

Cover:

Grand Island teachers Jill Kimbrough, Chelsi Christensen and Jordy Duer are all in the early stages of their teaching careers. They are also part of NSEA's pilot project aimed at keeping young teachers in the profession. Learn more on

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NSEA
THE
VOICE

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Regularly cited by the State Education Association Communicators, including these honors: Best Magazine, Best News Story, Best Feature Story, Best Photography, Best Editorial Design.



Kids Like Felix Deserve a Chance



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

*Clearly, the
education world
is changing
quickly, and in
ways we may
not always like.*

”

The February tragedy in Florida – the senseless shooting of 14 teenagers and three high school educators – stirred deep emotions in all of us. As we tried to fathom what happened, many of us thought of our students who struggle with mental health and other issues.

Among my initial thoughts were those of a young man I taught, early in my career, in a self-contained classroom for students with behavior disorders.

Felix struggled with mental health needs. One day he arrived at my classroom with several personal items, including gold necklaces, he had stolen from his uncle. The family’s pastor soon called the school to ask whether I could bring Felix home with his misappropriated goods.

My paraprofessional, Sally, and I got in my minivan with Felix to take him home and return the items to his uncle. His family lived in a colonia quite a few miles from the school and community, out in the scrub, rock and mesquite of the south Texas desert.

Once we arrived, I climbed out of the van and walked up to the house. Sally, who was also my sometimes interpreter, remained in the van. The uncle met me at the door with a shotgun, which I presumed was loaded. After a few tense moments, I used what little Spanish I knew at the time to settle him down and convince him to agree to put his gun away.

While that was perhaps my most harrowing and closest experience with a weapon during my teaching career, I wish I could say that it was my only such encounter. It was not.

Mind-Boggling

My Felix experience was at Edinburg, TX, a school district of nearly 50,000 students about 20 miles from the border with Mexico. It’s a huge district, spreading across nearly 1,000 square miles. Nearly 80 percent of students qualify for free lunch.

Here is what boggles my mind: The school district’s budget today includes 78 sworn police officers, another 30 security officers, three K-9 officers, and a SWAT team equipped with military surplus gear. That’s a far different budget line for school security than the district I left more than 25 years ago.

Clearly, the education world is changing quickly, and in ways we may not always like. As we grapple with school safety, the need for more mental health services for our students, and the gun control debate, we can all recount stories of students like Felix. We all have personal views and influences on these issues. But each of us, as

teachers, want one thing: we want our schools to be havens of safety.

Support for LB998

Your NSEA is dedicated to working for the safety and well-being of our members and students. We are in ongoing meetings with a coalition of education-oriented groups talking about school safety and mental health services.

We support eight bills in the legislature this session that are focused on mental health and support services for our students. One, LB998, would place a social worker in every Educational Service Unit in the state. It has become the priority bill of Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz.

Our standing Resolutions, reviewed and updated each year at the NSEA Delegate Assembly, clearly express our concern for schools as a safe place. Those resolutions address school environments, bullying and mental health care for students. Resolution C-9 states, in part, that the “NSEA believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons.”

Survey and Action

Educators nationwide have similar sentiments. Results from a new survey by the NEA found:

- 99 percent of NEA members across the country favor universal background checks;
- 91 percent of teachers support taking measures to prevent the mentally ill from accessing guns; and
- 90 percent favor preventing those with a history of domestic violence from gaining access to guns.

Finally, the NSEA Board of Directors will bring a New Business Item to Delegate Assembly asking for formation of a committee to look more closely at school safety and all the services that school safety might encompass. If the committee’s formation is approved, the committee will make recommendations for action at Delegate Assembly 2019.

Delegate Assembly breakouts this year will include professional development on school safety, trauma-informed classrooms and a variety of other subjects on issues we are facing across Nebraska. You will find a schedule of those breakouts – and details on how to attend on page XX!

Although sometimes troubled, Felix could be a good kid. His family was dirt poor, and somewhere I still have a rock he gave me as a gift, proof of his kindness, proof that even troubled kids can be reached.

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9-Day Strike Ends in Win

NEA President
Lauds West Virginia;
Oklahoma May be Next

Every school in West Virginia closed on the last Thursday of February for what eventually became a 9-day work walkout by nearly 22,000 public school teachers and education support professionals.

The walkout seemed to be near an end in early March when the West Virginia House of Delegates approved a five percent salary increase. The state's senate initially balked and offered four percent. Teachers continued the walkout into the next week, and the Senate ultimately agreed to the five percent.

West Virginia teachers had not had a raise in four years. They left their jobs on Feb. 22 in protest of low pay and swiftly rising costs in health insurance premiums.

The West Virginia governor agreed to appoint a task force to review the state's health insurance program, which has seen health insurance costs spike.

As West Virginia teachers were on strike, Oklahoma teachers considered similar action in April. Teachers there have not had a raise since 2008. Dwindling resources have forced 91 of 500 Oklahoma school districts to move to four-day weeks. Class size has ballooned and programs have been cut.

West Virginia teachers have one of the lowest starting salaries in the country, ranking ahead of only Mississippi, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

During the walkout, thousands of teachers met at the state capitol on the first day of the walkout. Estimates put the numbers inside the building at more than 5,100.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen García said the West Virginia Senate would not have honored the pact without the efforts of the West Virginia Education Association.

"They stood in solidarity and made their voices heard to demand recognition of their professionalism and dignity because they know attracting and retaining the most caring and competent educators for West Virginia students is essential to their state's success," she said.

Eskelsen García cautioned that the victory will be short lived if the task force fails to confront challenges in the state's Public Employee Insurance Agency (PEIA).

"I have complete faith in the educators of West Virginia to continue making their voices heard and ensure the task force is successful," she said.

Loan Forgiveness Now Open!

For July 1 Coursework

Educators seeking advanced endorsements and skills through college coursework may now apply for tuition reimbursement via the state's 2018-19 Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program (EETP).

The application process opened on the Nebraska Department of Education website on Monday, April 2, at 9 a.m.

The reimbursement in this round is for classes from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019. Individuals must apply each year.

EETP provides a limited number of forgivable loans to Nebraska teachers enrolled in an eligible graduate program at a Nebraska institution of higher education. Eligible students may apply on an annual basis for funds of \$175 per credit hour, up to a maximum of \$3,000. Students can apply for EETP loans annually for up to five consecutive years. To be considered for an EETP

forgivable loan, an educator must:

- Be employed as a certificated teacher in an approved or accredited public or private PK-12 school in Nebraska;

- Be enrolled in an approved graduate program at an eligible NE institution;

- Be a resident Nebraska student.

