

THE

# VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ♦ December 2017



Take Note:  
Young Educators Rising!



# Not All Contracts are Created Equal

## Contract Language Questions? Call NSEA

A recent request from a local negotiator shed light on the fact that not all negotiated agreements are created equal.

The negotiator was reviewing contract language bargained by other associations. After looking at contracts from other local associations, the negotiator sent a question through NSEA's website to the organizational specialist assigned to that local. The question read this way:

"As I look through Negotiated Agreements for our array schools, I'm finding a LOT of Grievance Procedures included at the end of the agreement. Is that something we need to be including? Our board already has a grievance policy in the staff handbook that was written by their law firm. Could we use that? I'm looking for guidance."

As negotiators return to the table this fall, many are finding the need to clarify language or add new components to their negotiated agreements, according to NSEA Director of Collective Bargaining Randy Gordon.

"While language pulled from other local association agreements offers a starting point, it's important to also reference the NSEA's Sample Negotiated Agreement," he said.

"The basic components of a negotiated agreement are available through the Mem-



Gordon

bers Only section of [nsea.org](http://nsea.org) or through your organizational specialist," he said.

Those basic components include:

- Salary and placement language
- Leave categories
- Job protections
- Extra duty assignments
- Insurance benefits

The sample language is regularly reviewed and was recently updated to include language addressing a recent Nebraska Supreme Court decision on grievance procedures, so negotiators should use it to stay current on issues affecting changes to the agreement, he said.

Regardless of how agreement changes are drafted, it's always important to include precise language and timelines, when appropriate, and to adjust outdated wording. If negotiators have questions, never hesitate to contact your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

## Lead Contamination Discussed at Omaha Symposium

By Anna Flores, NSEA Intern

It's an epidemic, a crisis caused by lead.

NSEA was represented at the What's Lead Got to do With It? lunch in Omaha, held by the Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance.

In 1998, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was alerted about the high number of Omaha children with abnormal levels of lead in their blood. Since 1999, the EPA has been cleaning up contaminated industrial sites – one a lead smelting site that operated for 125 years, another a lead battery recycling site.

The contamination covered an estimated 27 miles, and was deemed an EPA Superfund cleanup site. It is the largest residential lead cleanup site in the U.S., says the EPA.

Symptoms of high lead levels in adults

include high blood pressure, abdominal pain, constipation, joint and muscle pain, and a decline in mental acuity.

Lead symptoms in children include coma, convulsions and even death. Lesser levels of lead can damage the central nervous system, kidneys and stem cells.

NSEA was represented at the lunch by NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte, Millard, and Omaha organizational specialists Judy Roach and Liz Figueroa. They were there to learn about the effects of lead contamination in children.

Panelists affected by lead spoke. Symone D. Sanders, Mary Castaneda, Chris Rodgers, Brenda Council and Charles Fischer related their stories, as artist Watie White moderated. White began sketching portraits

of those affected by lead poisoning and the Omaha Star newspaper began publishing the sketches and featured stories about those he depicted.

The panel discussion included information on how the Omaha area became contaminated and the solution to this epidemic.

"We need to take a comprehensive approach," Sanders said. "We need to take the lead out so they (children) can have a brighter future."

Citizens who believe their soil is contaminated by lead should order testing. If the test is positive, excavation will occur, new soil and grass will finish the job. Testing and cleanup are paid for by EPA. For details, go to:

[douglascounty-ne.org](http://douglascounty-ne.org)

**Cover:** With a growing need — and a shrinking supply — of new teacher candidates coming from the state's teacher education programs, these sponsors of Educators Rising chapters across the state are of vital importance. Learn how a grant from the National Education Association is assisting them as they 'grow their own teachers' on

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**NSEA**  
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**SE**  
STATE EDUCATION EDITORS

# Planting Seeds for the Future



**NSEA President  
Jenni Benson**

“

*Let me assure you  
that we are growing  
and preparing to  
graduate a wonderful  
new crop of teachers!*

”

It may sound cliché but I learn something every day. Sometimes I need to look for it. Mostly, I learn from others and from events around me. I also love to learn from the past and apply it to my present.

This time of year, I am especially melancholy about the past. My work as your president has taken me 12,000 miles in my car over the past four months. I use that “windshield time” to think and learn. I don’t mind the travel – the sights and sounds of fall remind me of harvest and my family. My father worked at a grain elevator for nearly 50 years. My grandfather farmed into his 80s, and lived to be almost 102 years old. Both men imparted a great deal of wisdom to me.

Recently, my time on the road brought me the beautiful gift of watching our Nebraska farmers harvesting their crops. I shared much of what I’d learned about farming and harvest with NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell as we motored nearly 2,000 miles on our trip to Gering for the Cowboy Up Advocacy Conference, and then on to Oklahoma City for a regional meeting with our education colleagues. I regaled her with stories of my grandparents’ farm and our family excursions to the Nebraska Sandhills. It was an enjoyable trip down memory lane for me – and reminded me that those memories are filled with important learnings.

Intertwined in my stories were things I have learned and continue to learn about myself and my decision to become an educator. I learn more and more about this job and the wonderful work of our members as I crisscross our great state and meet with members and other Nebraskans. It is a privilege and honor.

## **A Wonderful New Crop**

Recently, three events galvanized my hope for the future of our teaching profession. As we work each day in our classrooms, we realize that our students are going to grow up to be accountants, nurses, farmers, attorneys, carpenters...and teachers. Let me assure you that we are growing and preparing to graduate a wonderful new crop of teachers!

In early November, I attended the fall conference of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) at Peru State College. I am so proud of these aspiring educators. Our NSEA staff did a great job helping the student leadership plan a diverse and thought-provok-

ing learning opportunity.

Among other things, these student members raised nearly \$1,100 to donate to a hurricane ravaged school in Port Arthur, TX. They also learned from a diverse group of speakers, including a panel of three who addressed the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) issue. (Learn more about the conference on page 13.)

## **Passion for the Profession**

Two weeks later, more than 400 high school students who are considering education as a career attended the Educators Rising Showcase of Teaching held at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. In breakout sessions, the students watched as practicing teachers presented lesson plans in their area of discipline. The students were impressive! Equally impressive were the 25 or so Educators Rising chapter advisors. You can tell the advisors have a passion for the profession and work diligently and creatively to teach and cultivate young minds, moving more students to consider the teaching profession.

Through a competitive grant program, NSEA received support from NEA’s Great Public Schools Fund to grow the Educators Rising organization in the state. In the past nine months the grant has helped about a dozen new chapters get started across the state, or get into the early stages of organization. The grant has effectively doubled the number of chapters in Nebraska, and we’re aiming for more. (Learn more about the grant, and about Educators Rising, in the cover story on page 7.)

## **Helping Young Educators**

And finally, members at the 2017 Delegate Assembly approved a New Business Item directing NSEA to focus on the needs of early career educators – those in their first seven years of teaching. A committee met to brainstorm and collaborate on ideas to meet the unique needs of those beginning their teaching career. We are now working with NEA to plan and develop the resources we need to support those members. Soon we’ll be sending a survey to those new-to-the-profession members to solicit their input as we plan to meet their needs.

Just as Nebraska farmers do, we are thinking ahead to spring and the planting of seeds for the future. Watch us grow!



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# Retirement Plan Outlook: Sunny

## Yearly Review of Plan Shows Growth, Full Funding Sooner than Expected

The outlook for the state-managed public school-employee retirement plan can pretty much be summed up in one word: sunny.

For the second year in a row, the annual review of the plan indicates it is healthy and is headed in the right direction. In fact, the plan is expected to reach 100 percent funding eight years earlier than projections from a year ago.

Further, the projections indicate the school plan will need no additional state funding beyond the statutorily-required two percent contribution through at least 2022.

Plan consultants unveiled the sunny forecast at November's joint yearly meeting of the Nebraska Investment Council (NIC) and the Public Employees Retirement Board (PERB). The consultants reported that the plan is projected to be fully funded by 2030, well ahead of the 2038 projection of a year ago. A strong market the past two years has driven growth in the plan's health, particularly during the year that ended on June 30.

"It has helped a lot to have a strong return in the market," said Pat Beckham, a consultant and principal actuary with Cavanaugh Macdonald Consulting.

Changes to the Rule of 85 — plan members hired after July 1, 2018, must wait until age 60 to qualify — and other smaller changes were plan savings that contributed to strengthening the plan.

### Outlook is Positive

Action by PERB members last year to lower the actuarial rate of return on investments from 8 percent annually to 7.5 percent, effective on Jan. 1, 2018, had a significant effect on projections. Yet the funding outlook remains positive, and members of both PERB and NIC boards expressed satisfaction with the outcome and trends.

Aon Hewitt Investment Consulting Partner Max Kotary reminded board members that 20 years ago nearly 80 percent of public employee retirement plans expected 8 percent return on investment. Today, about 20 percent of those plans remain at 8 percent. Most, like

Nebraska, have lessened the goal to 7.5 percent or lower.

Kotary said his firm's analysts believe there is a "better than one in three chance of meeting or exceeding the 7.5 percent rate of return."

The plan had a 13.8 percent return on investment for the year that ended on June 30.

Beckham said the change in the rate of return increased the school plan's unfunded liability from \$1.16 billion to \$1.65 billion, and lowered the funded ratio of actuarial assets from 90 percent a year ago to 87 percent on July 1 of this year.

However, for the year ending June 30, the actuarial value of the school retirement plan grew by \$765 million — from \$10.046 billion to \$10.811 billion. And while the funded ratio of actuarial assets dipped to 87 percent, the trend is up. The plan was just 83 percent funded three years ago and 77 percent funded four years ago.

The funded ratio measures the value of the plan — with gains and losses smoothed over a five-year period — against plan liabilities.

Historically, the actuarial funded ratio of the plan hovered in the upper 80s to mid-90s, though the Great Recession pushed the ratio into the mid-70s.

### In Good Shape

Figures from the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Board during November show growth in plan participation and in plan funding.

	July 1, 2016	July 1, 2017
<b>Active members .....</b>	<b>41,443 .....</b>	<b>41,943 .....</b>
<b>Retired/Beneficiaries.....</b>	<b>22,530 .....</b>	<b>23,325 .....</b>
<b>Other .....</b>	<b>21,912 .....</b>	<b>22,630 .....</b>
<b>All Plan Members .....</b>	<b>85,885 .....</b>	<b>87,898 .....</b>
<b>Annual Benefit Paid ....</b>	<b>\$519.4m .....</b>	<b>\$549.0m .....</b>
<b>Assets (actuarial) .....</b>	<b>\$10.045b .....</b>	<b>\$10.810b .....</b>

### No Added State Dollars

Brent Banister, also with Cavanaugh Macdonald, pointed out that the total of all contributions — state, employer and employee — to the plan, is slightly more than what is needed, which takes the state off the hook for additional funding.

"The general trend is upward. Things are moving in the right direction, short of this one blip," said Banister, attributing the blip to the adjustment in actuarial rate of return.

The report from a year ago forecast the state plugging an additional \$900,000 into the plan in 2020 and another \$3 million in 2021 to keep the plan on track. November's report suggests that no additional state contributions will be needed for at least the next five years.

In addition to the state's required contribution, which equals two percent of teacher salaries, education employees contribute 9.78 percent of salary, and school districts contribute the equivalent of 9.88 percent of salary. The state plan covers all K-12 education employees in Nebraska except for those in Omaha. Omaha educators fall under a separate plan that was founded several decades before the state plan.

## Study: 'Authentic' Teachers Better at Engaging Students

Teachers who have an authentic teaching style are more positively received by students, according to research published in the National Communication Association's journal, *Communication Education*.

To achieve a more authentic style, teachers should use time before and after class to converse with students, allow opportunity to share experiences, and view teaching as an opportunity for dialogue.

However, to be truly authentic, teachers should enact such behaviors only so far as their personality and demeanor naturally allow, say study authors Professor Zac Johnson of California State University and Pro-

fessor Sara LaBelle of Chapman University.

About 300 college students were questioned about their perceptions of authentic and inauthentic teacher behavior and communication. Responses indicated that authentic teachers were seen as approachable, passionate, attentive, capable, and knowledgeable, while inauthentic teachers were viewed as unapproachable, lacking passion, inattentive, incapable, and disrespectful.

Authentic teachers showed a willingness to share details of their life, and displayed elements of humanity by telling stories, making jokes, and admitting mistakes. They also demonstrated care and compassion by

recognizing students as individuals and attending to their needs academically and personally, for example, by emailing those absent from class due to illness.

Students report higher levels of learning and deeper understanding in experiences described as authentic. More importantly, at-risk students are positively affected by teachers they perceive as authentic in communication. By teaching authentically, teachers may create more meaningful experiences and deeper learning for all students in a variety of settings and across disciplines.

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**Leaders!** These Educators Rising Nebraska state officers posed with NSEA President Jenni Benson at a state conference in Omaha in November. From left are Carmel Notario, Omaha Bryan High, secretary; Payton Steensma, Millard West High, president; Benson; Megan Peklo, Omaha Burke High, vice president of membership; and Elizabeth Soriano, Omaha Central High, vice president of communication.