Applicants must also complete:

- A graduate degree in a shortage area;

- A graduate program for an added Endorsement in a shortage area;

- A graduate degree in curriculum and instruction;

- A graduate degree in a subject area in which an endorsement is already held; or

- A graduate degree that will result in an additional endorsement not considered a shortage area which your administrator believes will be beneficial to your students.

For more details, go to the website at:

www.education.ne.gov/educatorprep/eetp-current-teachers/

Higher Ed Opportunity Ahead

Bylaw Change, Conference on the Horizon

If change is good, NSEA's Higher Education Academy is in a very good position.

There are a number of positive developments that will affect higher education locals and members across the state. For instance:

- A proposed change to NSEA Bylaws will be considered at Delegate Assembly on April 28. The plan would give the Higher Education representative on NSEA's Board

of Directors full voting rights. The Higher Education rep now has ex officio status.

- At Delegate Assembly on Friday, April 27, energies will be devoted to professional development. Participants need not be a delegate. One session is set aside exclusively for Higher Education Academy members. NSEA Director of Research Larry Scherer is accepting discussion ideas. Academy activities, state budget cuts and freedom of speech issues will be discussed.

The second day of the Delegate Assembly will include the Bylaws vote and other issues. Given the importance of the vote on the Bylaw changes, the Higher Education team would strongly encourage local associations to elect delegates to DA.

If your local has more than 25 members you are assured of one delegate plus an additional delegate for each 50 additional members, or the greater portion thereof. If

your local has 25 or fewer members, your local and individual members can send someone to DA as a "cluster delegate." Each NSEA Governance District is allocated delegates for each 50 members of locals of 25 or less. For more details on delegate selection go to:

www.nsea.org/delegateassembly

If you need assistance with delegate

elections, please call Julie Wolf or Joan Sparks at 1-800-742-0047. NSEA covers mileage and half the cost of lodging. Some locals pick up

some other expenses. Also consider these upcoming events:

- The Higher Education Academy summer conference will be June 8-9 at NSEA headquarters. Contact Higher Education Academy President Andrew Lenzen for details at lenasoga98@yahoo.com.

- Community college bargaining for 2018-19 is all but wrapped for Metro, Northeast and Mid-Plains community colleges. It appears that all settled at or above 3 percent. Southeast Community College Professional Staff are still negotiating. State college and University of Nebraska at Kearney bargaining begins this spring for the 2019-21 biennium.

If you have questions, call Scherer at 1-800-742-0047, or email him at:

larry.scherer@nsea.org





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Summer 2018 Offerings

Master's in Education — Educational Administration

Subject	Catalog #	Title	Session
EDCI	631	RESEARCH DESIGN/DATA ANALYSIS	8W2
EDCI	633	EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	4W2
EDCI	635	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	8W2
EDCI	638	SCHOOL LAW	8W2
EDAD	629	FUNDAMENTALS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	8W2
EDAD	632	SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION	8W2
EDAD	633	SCHOOL ADMIN & LEADERSHIP	8W2
EDAD	638	PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION	8W2

Master's in Education — Curriculum and Instruction

Subject	Catalog #	Title	Session
EDCI	631	RESEARCH DESIGN/DATA ANALYSIS	8W2
EDCI	633	EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	4W2
EDCI	635	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	8W2
EDCI	638	SCHOOL LAW	8W2
READ	635	DIAGNOSIS AND CORRECTION	4W2
READ	638	SEM IN READING: ISSUES, TRENDS	4W3
SPED	532	SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUC	4W2
SPED	630	CHAR. OF EMOTIONAL & BEH. DISAB.	8W1

Master's in Education — School Counseling

Subject	Catalog #	Title	Session
COUN	531	COUNSELING & COMMUNICATION SKILLS	8W1
COUN	533	COUNSELING ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY	8W2
COUN	534	FUNDAMENTALS OF ASSESSMENT	8W2
COUN	535	MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING	8W1
COUN	541	COUNSELING THEORIES	8W2
COUN	635	SCHOOL COUNSELING	8W2

Session Key

4W2 = Four week 2: June 4-June 29

8W1 = Eight week 1: May 7-June 29

4W3 = Four week 3: July 2-July 27

8W2 = Eight week 2: June 4-July 27



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Tea and Talk: Early career educators met in Grand Island recently to talk about teaching, learning and questions about the profession. From left are first year teacher Jordy Duer; retired NSEA Organizational Specialist Maureen Nickels; first-year teacher Chelsi Christensen; fifth year teacher Jill Kimbrough; NSEA Organizational Specialist Cindy Copich.

New Grant for New Teachers

NSEA Pilot Program Gets Lift from NEA via Three-Year Grant

Just weeks into her first year of teaching, Chelsi Christensen admits she was a “little freaked out” when she received an email, and later a text message, from Maureen Nickels.

“I wondered ‘who is this woman? How does she know me?’” said Christensen.

Seven months later, Christensen is more than pleased to have answered the message from Nickels. So, too, are Jordy Duer and Jill Kimbrough, also early-in-their-career teachers at the Grand Island Public Schools.

Nickels’ outreach was an invitation to the three to join a pilot project designed to mentor and support teachers who are just getting their professional careers under way – early career educators, in Association-speak.

The NSEA pilot project grew from an NEA pilot program designed to show support for early career educators by assisting them in improving their practice and en-

hancing student learning. The method was simple: gather interested teachers in a casual setting, get to know each other. Then meet through the wonders of technology on a weekly basis to talk about common teaching and learning issues and concerns.

Nickels would organize locally, and then join an NEA-appointed “virtual coach” as consultant and sometimes moderator of the weekly discussions. The weekly discussions would cover any teaching subject and would ultimately serve to give the new teachers the support and advice they craved.

Teachers would see their network of supportive colleagues grow, be encouraged to stay in the profession for a longer period, and develop a stronger bond with their local association.

To say the program is a success is an understatement for Christensen, Duer and Kimbrough. All are enthusiastic about the support they’ve received. More on that later.

The really good news is that the pilot program will soon expand. NSEA and the South Dakota Education Association have received a grant from the National Education Association’s Great Public Schools

Grant Fund to grow the program. The return on your dues investment is enormous: The grant will provide \$450,000 in programming over three years across the two states.

The bulk of the grant monies coming to Nebraska will fund professional development supports, instructional coaching and mentoring aimed at early career educators – those in their first 10 years of teaching. The funds would encourage small early career educator projects across rural Nebraska, where teacher retention is weakest. Thirty percent of Nebraska teachers leave the profession in the first five years.

“This is but one example of NEA dues dollars coming back to Nebraska to help Nebraska teachers and, ultimately, Nebraska children,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson.

“The benefits from this grant will reverberate through our teaching corps and will benefit Nebraska students for years.”