# Young Educators Rising!

## Program has Made Teaching 'Cool, Realistic' Profession

If anyone doubts that the Educators Rising program encourages high school students to consider teaching as a career, all they need to do is sit with Jack Bangert in a hallway of the Milo Bail Student Center at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

At UNO one Wednesday morning in November, Bangert spoke with 10 UNO students – each one a former member of the Omaha South High School chapter of Educators Rising that he advises. On that morning, all were headed to UNO classes that will take them one step closer to a teaching certificate.

“That was just 10 students while I was sitting outside the conference hall,” said Bangert. “I think five years from now we will really reap the rewards of this program.”

If those 10 teachers-to-be and other recent benchmarks for the Educators Rising program in Nebraska are an indication, the riches from Educators Rising activities are indeed on the way. Fueled by a shortage of candidates from Nebraska teacher education programs, and boosted by a generous grant to NSEA from the National Education Association (NEA) Great Public Schools Fund, Educators Rising may now be serving more high schools students in the state than ever before.

Consider that:

■ Bangert was at UNO for the Educators Rising Nebraska annual Showcase of Teaching, a fall conference at which about 300 high school students and advisors were expected. Instead, 400 registered. The 2016 version of the conference had 280 attendees.

■ The number of high schools represented at the Showcase reached 19 this year. Last

year there were about 15 active Educators Rising chapters statewide. Today, at least 30 high schools have chapters that are active or that are taking steps to becoming organized.

■ Advisor Louis Harrison reports more than 20 members at his Bellevue West High School chapter, more than double from last year. Omaha Bryan High’s Jana Georgius said 34 members belong to her chapter, compared to 26 last year.

And seven students from the brand-new Scottsbluff High School chapter, led by advisor Jamie Batterman, made the trip to Omaha. Batterman foresees tremendous growth in her chapter.

“With our career academy programming and opportunities for great experiences, in addition to Educators Rising, I feel our numbers will grow quite a bit,” she said. “The students are really selling the program.”

The Omaha South chapter began with 13 students eight years ago. Today it has more than 90.

“Teaching has become cool and a realistic and noble profession at South High School,” he said.

### Teacher Shortage

Some of the growth in Educators Rising may be attributed to the realization within Nebraska’s education family that the state faces a teacher shortage, that the flow of new teachers from the state’s colleges and universities has slowed.

In 2003-04, there were more than 7,500 teacher education candidates in Nebraska’s colleges of education. By 2013-14, that number

### Record Numbers!

These chapters (and the number of students they sent) attended the Educators Rising Conference in Omaha in November. With sponsors, attendance surpassed 400. New chapters are in bold.

Bellevue East: 9  
 Bellevue West: 13  
 Millard Ed Academy: 42  
 Millard South: 7  
**Norfolk: 4**  
 Omaha Bryan: 25  
 Omaha Burke: 17  
 Omaha Central: 22  
 Omaha South: 91  
 Papillion LaVista: 15  
 Papillion LaVista South: 28  
 Plattsmouth: 11  
**Ralston: 4**  
**Scottsbluff: 7**  
**South Sioux City: 8**  
 Lincoln Career Academy: 46  
 Westside: 12  
 Avenue Scholars: 13  
 Beatrice: 4

### New chapters not yet ready to send students:

Columbus, Fremont, Kearney, Lincoln North Star, Madison, Omaha North, Omaha Northwest.

### Other organized chapters:

Bancroft-Rosalie, Creighton, Randolph, Sandy Creek.



had dwindled to 3,500, according to the Nebraska Department of Education. That dearth of candidates for employment may have made administrators more accepting of “grow your own teachers” programming like Educators Rising.

Administrators are “most definitely” interested in Educators Rising and similar programs, said Carol Ringenberg Packard, Health Sciences/Education and Training Career Field specialist for the Nebraska Department of Education.

“They are the ones who are looking for and hiring these teacher candidates,” she said.

The rapid growth in chapters and membership can also be attributed to work by NSEA to encourage creation of new chapters. Using a generous NEA Great Public Schools Fund grant, NSEA has provided “seed” funding to nearly every Nebraska chapter.

Building on a \$109,000 grant in 2016-17, the two-year, \$335,120 grant from the NEA Great Public Schools Fund is to be used primarily to recruit minority students to a teaching career pathway. Ethnic minorities make up more than 30 percent of Nebraska K-12 students, yet only 4 percent of teachers are of minority descent.

“We need more teachers of color who can serve as role models for students,” said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell.

Harrison, at Bellevue West, agrees.

“As a minority teacher, I feel the best way to attract minority students to the profession is for them to see someone who looks like them be successful and passionate about teaching,” he said.

“I like to think that I do that on a daily basis. And as the face of Ed Rising at my school, it lets our students see that race and ethnicity isn’t a barrier to a teaching career,” he said.

The grant allows NSEA staff to work with local association members to develop and grow new Educators Rising chapters at high schools across the state, as well as to bolster existing Ed Rising chapters.

Grant monies are also used to assist post-secondary students in their efforts to pass the Praxis Core test required to enter Nebraska colleges of education.

That aspect of the grant application stemmed in part from a focus group discussion with ethnic and minority NSEA members in 2015. NSEA staff and leaders learned that a significant stumbling block for ethnic and minority students seeking to become teachers is the lack of adequate preparation and tutoring for the Praxis Core test.

The plan calls for building a statewide cadre of tutors for the Praxis Core test; to further develop the prep and tutoring programs; to recruit students to the program; to secure needed materials and facilities for the activity; and to provide a stipend to tutors. The long-term goal is to maintain the program with assistance from Nebraska’s

## The Ed Rising Rebrand

Educators Rising was re-branded in 2016 from the previous incarnation as Future Educators of America. Sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, the national Educators Rising program is managed by a board of directors that includes three Nebraskans: former Nebraska Commissioner of Education Doug Christensen; State Senator and former Millard West High School Principal Rick Kolowski; and David Hempill, assistant principal at Kiewit Middle School in Omaha. Learn more at: [educatorsrising.org](http://educatorsrising.org)

16 colleges of education and to develop an online tutorial and follow-up Webinars.

### Funding Help

While minorities and high-minority population high schools have been targeted for Educator Rising chapters by NSEA, the program is open to all students with an interest in teaching. The funding provided to local chapters by NSEA has made a difference.

Bangert said the grant has helped cover the cost of registration for state conferences, and has “created a vibe in our school.

“Our students come back from conferences and field trips and they are incredibly positive about the experiences they have had. They talk with their friends about the class and the experiences,” he said.

Those opportunities, he said, have changed the paradigm that surrounds the education profession at South High.