Weekly Meetings

Nickels’ bona fides are well-known in central Nebraska. She taught for nearly 30 years in Grand Island, then spent another 16

years as an NSEA organizational specialist for south central and central Nebraska. Today, she is unopposed for a second term on the Nebraska State Board of Education.

She jumped at the chance to coordinate the Grand Island pilot project. She organized a core group of five young teachers, met with them to get acquainted and to introduce them to their NEA-appointed “coach” – Kathleen Christensen, a teaching veteran from Wyoming.

Christensen, too, has a good track record. A National Board Certified teacher in her 33rd year, she taught upper elementary and has been a full-time mentor for 12 years. She is now mentoring 92 teachers in their first three years of teaching.

Once organized, they met on most Wednesday evenings via a Zoom Virtual Communications networking program. Their discussions would usually last less than an hour. The five met through the end of the semester; two were pulled away by other commitments for the second semester.

“Our coach had all kinds of things to give these teachers, and those teachers absolutely loved it,” said Nickels.

The teachers might spend the first 20 minutes of the hour talking about their school day, before Coach Christensen would ask “what is something that hap-

pened in your class this week that I might be able to send you something to read, or answer a question, or help in some way,” said Nickels.

Topics covered included group strategies, behavioral strategies, what’s important in reading circles, different ways to approach planning – anything a first-year teacher might require in terms of assistance.

“Kathy just really gets it,” said third-grade teacher Christensen. “She understands that our time is valuable. We talk about our day, and then talk about how we might have done something different, another way. And she won’t go back and tell our principal.”

Duer, a first-year teacher like Christensen, and a fourth-grade teacher, accepted Nickels’ invitation as a way to network within the district. She finds the program rewarding, with credit to Coach Christensen.

“I think she is good at what she does (coaching) because that IS what she does,” said Duer.

Kimbrough is further along in her career – she’s in her fifth year and is a 21st century literacy teacher at the middle school level. Kimbrough cited sound timing interest as her reason for participating.

“Every veteran teacher I’ve talked to says the first four years are very formative. The first year, you’re treading water. The

next three years you figure out who you are as a professional,” said Kimbrough.

‘Loved the Connections’

The long-term goal of the NEA grant monies is to build teacher retention, primarily in rural areas of Nebraska where retention is extremely challenging.

“New teachers in these geographically isolated areas often feel disconnected from other teachers their own age,” said Cindy Copich, an NSEA organizational specialist and the Association lead on the grant project.

“Professional supports for early career educators build teacher leadership, engagement in union matters, and connections with other educators,” said Copich. “Those factors all ensure greater retention of teachers in the profession, as well as deeper engagement of rural educators in their association.”

Thus far, the process seems to be working.

“To know that there are others in my school district, in my situation, that I can go and talk to... I really appreciate that fact,” said Christensen.

Duer agreed. “I have really loved building these connections,” she said.

Like that first call from Nickels, making those connections works.

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Meet the Senator: Sen. Adam Morfeld of Lincoln spoke about advocacy for education to a handful of members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska in late March at NSEA Headquarters. From left are SEAN President Maddie Kinney, York College; Alicia Laufenberg, University of Nebraska-Omaha; Megan Wallace, Peru State College; Evann Vrana, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Sara Vance, Peru State College; Morfeld; Elyse Thompson and Janelle Moyle, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Luis Olivas, University of Nebraska-Kearney; Tommy Eckhart, York College; and Denton Beacom, Wayne State College.

LB295 Progress Slowed

'Reckless' Property Tax Relief Bill Still Alive

In late March, as the 2018 session of the Nebraska Legislature wound toward an uncertain end, two threats to state funding for public education took divergent paths.

LB947, a tax bill favored by the governor, featured corporate income tax cuts that would eventually carve a nearly \$650 million a year hole into the state's revenue stream. Sold as a property tax relief measure, the bill appeared to be chugging forward, despite a better property tax relief bill option (LB1084) available to senators.

LB1084, however, remained in committee as March neared an end.

At the start of the last week in March, Sen. Curt Friesen's LB1103 advanced out of committee. LB1103 would provide a minimum amount of state aid for every school district, and has the potential to provide a better vehicle for property tax relief than LB947.

Meanwhile, LB295, a private school tax credit scheme, faced a filibuster that chewed up hours of debate in the time-strapped short session. The now-stalled bill would have allowed individuals and corporations

to donate to private school scholarships, claim deductions and in some cases actually make a profit in the process. That scheme would have cost the state up to \$10 million in tax revenues annually – to start.

A flurry of calls and emails to state senators by NSEA members on the afternoon and evening that debate got under way assisted with turning back LB295. Opponents of public funding for private schools fought LB295, and questioned the fairness of legislation that would treat donations to private school scholarships more favorably than donations to other worthy causes.

Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld summed up the misguided thinking behind LB295 when he said it would reduce state revenues that might go to shore up state aid.

"We can't fund the needs that we have now," he said.



Nebraska Legislature

A 'Reckless' Bill

Although now on General File, LB947 languished in committee until late in March.

The OpenSky Institute called the bill "reckless" – a characterization that came as a result of the \$650 million in LB947 corporate tax cuts that would have to be offset by deep cuts to vital state services.

Mental Health Bill Advances

NSEA has high hopes that LB998 (Sen. Lynne Walz, Fremont) might make it to passage this year.

Despite opposition from a small cadre of senators who contended that the bill does too little to be effective, or that the cost would ultimately be borne by taxpayers, LB998 passed the first round of debate on a 27-8 vote.

LB998 would put a mental health social worker in each of Nebraska's 17 Educational Service Units. That worker would be a contact point for teachers and school officials in search of mental health services for students. Private donations would fund the \$3.6 million cost of the program for the first three years.

OpenSky said the corporate tax cuts would mean little to corporations that just received huge tax breaks from the federal government's tax package last fall.

"We question why the state would give up the ability to fund key priorities like health care and education for a tax cut that is unlikely to affect business location and investment decisions," wrote OpenSky Policy Institute Executive Director Renee Fry in a

column in the Omaha World-Herald.

NSEA argued that LB947 fails to meaningfully address the state's property tax issues, which is rooted in low state aid support for K-12 schools. LB947 would also dip into state reserves, pulling those reserves well below recommended levels. Even the Omaha World-Herald chimed in, saying that LB947 is "a measure that falls short of the strategic tax overhaul Nebraska needs."

NSEA supports Albion Sen. Tom Briese's LB1084, workable property tax relief that would broaden the sales tax base by removing select sales tax exemptions. It would also add a high-earner income tax and raise the sales tax by a half cent.

Absent the passage of either LB947 or LB1084, one group has begun collecting signatures for a proposal that would create a refundable state income tax credit of 50 percent of property taxes paid to schools. However, the plan offers no method for funding the estimated \$1 billion in property tax relief it purports to provide.

Meanwhile, these bills were pending:

Social Security Taxes – Support

LB738 (Sen. Brett Lindstrom, Omaha) advanced from the Revenue Committee to General File in mid-March, and had a chance to be heard before the Legislature adjourns. The bill would index state taxes paid on Social Security income – essentially lowering a retiree's state tax bill.

Third Grade Reading Bill – Support

In mid-March, an amended version of LB651 (Sen. Lou Ann Linehan, Elkhorn) was slipped into LB1081, the Nebraska Department of Education's technical update bill. LB1081 has been prioritized by the Education Committee and is likely to be passed during the final week of the session.

It is important to note that the third-grade retention provision in the original version of LB651 has been removed from the bill.

Members may recall that last year Line-

han introduced LB651, which at that time mandated third grade retention for students who could not pass a grade level reading assessment. The Education Committee had not yet acted on the bill when Linehan exercised a rarely utilized provision and pulled the bill out of committee and into first round debate by the full Legislature.

NSEA and members across the state fought LB651, knowing that it was not good for kids. Linehan's bill did not advance in 2017, but was left for action in this legislative session.

Last fall during the interim period, Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks joined Linehan on a statewide tour of schools that provided a firsthand look at how reading is really taught across the state. As a result, Linehan amended LB651 so that it no longer calls for retention and, in fact, emphasizes those practices which are most conducive to strong student learning in reading.

The proposed amendment is not perfect. NSEA is still concerned that it mandates all school districts to offer a summer reading camp. The effect of that requirement on school budgets is still unknown, but NSEA is extremely proud of the impact that members had on this legislation and the potential positive impact it could have on overall student reading success.

Elimination of State Board – Oppose

A proposed constitutional amendment to eliminate the Nebraska State Board of Education (Sen. John Murante, Gretna) remained in committee, with little chance of advancement.

Early Childhood Education – Support

NSEA's Jay Sears told the Education Committee that quality early childhood education programs pay dividends that may reach \$13 for each \$1 invested. LB877 incentivizes school districts to provide quality early childhood education by increasing the state aid reimbursement from

60 percent to 100 percent. NSEA testified in support, noting that quality early childhood education programs pay dividends that reach up to \$13 for every \$1 invested. LB877 remains in committee.

Dyslexia Resources – Support

Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks' LB1052 would require students identified as dyslexic to be provided with an evidence-based approach for reading and writing instruction. NSEA worked with Pansing Brooks on development of the bill.

NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell told the Education Committee LB1052 had much input from classroom teachers. She also said NSEA supports mandating dyslexia training in teacher education programs. NSEA, she said, plans to build training on dyslexia into the Association's statewide professional development program. LB1052 advanced from committee onto General File in mid-March.

Teaching Certificates – Support

NSEA supports LB1135 (Sen. Tony Vargas, Omaha), which allows a teacher with a valid teaching certificate from another state to begin teaching in Nebraska. NSEA also supports an amendment to require those teachers to eventually meet Nebraska certification standards. LB1135 remains in committee.

State Aid Study – Support

NSEA called LB1001 'forward-thinking' legislation by providing for a study of school finance in Nebraska. The last such study took place in 1989, and culminated in the current state aid formula. The idea gained steam with more than a half-dozen senators adding their names as sponsors, but the bill remains in committee in late March.

Sen. Tom Briese's LB1084 also proposes a study of Nebraska's system of providing state dollars to K-12 schools, but also remains in committee.



**Elect Nora Lenz
to the NSEA Board
Ethnic Minority
At-Large Seat**

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**Nebraska Middle
Level Academy**

Columbus Middle School, Columbus, NE
June 12, 2018, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Discover: #BeKind with Mark & Joni Adler, keynote speakers
Discover: Trauma-Informed Practices, by Cheryl Turner, lunch speaker
Discover: for yourself with a variety of breakout sessions

\$50 registration before May 12; \$75 after. Breakfast, lunch, snacks included!

More information and online registration at <https://goo.gl/Qte077>



New Traditions to be Set at DA

Friday Night Format Includes Two Dozen PD Breakouts

Melding the distant past with what must become the future, NSEA members will see a vibrant new vision for Delegate Assembly when the convention convenes in late April.

For years mired in the process of routine governance issues – vital but sometimes tedious – the 2018 Delegate Assembly will open with more than three hours of professional development in the form of 24 breakout sessions and 20 separate professional development topics.



Brown

“Members want, and need, quality professional development,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson, Lincoln.

“If we can deliver that professional development to members at Delegate Assembly, and conduct business as well, everyone wins.”

A century ago, professional development was common at Delegate Assembly. More recently, the focus has been on Association governance responsibilities and issues. However, there have been mounting requests from members in recent years to provide professional development. As a result, nearly two dozen topics will be addressed over three rounds of breakout sessions during the Friday night opening of NSEA’s 157th Delegate Assembly, set for April 27-28 in Lincoln.

Among the breakout session topics: Degrees Not Debt – Loan Forgiveness; Dyslexia Technical Assistance; Social Justice Basics for Educators; Social Media for Educators; Child Trauma and Toxic Stress; and much more (see entire list on page 17 in this special section).

Attendees will also hear a short keynote from Eric Brown, an Illinois biology teacher and one of nine members of the NEA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

Everyone is Invited!

The Friday night opening will break precedent in a second manner: Non-delegates and even non-NSEA members are invited to attend the professional development sessions.

“We are looking to improve the teaching profession, and the system of educa-



Gala Glory: Members of the Palmer Education Association posed for a moment at NSEA’s 2017 Delegate Assembly — the gala celebration marking 150 years since the Association was founded. Clockwise, from bottom left, are Whitney Hake, Mary Gregoski, Mikhail Happ, Becky Meyer and Jaime Green.

tion for all students in Nebraska,” said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell. “We welcome all educators to benefit from the programming NSEA will provide on Friday night.”

Following the breakouts, the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel will host a reception in the hotel Atrium.

Delegates and others planning to attend are encouraged to register their planned attendance at the professional development sessions. However, to be clear, registration for the professional development sessions **will not** serve as delegate registration for the Assembly. Duly elected delegates will receive separate instructions for registration as a delegate.

The business portion of the meeting this year will begin on Saturday morning, April 28.

Illinois Science Teacher

For his part, Brown was elected to a three-year term on the NEA Executive Committee in 2015. He has taught biology at Evanston Township High School for 16 years, is a teacher leader, former local association president, and former

board member for the Illinois Education Association.

He has also represented educators on the Illinois State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, among other activities.

Saturday morning, delegates will discuss and debate and vote on proposed changes to Bylaws, as well as any proposed new Resolutions or New Business Items.