Georgius said grant funding allowed Omaha Bryan to double from 12 to 23 the number of students who attended the November Educators Rising conference this year. Grant dollars have eased the fund-raising pressures, as well, she said.

Batterman’s students from Scottsbluff “loved the experience” of the trip to Omaha.

“They brought back ideas for lesson planning to use while collaborating with their cooperating educators during their job shadow experiences; tips for motivating students; and ideas for their competitive events projects,” said Batterman.

Harrison’s Bellevue West students have now been able to participate in Educators Rising at no cost (the \$10 membership fee can be a deterrent), spurring chapter growth.

An important factor in growing the program and, ultimately, the profession, sits at the head of every classroom.

“It is vitally important for teachers/educators to encourage young people to consider a career in education and join Ed Rising,” said Harrison.

“Teachers are in the best position to encourage the best and the brightest young people to pursue a career in education.”

*If you are interested in starting an Educators Rising program in your school, or are interested in tutoring college-level students in preparation for PRAXIS testing, contact your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.*

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# EHA in '18-'19: No Change in Coverage

## Board had Announced Zero Percent Rate Increase

As negotiators get deep into contract talks for the 2018-19 school year, one false report regarding the Educators Health Alliance health care plan for that school year must be put completely to rest: there is absolutely no change in coverage from the 2017-18 to the 2018-19 plan.

N S E A members who saw last month's announcement

already know that there will be no change in rates from 2017-18 to 2018-19, but there was speculation among some that the lack of a rate hike signaled changes to the health care plan. That is not true, said NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn, who chairs the EHA Board of Directors.

"We have managed this plan well. We have saved participants money. We have saved school districts, and school district patrons, money," said Clayburn. "Not only will there be no change in the rates in 2018-19, there will be no change in plan benefits."

All but four Nebraska school districts use the EHA plan, managed by NSEA, the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

When the 2018-19 plan year begins on Sept. 1, 2018, it will mark the 16th consecutive rate increase of less than 10 percent and the second time there has been a zero percent increase, said Clayburn. The average annual increase over the past eight years has been 3.3 percent.

The 2018-19 plan also boasts no increase in medical deductibles or other

copays. The zero percent increase is for all plan options. Rate increases in the previous seven years were 7.99 percent; 4.9 percent; 1.91 percent; 2.30 percent; 6.40 percent; 2.99 percent; and zero percent.

As Clayburn announced last month, the freeze in premium rates is made possible by several factors, including:

- The statewide effect of EHA's wellness and health promotion program;
- Recent lower than anticipated utilization rates in hospital and physician services;
- Pharmacy benefit management programming that has led to reduced pharmacy trends;
- A program designed to assist in the management of chronic diseases;
- Holding the line on health and administrative cost increases and;
- Continued prudent management in the design and choices of benefit plans.

EHA health insurance rates for the 2018-19 plan year apply to seven available active employee health benefit plans, three early retiree benefit plans, and five dental benefit plans.

The non-profit EHA was created to procure quality, affordable health care insurance for Nebraska education employees. Rates set by the EHA board are for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) health care plan used by more than 400 public school district and affiliate groups in the state. The plan is governed by a 12-member board representing the Nebraska Association



Educators  
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## Be Wary of Offers to Cover Medicare Costs

An alert to those who are nearing retirement age and Medicare eligibility: NSEA has received reports of school district administrators offering to pay for Medicare, Medicare Supplemental coverage and Medicare Part D if and when the teacher moves to that coverage.

Aside from affecting the school district's participation percentage in the Educators Health Alliance (a lower participation rate by a school district's employees can result in a premium rate surcharge to the district), the school district could be in violation of the Medicare Secondary Payor rule, which says a group cannot give incentives to a plan member to drop from the plan in favor of Medicare.

Those with questions about making the transition from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska through the Educators Health Alliance, and to Medicare, should contact the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) managed by the Nebraska Department of Insurance.

**NOTE: The SHIIP program educates Nebraskans about Medicare and helps them make informed decisions about insurance. The program is funded through federal grants.**

**SHIIP does not sell products or policies, and is not related to any insurance company. Confidential counseling is available for assistance.**

For details, call the Nebraska SHIIP program today at 1-800-234-7119.

of School Boards, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the NSEA. More than 80,000 Nebraskans are covered by the plan.

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### Capitol, Mansion Tours Go Online

The "Nebraska Virtual Capitol" website allows students and visitors to tour the State Capitol and Governor's Residence without ever setting foot in either building.

Visitors from around the world can discover more about Nebraska, its history, arts and architecture of the building that serves as the heart of our state government and the Governor's residence.

A few clicks reveal photos and details about each structure, including the elegant doors of the Warner Chamber, the amazing view looking up from the Capitol rotunda and the formal drawing room in the Governor's Residence. The site includes 360-degree

virtual tours with "hot spot" links to details and close-up images of rooms, mosaics and murals.

For educators, there are links to curriculum with lesson plans and other resources for teachers designing Nebraska studies and art lessons for their classrooms.

The curriculum is targeted at K-12 students, with an emphasis on fourth graders studying Nebraska history, and as a resource for students who cannot visit the buildings due to distance or cost.

The vision and leadership of former First Lady Sally Ganem and the support of nearly 100 donors, along with the Nebraska Arts Council, were critical to the creation of this resource.

To learn more, go to:

[netNebraska.org/virtualcapitol](http://netNebraska.org/virtualcapitol)

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# Higher Ed Members Tackle Rights, Contracts

## New Staffing Plan Bolsters Service

By Andrew Lenzen, President  
NSEA Higher Education Academy

With three months gone in the 2017-18 Association year, a lot has been happening with NSEA's higher education members. It has been busy!

First, NSEA management established a new staffing structure designed to unify access to higher education services and better serve higher education members.

"We've heard the voices of higher education leaders and members asking for staff they can call their own," said NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn. "The unified staffing structure offers that service."

NSEA Director of Research Larry Scherer is the Higher Education go-to-staffer for contacts from members and affiliates across the state, with assistance from organizational specialists Mike Wiesen, serving eastern Nebraska; Rich Wergin, serving central Nebraska; and Andrea Longoria, in western Nebraska. Higher education members are urged to direct calls and emails to Scherer.

So far this year, the Higher Education Team has received and addressed more than

20 member rights requests for assistance; assisted the Wayne State College Professional Staff with a grievance regarding a RIF hearing that was important for that local; and is dealing with another potential grievance at Central Community College regarding evaluation of faculty. At least two other bargaining unit issues are being addressed with assistance from the team and from NSEA legal services.

Contract talks are underway at three community colleges: Metro, Mid-Plains, Northeast and Southeast. The state college and University of Nebraska-Kearney bargaining units are prepping for negotiations next fall in an extremely challenging state revenue and budget environment. There is an NSEA commitment to work on updating arrays and data collection for community college, state college and UNK bargaining.

It was a great start to the new year with more than 25 higher education faculty from across the state at NSEA's Advocacy Conference in Columbus Sept. 29-30. We discussed goals for the coming year. Mem-



Lenzen

bers agreed that it is time for higher ed to become more active and visible. Academy officers were appointed and planning has begun for next summer's higher education conference. Watch *The Voice* for details.

Locally, a majority of higher ed affiliates have elected new presidents:

■ **UNKEA:** Will Aviles.

■ **Chadron State College:** Mathew Brust.

■ **Wayne State College:** Lori Nicholson.

■ **Central Community College:** Rachael Robinson-Keilig.

■ **Mid-Plains Community College:** Aaron McLean.

■ **Mid-Plains VEA:** Mike Janecek.

■ **Northeast Community College:** Melissa Lemke-Elznic.

■ **Western Nebraska Community College:** Aletia Norwood.

As president of the Higher Education Academy, contact me with thoughts or ideas about the role of the Academy and higher education within NSEA. Let us know what is happening on your campus. Reach me at:

[lenasoga98@yahoo.com](mailto:lenasoga98@yahoo.com)

You may also reach Scherer at:

[larry.scherer@nsea.org](mailto:larry.scherer@nsea.org)

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\* If you miss an application deadline, you can still apply as a non-degree seeking student to start taking classes that will apply toward your degree.



# SEAN Makes Change for One Texas District

## Cash, Knapsacks Given; Students Learn of DACA

When nearly 100 members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska all pull together in the same direction, good things happen.

The collective effort of chapters at colleges and universities across the state resulted in nearly \$1,100 and more than 120 knapsacks of school and other supplies being sent to a hurricane-ravaged school district in Texas last month.

SEAN's Change for Change drive saw local chapters collect spare change on each campus for the past month. The drive resulted in \$1,093.38 for the Port Arthur Independent School District.

"The dedication these SEAN members have to their future profession is truly inspiring. The education of my children is, proudly, in extremely good hands," said Kristen Sedlacek, NSEA organizational specialist and SEAN advisor.

SEAN members also heard from a panel discussing DACA – the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – issues.

Crete High School counselor Joel Lemus-Leon urged teachers to be steady when working with children facing immigration issues.

"Show consistency in being an advocate for students, for students who are vulnerable – even after hours," he said.

He urged teachers to build relationships with students, to identify and learn from ethnic minority staff members, and to find and learn from reliable information about immigration issues.

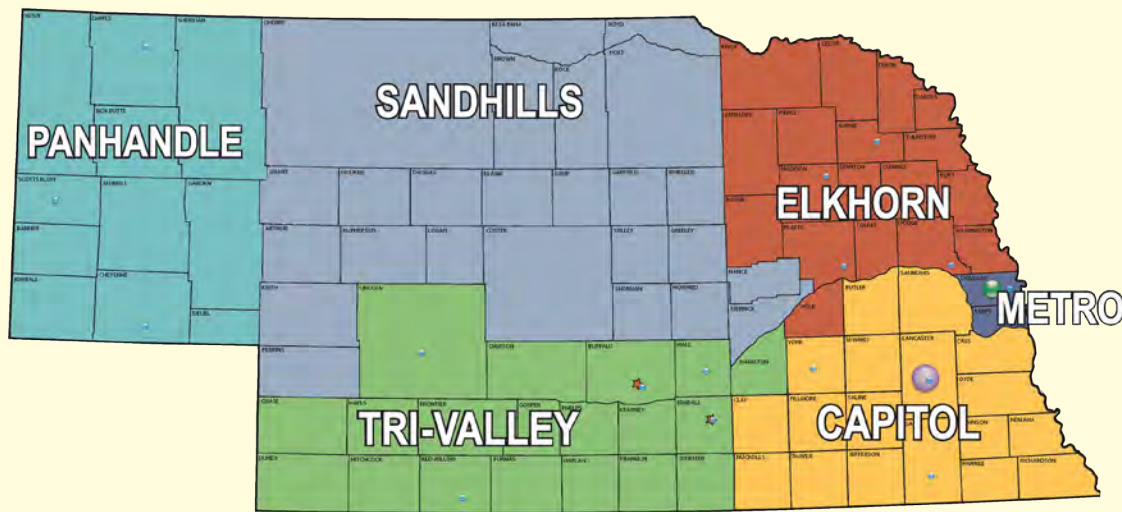
Maricia Guzman is a program coordinator for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center. She said where there are vulnerable people, there are those waiting to take advantage. Reliable information, she said can be found at [nilah.org](http://nilah.org) – the Nebraska Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline.



**Making the Call:** During one session, SEAN members were urged to call a parent or favorite teacher, thank them and tell them they loved them. Above, from left, Peru State College's Emily Whipple, Damian Causgrove and Rose Villeda make the call. At right, Hastings College students Christy Acevedo and Tatum Stenger pack Texas-bound bags with supplies. Below, SEAN members write short notes of encouragement to students to be included in the Texas bags. At bottom, students fill bags wearing 'Aspire to be the Change' t-shirts.







## THE VACANCIES

A statewide (see map) look at NSEA leadership opportunities:

### SANDHILLS

- Treasurer;
- Secretary;
- One seat on the NSEA Board of Directors;

### TRI-VALLEY

- President;
- Vice president;
- Treasurer;
- Secretary;
- One two-year term from each of the West, Central and East subdistricts.
- One one-year term from each of the West, Central and East subdistricts.
- One seat on the NSEA Board of Directors;

### ELKHORN

- Treasurer;
- Secretary;
- Three seats on the district executive committee.
- One seat on the NSEA Board of Directors;

### CAPITOL

- President;
- Treasurer;
- Secretary;
- Two seats on the district executive committee.
- One seat on the NSEA Board of Directors;

### METRO

- Treasurer;
- Secretary;
- Five seats on the district executive committee (all even-numbered subdistricts).
- One seat on the NSEA Board of Directors;

### PANHANDLE

- President;
- Vice president;
- Three seats on the district executive committee.

# Step Forward and Lead

With leadership comes responsibility. Leadership also brings about personal growth. Will you resolve to seek leadership in your professional association?

If so, the time to file is near!

The window for filing for the nearly three dozen openings on NSEA district boards and the NSEA Board of Directors will open on Monday, Jan. 1, and will close on Sunday, Jan. 28.

NSEA members will vote beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 16. Voting will close at midnight on Saturday, March 3.