Dues for 2018-19 will also be set by delegates on Saturday.

NSEA’s Delegate Assembly has been held once, and sometimes twice, each year since 1867, and is the Association’s annual business meeting.

All Delegate Assembly sessions are scheduled for the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in downtown Lincoln.

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

Order of Business: Delegate Assembly 2018

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

Registration: Cornhusker Marriott Hotel Atrium

Friday, April 27; 4-6 p.m.

Saturday, April 28: 6:30-8 a.m.

Friday, April 27, 2018

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

7 p.m.: Conference Opening with Keynote by Eric Brown, NEA Executive Committee

7:30-7:40 p.m.: Move to Professional Development Sessions

7:40-8:25 p.m.: Professional Development, Round 1

8:30-9:15 p.m.: Professional Development, Round 2

9:15: Marriott Cornhusker Hotel Reception, Hotel Atrium

Saturday, April 28, 2017 ♦ 8 a.m.

Breakfast: Cornhusker Marriott Lower Lobby, 6:30-7:45 a.m., sponsored by First National Bank of Omaha

Call to Order: 8 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

National Anthem

Report of Credentials Committee

Adoption of Standing/Procedural Rules

Adoption of Order of Business

Nominations for NSEA EMAC At-Large Representative

Candidate Remarks

Early Career Educators Committee Report

Report and Debate on Proposed Bylaws Amendments

Voting on Candidates and Bylaws

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

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

Report of the Auditing Review Committee

Budget Presentation for 2018-2019

Horace Mann Awards Luncheon

Elections Committee Report (when available)

Report and Actions on Resolutions

Committee Reports to the Assembly

Action on New Business Items

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

Action on the Dues Proposal for 2018-2019

Adjournment

Parliamentarian: John Heineman

2018-19 NSEA Dues Recommendation

Dues for Certificated Staff

The NSEA Board of Directors has recommended the following annual fee structure for Association membership by certificated staff. Delegates to the NSEA Delegate Assembly on April 27-28 will consider and act on this proposal. For the 2018-19 Association year, the NSEA Board of Directors recommends the dues for these certificated classes of NSEA membership be as follows:

Active: \$407 **Half-time Active:** \$203.50 **Active Substitute:** \$203.50 **Non-Active Sub:** \$101.75

The total NSEA dues and assessments for 2017-18 were \$406. The total NSEA dues and assessments for the current year and the proposal for next year are summarized below:

	2017-18	2018-19	Change (%)
General Fund Dues	\$381	\$382	\$1 (.002%)
Ballot Contingency Fund	\$10	\$10	\$0 (0%)
State PAC	\$15	\$15	\$0 (0%)
Total.....	\$406	\$407	\$7 (.002%)

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

All amounts listed are for state dues only. NEA dues for 2018-19 have been proposed at no more than \$192, a \$3 increase.

As noted, the 2018-19 dues amount for full-time, active members of NSEA includes a voluntary contribution of \$15 to NSEA's Political Action Fund and \$7.50 for half-time active members and active substitute members. This contribution is refundable upon receipt of a written, individually-composed request. A reminder of the opportunity to seek a refund is published in the January issue of the NSEA Voice.

Dues for Educational Support Professionals

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

ESP Dues Tier	NSEA Dues
Active ESP (salary of \$32,250 or more)	\$407.00 (100 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$25,800 to \$32,249)	\$366.30 (90 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$19,350 to \$25,799)	\$284.90 (70 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$12,900 to \$19,349)	\$203.50 (50 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$6,450 to \$12,899)	\$122.10 (30 percent of teacher dues)
Active ESP (\$6,449 or less)	\$40.70 (10 percent of teacher dues)

2018-19 Dues Comparison

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

State	16-17	17-18	Proposed	NSEA Dues History		
Wyoming.....	\$511	\$512	\$513	Budget Year	NSEA Dues	Percent Increase
Colorado	\$NA	\$NA	\$NA	2018-19	\$407	0.002
Iowa	\$499	\$499	\$499	2017-18	\$406	1.75
South Dakota....	\$415	\$406	\$415	2016-17	\$399	3.10
Nebraska	\$399	\$406	\$407	2015-16	\$387	0.78
Missouri	\$392	\$392	\$392	2014-15	\$384	1.05
Kansas.....	\$385	\$389	\$394	2013-14	\$380	1.06
				2012-13	\$376	1.08
				2011-12	\$372	4.20
AVERAGE	\$440.40	\$439.60	\$442.60	2010-11	\$357	2.00
				2009-10	\$350	2.30
				2008-09	\$342	4.26

Proposed Bylaws Revisions

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1

■ Article III: Board of Directors

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

Remaining Section 1 stays the same.

SECTION 2. The District Presidents; ~~the President of NSEA-Retired; the President of Higher Education Academy; an Education Support Professional representative; the President of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN);~~ shall be invited to attend all meetings of the Board of Directors each year as ex officio members without the right to vote. In the absence of any Board member the District President may assume the seat of an absent director for the same district with voting privileges. NSEA members who are elected at the National Education Association level to be members of the NEA Board of Directors shall be invited to attend meetings of the NSEA Board as ex officio members without the right to vote. NEA-budgeted funds must be utilized for expenses.

■ Article V: Delegate Assembly

SECTION 6. The Delegate Assembly shall elect the General Officers of the Association and at-large representatives of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC); ~~the Higher Education Academy; and Educational Support Professionals (ESPs).~~ All elections shall be by ballot except when there is only one (1) candidate for the position. In this case, the chair shall declare such candidate elected.

Rationale: These changes reflect the desire of membership, at Delegate Assembly 2017, to have these groups represented with a vote on the NSEA Board.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 2

Article III: Board of Directors

SECTION 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the President; the Vice President; the National Education Association Directors for Nebraska; the at-large representative of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC); and representatives of each District Association. The Board shall be apportioned on the basis of one person-one vote. Each District Association shall be entitled to at least one member on the Board of Directors. Each District Association member of the Board must represent the same number of constituents (with variation not to exceed plus or minus 10 percent). The representation ratio of Board members to constituents shall be determined by the NSEA Board of Directors.

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

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

Remaining Section 1 stays the same.

Rationale: These changes will ensure continuity of service by filling out

the term of office.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 3

■ Article I: Membership

SECTION 3. Any person joining as an Active member at after the time of initial eligibility shall be enrolled in full standing for the remainder of the membership year by paying the amount of annual dues which is commensurate with the remaining portion of the membership year.