To file for election, go to the NSEA website and click on the '2018 District Elections' link. Select your district, and then choose the office you are seeking. All persons seeking to file will need their 10-digit NSEA membership identification number. Your number will be found above your name on the mailing label of *The Voice*, or on the email that delivers the digital editions of *The Voice*. Call NSEA if you have questions about the election: 1-800-742-0047.

One step in the online filing process allows candidates to provide a 50-word statement. Voters will be able to read that statement during balloting. It may be easiest to type the statement in a Word or other text document before filing. Candidates can then paste the statement into the appropriate box during the filing process.

Note that NSEA encourages minorities to seek Association office at all levels. NSEA's Minority Involvement Plan says "It shall be the goal of the Association to seek minority representation on governing and appointive bodies at least equal to the percentage of minority membership for that appropriate level."

If you do not have access to the Internet, mail your name, address, local association name and a 50-word statement to: NSEA Elections, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Be sure to state which office you are seeking.

In all cases, the deadline for filing for office is Sunday, Jan. 28. The NSEA website is at:

[www.nsea.org](http://www.nsea.org)

## Higher Ed Academy Seeks Leaders

There will be vacancies to fill on the NSEA Higher Ed Academy Board of Directors for the 2018-19 year.



Vacancies exist for three-year terms of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, higher education faculty representative, academic professional representative, and educational support professional representative.

Because Higher Ed members are now integrat-

ed into NSEA's six districts, depending on workplace, they will receive two e-mails — one alerting them to NSEA elections and one for Higher

Ed Academy elections.

Those interested in one of these positions must contact NSEA President Jenni Benson by Jan. 28. She can be reached at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

[jenni.benson@nsea.org](mailto:jenni.benson@nsea.org)

## Required to Vote: A Valid Email Address

Would you like to vote in the 2018 NSEA election cycle? All you need is your 10-digit NSEA identification number.

Voting opens at 12:01 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16. Prior to that date, members with valid email addresses on file at NSEA will receive an e-mail detailing the procedure. The email will

include the member's unique 10-digit identification number.

NSEA members without a valid e-mail address on file will receive a postcard explaining the voting process. If you do not receive either a postcard or an email from NSEA by Friday, Feb. 16, call NSEA at 1-800-

742-0047.

Update your e-mail address by calling NSEA at 1-800-742-0047, or by filling the form at:

[www.nsea.org/contact-us](http://www.nsea.org/contact-us)





# Professional Development on Tap at DA

## Delegates Sought PD, Now It's on the Agenda

You've asked for it, now you'll get it!

Over the past few years, members at NSEA's April Delegate Assembly have suggested the annual business meeting also include professional development opportunities for members.

That will happen at the April 2018 event.

"We are still firming up our plans and format, but I think members will get a great deal of value out of the topics and ideas we are considering," said NSEA President Jenni Benson.

Initial plans call for the professional development to be offered on Friday evening, April 27, with all Association business to be conducted the following day.

Tentative professional development topics include trauma-informed classrooms; bullying; NEA's Degrees Not Debt program; Teach to Lead; legislative updates; teacher appraisal; social justice and more. Up to 10 options may be available, with each topic available at least twice during the evening.

In another new twist, the professional development programming will be open to registered delegates and non-delegates alike.

"It is important that all NSEA members have access to these kinds of opportunities," said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell. "This is the first of many professional development offerings we plan to provide members in 2018 and beyond."

## Recognize a Colleague's Excellence

Now is a good time to begin discussing who you or your association might nominate for one of the honors to be given at NSEA's Delegate Assembly in April.

Any NSEA member may nominate a member teacher, ESP or deserving group. Mailed nominations must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 16, 2018, and should be sent to NSEA Awards, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Nominations may also be submitted online, with required supporting material mailed to the NSEA. Online nomination forms are found under the 'Call for Nominations' link at:

[www.nsea.org](http://www.nsea.org)

The 2018 Delegate Assembly will be held at Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel April 27-28. NSEA members are eligible for:

■ **NSEA Rookie of the Year:** To honor a first-year teacher who excelled in the 2016-17 school year.

■ **Award for Teaching Excellence:** Honors a teacher who has excelled in the classroom over a period of time.

■ **Education Support Professional of the Year:** Honors an ESP who has excelled in his or her job.

Finalists will be notified in March, with winners revealed at Delegate Assembly. Recipients receive a \$250 cash award. NSEA members are also eligible for:

■ **The Great Plains Milestone Award:** Honors an individual/group for promoting human and civil rights.

■ **Community Service:** Honors NSEA members and/or local associations involved in volunteer work outside of classroom hours.

■ **Local Public Relations:** Honors local associations for outstanding communication within the association.

Also to be presented:

■ **Friend of Education:** Honors an individual or organization that has made a statewide contribution to education.

■ **Media:** Recognizes a newspaper, television or radio station for coverage of education issues and promotion of public education.

On Saturday, delegates will discuss and debate changes to By-laws, any proposed new Resolutions or New Business Items. Dues for 2017-18 will also be set by Delegates on Saturday.

The 2017 Delegate Assembly is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 27-28 at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel.

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.

# Federal Tax Cut Plan Seen as Giveaway

## Bill Risks Funding Thousands of Teachers

In late November, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a multi-trillion dollar plan that funds tax breaks for the wealthiest and corporations on the backs of students and working families.

Among other things, the House bill eliminates a popular deduction that allows educators to deduct up to \$250 of the cash they spend on their students and classroom supplies. Meanwhile, the bill preserves corporate deductions for office supplies.

The House bill also widens a tax benefit for the wealthiest to pay for private school expenses while cutting tax deductions for the middle class. The elimination of many of the state and local tax deductions would blow a hole in state and local revenue to support public education and

risk funding for nearly 250,000 educators, including more than 1,600 in Nebraska, according to estimates from the NEA.

The House plan also eliminates the student loan deduction but opens a new loophole for the wealthy to sock away money to pay for private school tuition.

NSEA President Jenni Benson urged Nebraskans to contact congressmen and U.S. Senators and ask them to support common sense tax reform, rather than remove tax deductions that benefit middle class education employees.

"As educators spend more and more of their own money each year to buy essentials for their students and classrooms, Washington chose to ignore the sacrifice they make to ensure that students have what they need," said Benson. "A majority in Congress voted to make this deduction permanent in 2015 – yet now they want to end it. It's hypocritical and nonsensical."

NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell called the action irresponsible.

"It is irresponsible to put funding for 250,000 education jobs at risk – including 1,600-plus jobs in our state," said Fennell.

She said the House plan would mean significant cuts to public education and provide more loopholes for the rich through a voucher scam offered as tax relief.

"This poorly veiled and risky voucher program will only benefit those who can already afford private school tuition at the expense of our students and neighborhood public schools – where 9 out of 10 children attend. This is not normal.