Rationale: This would accommodate members who join during the time of year when prorated dues are in effect.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 4

■ Article II: Officers

SECTION 4. Candidates for the offices of President, Vice President and NEA Director may declare their candidacy at any time. Any candidate who wishes to have their candidate information included in the Delegate Assembly mailing digital packet must submit the information to the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director not less than 45 days prior to Delegate Assembly. To have a candidate's name placed on the ballot, the candidates for the offices of President, Vice President or NEA Director must be nominated from the floor during the first session of the Delegate Assembly.

Rationale: Delegate Assembly materials are now disseminated electronically. This language reflects that shift.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 5

■ Article III: District Associations

SECTION 1. The District Associations shall be configured to guarantee one-person one vote representation on the NSEA Board of Directors. A committee composed of the NSEA District Presidents and the NSEA Bylaws Committee shall annually review NSEA's governance compliance with the one person one vote requirement and shall develop a district boundary model which will guarantee compliance with NEA affiliation standards. The Committee shall recommend the plan to the NSEA Board for its consideration. Prior to the adoption of any district configuration by the NSEA Board, the model shall be distributed to the executive committee of each of the existing districts and the details provided to local associations and members through mailings and NSEA publications. The Board will then solicit comments and recommendations for thirty (30) days. Thereafter, the Board will make any appropriate changes in the model and adopt the new district structure. Any changes in the district structure will become effective on September 1 following the adoption of change. Each District shall be composed of contiguous counties. The plan may move a local from a county to a contiguous District in order to create a District model that is in compliance. In addition, the Board of Directors may create statewide districts.

Rationale: Now, adjustments can be made only by shifting contiguous counties; moving a county into or out of a District to meet the compliance ratio can create a "domino effect" across districts. Allowing for the movement of locals would minimize disruption.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 6

■ Article V: Delegate Assembly

SECTION 6. The Delegate Assembly shall elect the General Officers of the Association and the at-large representative of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC). All elections shall be by ballot except when there is only one (1) candidate for the position. In this case, the chair shall declare such candidate elected.

Candidates for the EMAC At-Large Board Representative may declare their candidacy at any time. Any candidate who wishes to have their candidate information included in the Delegate Assembly digital packet must submit the information to the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director not less than 45 days prior to Delegate Assembly. To have a candidate's name placed on the ballot, the candidates for EMAC At-Large Representative must be nominated from the floor during the first session of the Delegate Assembly.

Rationale: The proposed language is similar to existing Bylaws language describing the candidate process for officer positions.

Opportunity Awaits

Professional Development Includes Trauma, Dyslexia, Social Justice

For the first time in years, NSEA members at Delegate Assembly will be able to select from a menu of professional development sessions. These sessions, all scheduled for Friday, April 27, are open to delegates, non-delegates and even non-members. If you plan to take part, please register your intent to participate (see box).

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

■ Child Trauma and Toxic Stress: What is it and How Does it Affect Our Students, with Jack Bangert, Omaha South High.

A two-part session to explore the definition and scientific evidence for child trauma/toxic stress. The first session will explore the effect of trauma.

■ **Degrees, Not Debt: Loan Forgiveness, with NSEA's Kristen Sedlacek.** This session will help you determine whether you are eligible for a federal loan forgiveness program.

■ **Engaging and Communicating with ESP Members, Amy German, ESP representative on the NSEA Board of Directors.** Discussion on recruiting, retaining and engaging Education Support Professionals.

■ **Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee, with EMAC Chair Isau Metes.** The annual meeting of the NSEA Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee.

■ **Higher Education Academy, with NSEA's Larry Scherer.** A planning session for the HEA summer conference, along with clarification of action priorities.

Keynote Speaker: 7 p.m.

■ **Assembly keynote: Eric Brown, NEA Executive Committee.**

Session I: 7:40-8:25 p.m.

■ **Child Trauma and Toxic Stress: What is it and How Does it Affect Our Students, Part II, with Jack Bangert, Omaha South High.** A two-part session to explore the definition and scientific evidence for child trauma/toxic stress. The second session will look at measuring trauma and its prevalence in our schools.

■ **Concussion Recognition and Management in the Classroom, Sharon Royers, Peggy Reisher.** Royers, a retired OPS administrator, will share details about Nebraska's Return To Learn Law, as well as best practice strategies teachers need to know to support students returning to the classroom after sustaining a concussion.

■ **Degrees, Not Debt: Learn the Basics, with NSEA's Kristen Sedlacek.** Information about loan types, repayment options, loan consolidation and more.

■ **Dyslexia technical Assistance: What you Need to Know, with Eileen Vautravers, MD, and Gwelda Carlson.** Vautravers will explain dyslexia, characteristics and conditions. Carlson will cover the importance of early identification and more. Handouts provided.

■ **Health Insurance After Retirement, Kent Trelford-Thompson, Blue Cross.** You've decided to retire: What will you do for health and dental insurance going forward?

■ **Helping Everyone Achieve Respect: A Free Anti-Bullying**

Resource with Major Joe Eggan and LTC Will Prusia. Developed by Harvard University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the program is available through the Nebraska National Guard at no charge.

■ **How to Run 100 Miles: Goal Attainment and Perseverance, Steph Whitmore, California Casualty.** Learn how to accomplish the unimaginable in this highly visual session detailing an athlete's epiphany that led her to personal growth and discovery.

■ **Organizing for Change, with NEA's Jason Burns.** Discussion will focus on how to build an organizing culture in your association.

■ **School Board Contact teams, with Linda Freye and Lanny Boswell.** Boswell is president of the Lincoln School Board; Freye is an NEA director and Lincoln teacher. They discuss how to develop strong working relationships with school board members.

■ **Social Justice Basics for Educators, Mandy Faripour,**

NSEA. This session will be a primer on social justice and will be aimed at personalizing needs for your local. Participants will walk away with a basic understanding of what social justice is and how it applies to their local.

Session II: 8:35-9:15 p.m.

■ **The Bargaining Retrospective: 2018-19 Challenges and What Lies Ahead.** A zero percent increase in insurance premiums meant good news for some negotiations teams, but challenges remained as board teams attacked from all angles. A look back at what happened at the table and what lies ahead.

■ **Educators Health Alliance Plan and Wellness Program.** Your EHA Plan Advocate Greg Long will answer questions about the EHA health benefit plan and the EHA Wellness Program.

■ **Educators Rising: Create a Chapter in Your School! With Nancy Burkhart.** Educators Rising chapters foster interest in the teaching profession at the high school level. Join this session to understand how Educators Rising is working to recruit teachers for Nebraska.

■ **Engaging the Next Generation in the Union, NEA's Eric Brown and NSEA's Heather Fritz.** How can we effectively engage early career educators, and why is it important?

■ **2018 Legislative Session Recap, with NSEA's Jason Hayes.** Review of changes made during the 2018 legislative session that will affect your classroom and your teaching.