"We ask Nebraskans to contact their representatives to reject this reckless plan."

The U.S. Senate was also considering a tax relief plan at press time. Once both branches have OK'd a plan, it will be reconciled and reconsidered in each house.





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## Our School Board Conversation



**Executive Director  
Maddie Fennell**

“

...NSEA is actively working with NASB, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska Department of Education and many others to meet our shared mission: a great public school for EVERY child.

”

Last month, NSEA President Jenni Benson and I were invited to attend the annual meeting of the Nebraska Association of School Boards. In fact, NASB leaders were kind enough to offer NSEA an opportunity to present at the conference. We asked outgoing NASB President Linda Richards to chair a panel that included Jenni and I, and Nebraska State Board of Education members Patsy Koch Johns and Lisa Fricke, both former active teacher members and now members of NSEA-Retired.

The hour-long session was promoted thus:

*It is imperative that Nebraska's education community work together to ensure strong public schools and a quality education for all our public school students. As it celebrates its 150th anniversary, the NSEA has embarked on a new strategic plan. Join a panel of NSEA and school board leaders to hear about NSEA's new direction and for candid answers to your questions.*

The NSEA strategic plan was built over the last two years with input from members across the state. At the 2017 Delegate Assembly, delegates approved five goals and associated outcomes that will drive our work in the coming years. We believe that by increasing the capacity of our Association to effect change through member organizing, political involvement, advancing social justice issues, and responsive governance structures, our members will be better prepared to advocate for and meet the needs of our students, our profession and public education.

### Questions Asked

Prior to the conference, we asked Linda to ask us the kind of questions that people always want to ask NSEA, but may not feel are appropriate (or the ones they will only ask when we aren't in the room to answer!). It was probably a good thing that we asked, since Linda is a straight shooter and wouldn't have pulled punches anyway!

I want to share with you some of the questions, and our responses, from that afternoon.

### Why should the NASB and the State Board care about – and even support – NSEA's strategic plan?

While “I Love Public Schools” shirts are proudly worn across our state, there are forces out there that are actively seeking to dismantle public schools. They see a business and profit opportunity by funneling tax dollars into private pockets through vouchers and charter schools. Those forces would love to see NSEA and NASB at odds with each other. Our division would be their opportunity. But NSEA is actively working with NASB, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators,

the Nebraska Department of Education and many others to meet our shared mission: a great public school for EVERY child. As Linda said, we are focused on working together for the benefit of the 312,000 students in our Nebraska public schools!

### How safe do you believe teachers feel in speaking up when they have a problem or idea?

We stressed that the school board members need to have policies that clearly outline when and how teachers can speak to board members or speak on public issues. The two-way lines of communication between all education stakeholders must be open. The level of safety felt is in direct correlation to what teachers see happen to a teacher who speaks up. Was the teacher supported? Was their idea given thoughtful consideration? Was their problem openly addressed? It's not enough to have an “open door” policy; your actions must be in support of collaboration.

**Local school boards sometimes feel that the NSEA and local teachers' association focus only on salary and benefits – and block progress and reform. How do you respond to that and what can our state organizations do to promote increased collaboration in our local public schools?**

Teachers are parents and breadwinners – and holders of student loan debt! They need a salary that allows them to provide for their families while committing their professional lives to their students (while not being exhausted from working a second and third job to make ends meet). While the union and school board have a duty to work together on negotiations, our real collaboration should go far beyond the bargaining table. Too often, we burn bridges across our differences instead of building them across the common interest we have in seeing our students succeed. We all need to listen to *understand* rather than *reply* while staying focused on doing what is in the best interests of students.

As Jenni often reminds all of us, “While students comprise 27 percent of our population, they are 100 percent of our future.”

I am proud of the collaborative relationships that NSEA enjoys with NASB, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the myriads of other organizations and individuals that support the future of the 312,000 students in our Nebraska public schools.

Note: NSEA's full strategic plan is found at:  
[www.bit.ly/NSEAPlan](http://www.bit.ly/NSEAPlan)

### GOALS

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

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

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

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

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

# Wanted: Retired Delegates, Willing Lobbyists

### Leadership Vacancy, Delegate Rosters will be Filled by Vote

This coming New Year will bring the possibility of only minor changes to your NSEA-Retired Board of Directors. Because of an election cycle quirk, only one of 11 seats on the board will be contested in 2018.

Open for election is the Metro District representative seat, where Carol Krejci of Omaha is completing her first term. Candidates seeking that post will serve a three-year term beginning Aug. 15, 2018.

Also to be elected: delegates to 2018 NSEA Delegate Assembly, to be held in Lincoln on April 27-28; and delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, to be held in Minneapolis from June 30 to July 5. These delegates will serve a one year term.

Probable numbers for Delegate Assembly will include four delegates from Capitol District; three from Elkhorn District; five from Metro District; one from the remainder of the state; and three at-large delegates.

Complete details on how to file for these elections will be posted in mid-January on the NSEA-Retired website at:

[www.nsea.org/retired](http://www.nsea.org/retired)

Any NSEA-Retired member in good standing is eligible to seek election to one of these openings. Candidates for District Director, NSEA Delegate Assembly or NEA Representative Assembly must live in the NSEA District they wish to represent.

### Lobby Day Scheduled

A key date for 2018 has been set.



**Thank You:** The NSEA-Retired Fall Conference provided an opportunity to thank the now-retired Duane Obermier for his service to the Association. NSEA-Retired President De Tonack, left, thanked Obermier and his wife, Bonnie, by acknowledging a donation made on their behalf to the Latino Peace Officers Association (LPOA) in Omaha. The Obermiers were instrumental in the successful nomination of the LPOA for NEA's George I. Sanchez Award at the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly in Boston. The LPOA also received NSEA's Great Plains Milestone Award at the NSEA Delegate Assembly in 2014.

The NSEA-Retired Lobby Day will be Tuesday, Feb. 13, at the NSEA Headquarters. The 2018 calendar calls for a short legislative session, but it promises to be jam-packed with scores of education-related issues on the front burner. And the lobbying part is easy! To register, go to:

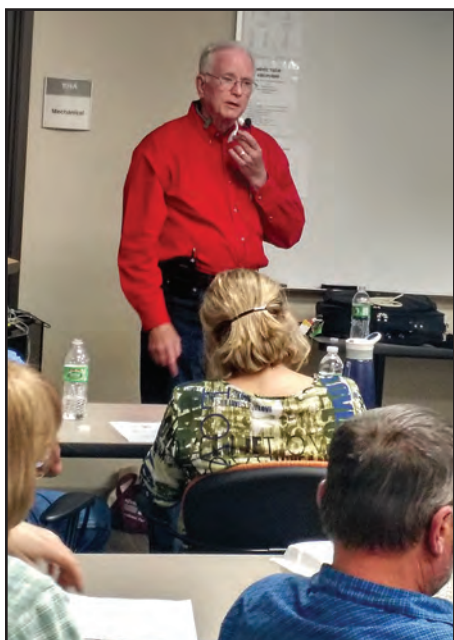
[www.nsea.org/RetiredLobby](http://www.nsea.org/RetiredLobby)

### Sarpy County Members Spooked!

Ben Justman of the Sarpy County Museum was at the Bellevue Education Association Retired's meeting in October with more than 60 members. Justman told stories of forgotten ghost towns of Sarpy County.

— De Tonack

— President, NSEA-Retired



**Retirement Planning:** For years, former NSEA-Retired President Roger Rea, left, has provided retirement planning seminars to members around the state. Since the start of the 2017-18 school year, Rea has given another four such sessions in NSEA's Sandhills District, sponsored by the Sandhills District Board of Directors. Rea made a presentation in mid-October to 53 NSEA members at Broken Bow, above. During that same week he also provided workshops at Hyanis, O'Neill and Palmer.



# Playing Field said Tilted for Some Nebraska Kids

There are vast differences in opportunity for children in Nebraska, and other states as well, the Public News Service (NE) reported in late October.

A study reviewed by the Public News Service shed light on potential policy that might level the playing field for all children.

The report from the The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2017 Race for Results work, indicates that three issues prevent children of color and children from immigrant families from reaching full potential. Those issues are poverty, limited educational opportunities and family separation.

Nebraska has mostly done well for kids, Chrissy Tonkinson, a research coordinator with Voices for Children in Nebraska, told the Public News Service (NE).

"But unfortunately, Nebraska is mostly a really good state to be a white kid," she says. "And so we need to make sure that we're affording the advantages that white non-Hispanic kids get to every single Nebraska kid as our state grows more and more diverse."

Judged by key milestones, Nebraska ranks 30th in opportunities for African-American children, 33rd for Asian and Pacific Islander children and 37th for Latino children, according to the study.

Report co-author Laura Speer, the associate director of policy reform and advocacy at the Casey Foundation, says child well-being is key to the nation's future and very much influenced by their environments. She said that policies are needed that make communities more supportive and healthy.

"Those are things like increasing access to early child care and education and ensuring that students are ready for higher education," she says. "We know this has a really high return on investment, so we need to make sure that's something that we invest in as a country."

The report recommends expanding economic opportunity for parents and keeping families together. Tonkinson says for immigrant families this means ensuring a child's well-being is prioritized in immigration-enforcement decisions.

## Westside Educator Earns NEA Foundation Fellowship

The NEA Foundation has named Angela Madsen, English/language arts and social studies educator at Westside Middle School in Omaha, as one of the 48 NEA members to become one of the 2018 class of Global Learning Fellows.

She will spend a year building global competency skills and creating global lesson plans for their students that are

freely shared through open-source platforms.

"I want to enhance my knowledge and practice so I can advocate more effectively that global competence, especially in our current climate, is as essential to student success as literacy," said Madsen.

Over the next year, the NEA Founda-

tion will support Madsen as she immerses herself in online coursework, webinars, and collegial study, including a two-day professional development workshop and a nine-day international field study next summer.

The NEA Foundation applications for 2019 are accepted through Feb. 5 at:

[www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org)

## Weights, Measures Detailed in Video

In the world of weights and measures, inspectors are frequently asked, "how do you know yours is right?"

Regarding test weights, an inspector of weights and measures will try to describe this system of traceability of their mass standards all the way back to a piece of metal stored in a vault in the basement of a building in France that has served as the international mass standard dating back to the 19th century.

Today, there is a video entitled The American Kilogram available to educators explaining the system, according to Lincoln's Don Onwiler, who is the executive director of the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM).

The video is nine minutes long and was produced by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Both fun and educational, the video explains the measurement system and the system's history and reliability. The video also explains that — surprise! — America's system of weights and measures is based on the metric system.

The NCWM is headquartered in Lincoln, said Onwiler. The video link is at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmSJXC6\\_qQ8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmSJXC6_qQ8&feature=youtu.be)

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N175944CA

# Take Action!

## Apply for Athletic Grant; Reduce Travel Costs!

Would you like to give your school's athletes more than a sporting chance?

Would you like to travel *and* save money doing so?

You can apply for athletic grants of from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for your middle/high school's team through the California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant.

You can travel less expensively by using the NEA Member Benefits new program called NEA Vacations!

The California Casualty grant was established to provide support to public school sports programs affected by reduced budgets.

As a school employee and a member of NSEA, you can apply for a grant award for your school's sports program.

The program considers requests for public middle/high schools where athletic programs are in jeopardy and in need of funds. The application deadline is Jan. 15.

Applications must be submitted by an active employee of the school for which the grant is requested. The applicant must be a current member, or referred by a current member, of NSEA. Advise your principal and athletic director of your grant request as they will be contacted about your application status.

A selection committee will review applications and applicants will be notified of their status by May 30. Awards must be used to subsidize the sports program(s) identified on the grant application and cannot be used for student awards, construction or other school programs.

California Casualty requires permission to publish details of the award. For more details, or to apply, go to:

**CalCasAthleticsGrant.com**

Regarding those vacation savings: The one-stop NEA Vacations program allows you to book vacation plans and earn dollars toward future vacation purchases.

To learn more, turn to page 15 in this issue, or go to:

**www.neamb.com**

## Speaking of Education

"Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds, do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."

— *Anatole France,*  
*Journalist, Novelist, 1844-1924*

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

## Class Note Taker

From Janetta Carney, a teacher in Arkansas:

"I keep a folder for each class period in a file stacker at the front of the room and assign a note taker every day. The note taker uses carbon paper and notebook paper to copy the notes from the lecture. The student gets to keep his/her original and the copy goes in the class file at the end of the period. All students know when they return from an absence, they are to check the folder for any notes and handouts they may have missed. If more than one student is absent, the note taker writes the names of the absentees on the top of the paper so they know when they return they have to copy the notes and pass them on to the next student. This policy works well for me, and I don't have to answer the 'What did I miss yesterday?' question. My students know to look in the file."



**Sign up for Works4Me messages at: [nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html](http://nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html)**



## Fly the Friendly Skies!

**NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn may be a Navy man, but he was one of several Nebraska educators who took advantage of an opportunity to fly in a Nebraska Army National Guard UH60 Blackhawk helicopter in October. The Guard makes flights available to educators through the Nebraska Army National Guard Educator Flight program.**