■ **The New NEA 360 Portal, NSEA Comptroller Sheri Jablonski.** The new NEA member portal allows members to see their membership and demographic information online. Come see the features of the new portal and how it works with your Ed Communities Account!

■ **President's Parlor, with NSEA President Jenni Benson.** Have you always had a question you wanted to ask about NSEA? Benson will lead the discussion and answer those questions.

■ **Social Media for Educators, Eddie Ventura, NSEA Board.** Social Media can be a valuable, powerful tool for professional development, resource sharing and social interactions.

■ **Threat Assessment as a Prevention Tool.** Threat assessment is a respectful, discreet and proactive process which identifies safety issues in the school environment. Threat assessment is being used effectively in many school districts to enhance safety and help people in need connect to services.

■ **Welcoming LGBTQ Students and Colleagues, Abby Swatsworth.** Confused by the numerous identities today's youth embody? Join this workshop to learn how you can help create affirming spaces for sexual minorities.

Registration Details

Registration for the professional development sessions **does not** count as registration as a delegate to Delegate Assembly. To register as a delegate, contact your local association leadership. To register for professional development, go to: www.nsea/2018pd



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EDUC 601	Study Design and Data Collection	June 5 - July 27, 2018	3
EDUC 605	Cognition and Learning	Sept 8 - Oct 5, 2018	3
EDUC 553	Using the Internet	Oct 6 - Nov 2, 2018	3
EDUC 540	The Master Teacher	Nov 3 - Nov 30, 2018	3
EDUC 600	Sociology of Education	Jan 12 - Feb 8, 2019	3
SPED 500	Inclusionary Practices	Feb 9 - March 8, 2019	3
EDUC 552	Introduction to Multimedia Authoring (or elective or Graduate Transfer Credit)	March 9 - April 5, 2019	3
EDUC 621	Curriculum Development	June 3 - July 26, 2019	3
EDUC 602	Statistical Methods and Data Analysis	June 3 - July 26, 2019	3
EDUC 569	Teachers as Collaborative Leaders (or elective or Graduate Transfer Credit)	Sept 7 - Oct 4, 2019	3
EDUC 623	Assessment of Instruction (8-week capstone)	Oct 5 - Nov 29, 2019	3

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EDUC 601	Study Design and Data Collection	June 5 - July 27, 2018	3

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Read Across America Goes to Africa

Nebraskans Celebrate Seuss in Tanzania

Nebraska teachers and other educators across the country led students through Read Across America activities in early March, celebrating reading and the birthday of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss.

The team of Mary Ann Niemoth and her brother John Niemoth took it a step further.

The NSEA-Retired members might have called their mission trip to Tanzania "Read Across Africa." They spent a month in Tanzania on a mission trip that was both amazing and humbling, said Mary Ann Niemoth.

It was John's third trip to Africa, and Mary Ann's first mission trip to that continent, though she has taken such trips to Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

"I was amazed at the reception we got. There were 285 kids, and all of a sudden you have 285 new friends," she said.

They were invited to Tanzania by Lutheran pastor Eliabu Mbasha, a man John Niemoth had worked with before. Mbasha's family served as hosts, and took the Niemoths to school each day. The Niemoths taught English, geography, science and Bible courses at Kyarasa Primary School in Sawe Village, in view of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Mary Ann Niemoth also donated her collection of Dr. Seuss books to the school, and shared Dr. Seuss stories with students. She said the trip made her appreciate even more what American schools have.

"These students and their school had no electricity, no computers," she said.

Among other projects, they used an inexpensive inflatable beach ball with a world map on it to teach geography.

"Students had to point out their country, Tanzania, and then Nebraska, on the globe, then toss it to a fellow student and they had to identify two sites. After having success with this activity, we added the other continents. Identifying the oceans was the next step," she said.

"You get hooked with these kids, they are so loving," said Mary Ann Niemoth.

John Niemoth taught for many years at Valley; Mary Ann Niemoth taught for 30



Read Across Africa: NSEA-Retired members and siblings Mary Ann Niemoth, left, and John Niemoth, above at right, spent a month in Africa recently on a mission trip. Mary Ann Niemoth displays some of the books she took and left at the school. John Niemoth shows how to purify water using a simple chemical process and a car battery for power.

years at Hastings, retiring in 2011.

Spring Conference Ahead!

The NSEA-Retired Spring Conference will be held Thursday, April 26, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Mahoney State Park, off Interstate 80 between Lincoln and Omaha.

The morning session will provide an opportunity to hear from Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld on his work with Civic Nebraska, a non-profit, non-partisan organization working to create a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans.

The afternoon session will have a viewing of "Seeds of Hope," an I Love Public Schools film showing the challenges and successes of Nebraska educators working with immigrant and refugee children. There will also be many breakout sessions from which to choose: Recycling: New Directions and Challenges; Martial Arts: Common Sense Self-Defense; The Virtual Classroom: How Does Technology Connect the Student at Home with the School Classroom?; Bridges to Better Living: Advice for Making Transitions as We Age; Driving Safety; and BCBS insurance information.

One-day access to the state park will be provided to those cars without a park pass. The day concludes with desserts and prizes.

The conference is free to all NSEA-Retired members, and will cost \$10 for non-members. For more details, contact Rebecca

Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or email her at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

To register for the conference by April 19, go to:

www.nsea.org/retired

Science Camp at Pierce

Don Wood, an active member of the NSEA-Elkhorn/Sandhills Retired Association and a 41-year classroom vet from Pierce High School, has created an after-school science camp for elementary students.

All students in grades fourth through sixth receive an invitation to the camp. No fees are charged and Wood uses his former high school classroom. He has also offered the science camp to home-schooled students and students at Zion Lutheran Elementary.

To get ideas for science topics, Wood talks with teachers from each grade. He attempts to expose the students to as many areas of science as possible without duplicating topics in any of the grades.

The science camp is arranged for a four-day sequence depending on school schedule and extends from 3:30-5:15 p.m. each of the four days. The district is very supportive and provides students a ride to the high school for the camp. For more details on his camp activities contact Don at:

wood@ptcnet.net

— *De Tonack*
— *President, NSEA-Retired*

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Milken Honors Bestowed on South Sioux's Pickinpaugh

Science Teacher Among Handful of National Recipients

South Sioux City Middle School teacher Jon Pickinpaugh is the latest Nebraska recipient of a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award for teaching excellence.

The eighth-grade science teacher has taught at South Sioux City Middle School since his graduation from Wayne State College in 2010. He is one of only 44 Milken winners for the 2017-18 school year, and the only recipient from Nebraska.

A Wayne native, Pickinpaugh also has a degree in business administration from Wayne State.

According to the Milken Foundation, Pickinpaugh has developed a multifaceted approach to enhancing science proficiency, promoting structure and flexibility, while employing both self-directed and targeted learning. In his years at South Sioux City, he has helped prioritize learning

standards and built proficiency scales to ramp up academic and behavioral improvements.

He has also worked with at-risk students in the high-poverty school through his after-school role as football and wrestling coach, where he's been known to spend quality time discussing life with students after practice.

"Jon Pickinpaugh is a superlative educator who aims to engage every student. His drive to make science education interesting and attainable to all is the type of leadership we see in Milken Educators," said Greg Gallagher.

"Jon is a leader both inside the classroom and within the community," said Dr. Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education. "His dedication

to improving his students academically and more importantly, as good citizens, is an inspiration."

The Milken Awards are not application-driven; the Milken award is bestowed on recipients.



Pickinpaugh

Fennell Named to Board of Ed Nonprofit Initiative Offers Stipend to Educators to Document Ed Tech Experiences

The Jefferson Education Accelerator, in partnership with the University of Virginia Curry School of Education, has launched the Jefferson Education Exchange (JEX), a nonprofit committed to bringing educator perspectives to bear on edtech procurement and research.

JEX has received \$1 million in seed funding from Strada Education Network, along with support from the Curry School Foundation. NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell has been named to the JEX Board of Directors.

The concept for the Exchange grew out of research conducted for the Accelerator's inaugural EdTech Efficacy Research Academic Symposium, which was co-convened with Digital Promise and the University of Virginia. The first-of-its-kind event gathered a diverse cross-section of educators, researchers, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers in May 2017.

Bart Epstein, who will serve as president of JEX, said the path ahead is clear.

"No individual district or institution is in a position to make the investments required to collect educator perspectives at scale," he said. "The nature of this work is such that it is best addressed by an independent nonprofit, free from interference by providers themselves."

JEX's work will center on research and development to guide the design of research protocols and tools that will enable educators to document and share their experiences with specific edtech products. Educators who participate will receive both a stipend and technical support from JEX, in exchange for careful documentation of their experiences implementing products that have already been selected by their institutions.

To learn more about JEX and how to participate, visit:

www.jexuva.org

New Leaders Take Office in August

District, State Officers set for 2018-19

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

These representatives will take office beginning with the Aug. 1 start date of the 2018-19 Association year. Here are the results:

HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY

■ President: Andrew Lenzen, Nebraska Western Community College.

TRI-VALLEY DISTRICT

■ District president: Amy Burns, Kearney.
■ District vice president: Amy Sabatka, North Platte.
■ District secretary: Jill Lenners, Grand Island.
■ District treasurer: Angie Dickey, Chase County.
■ Executive committee: Jade Bartunek, Hastings; Melissa Boutwell, Lexington; Janet Sheaffer, Chase County.

ELKHORN DISTRICT

■ District secretary, Lanette Von Seggern, Pender.
■ NSEA Board of Directors: Jason Wiese, Arlington; Kimberly Erickson, Norfolk.
■ Executive committee: Jane Walford, Tekamah-Herman; George Weiland, Umo'ho Nation.

CAPITOL DISTRICT

■ District president: Burke Brown, Palmyra.
■ District secretary: Robin Ankrom, Falls City.
■ District treasurer: Devin Garcia, Lewiston.
■ NSEA Board of Directors: Michael Geist, Lincoln.
■ Executive committee: Bailey Feit, Lincoln.

METRO DISTRICT

■ District treasurer: Alan Bone, Westside.
■ District secretary: Marsha Edquist, Millard.
■ NSEA Board: Justin Potts, Omaha.
■ Executive committee: Paula Aguirre, Stan Croft, Omaha; Kathie Garabrandt, Millard; Julie Adams, Bellevue; Mary Claire Liescheski, Douglas County West.

PANHANDLE DISTRICT

■ District president: Renae Noble, Chadron.
■ District vice president: Roberta Rudden, Alliance.
■ Executive Committee: Amanda Reilly, Bayard.

SANDHILLS DISTRICT

■ District treasurer: Marcia Smith, Wheeler Central.
■ District secretary: Emily Tobias, Sargent.
■ NSEA Board: Marina Garner, Hyannis.

Take Action!

Are You Registered to Vote in May?

Nebraska's Primary Election is May 15, and no matter which side of the aisle you may favor, all educators should set a good example by registering and then voting.

The registration process is painless and simple. The deadline to register at your county clerk's office is Friday, May 4.

You may also register electronically at the Nebraska Secretary of State's website. At the website, click on the '2018 Elections' tab, and then look for the 'NReg2vote - Online Voter Registration' link. That website is at:

www.sos.ne.gov

Speaking of Education

"We must scrupulously guard the civil rights and civil liberties of all citizens, whatever their background. We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred is a wedge designed to attack our civilization."

"No country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources. Demoralization caused by vast unemployment is our greatest extravagance. Morally, it is the greatest menace to our social order."

"Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in."

— **Martin Luther King, Jr**
Minister, Activist
Jan. 15, 1929-April 4, 1968

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

Engaging Parents Who Don't Speak English

From Nicole, an ELL and Spanish/English immersion teacher in North Carolina:

"Each year, half of my students (and their parents/families) speak Spanish as their first language. I've found the key to getting parents involved is for me to know what their availability is and what they are able to do or enjoy doing—volunteering in the class organizing, working with small groups, chaperoning field trips, helping in the lunch room or at recess, helping with a special school event, etc. Then I provide parents with the information on when, where, how I need volunteers in advance and then again as dates approach (in Spanish).

"I communicate in Spanish/English via my classroom blog, which I print and send home for parents who prefer paper or don't have computer/internet access. Next, I provide the option of parents being a volunteer from home. I send projects and instructions in baggies (including supplies) on Friday, and on Monday students would bring back the completed projects.

"If you don't speak the parents' first language, then find someone who does and enlist their help. Our school has 'room parents' who are bilingual parents willing to contact parents who speak their same language and share teacher information. If there isn't a parent or person at your school, try your district — almost every district has outreach workers who speak the languages spoken by the families in their district. This can help to clear up any misunderstandings and lets parents know that you want to talk to them and took the time to seek out help!"

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



A Reading Blitz! NSEA President Jenni Benson honored Dr. Seuss and read to students in Scottsbluff on one day and in Lincoln the next as part of NEA's Read Across America campaign. Above, left, Benson is with Jessica Foland's classroom at Westmoor Elementary School in Scottsbluff. At right, she poses with Everett Elementary School kindergarten teacher Jules Spickelmier, at left, and student teacher Taylor Fredrick in their Lincoln classroom. Read Across America focuses on motivating children and teens to read — through events, partnerships, and reading resources. The program culminated in a reading celebration on March 2 — Theodor Seuss Geisel's birthday.