

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ♦ January 2019

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*Jared Wagenknecht serves as chair
of NSEA's Government Relations Committee*

- Legacy Gift Boosts Children's Fund
- Scotts Invest for More Teachers
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Important Details Inside!



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At Five Years, Buffett Institute Efforts Aim High

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska has released a report detailing progress and accomplishments during its first five years. Efforts to close the achievement gap and to strengthen the early childhood workforce constitute the critical areas of work.

The Institute began operations in June 2013 and set a fast trajectory under the leadership of founding Executive Director Samuel J. Meisels, a nationally recognized leader in early education. Shaped by the shared vision of the University of Nebraska and philanthropist Susie Buffett, the Institute focuses on early childhood development and education.

In 2013, approximately 40 percent of Nebraska's children from birth through age 5 — urban and rural — were considered at risk of failing at school.

The Institute set out to change that statistic and the lives of young children, birth through grade three. Working on all campuses of the University of Nebraska, Meisels and his team established two signature programs: the Achievement Gap Challenge and the Early Childhood Workforce Development Program.

"From the moment I came to Nebraska, I had one big idea: to make Nebraska the best state in the nation to be a baby," said Meisels. "We are well on our way to meeting our goals."

The Institute earned NSEA's highest award, the Friend of Education, in 2018.

First five year highlights include:

■ **Understanding Needs & Views:** In 2016, the Institute partnered with Gallup on the largest opinion poll ever of Nebraskans concerning attitudes about early care and education. It also commissioned an extensive study of more than 1,600 members of the state's early childhood workforce. Findings show the vast majority of Nebraskans support early childhood education. More than

two-thirds said early care and education has a significant impact on a child's long-term success. Yet very few believe high-quality care and education is available or affordable for all Nebraskans.

■ **Birth to Grade 3 Demo:** The Institute works with 11 metro school districts in the largest birth through third grade demonstration project in the U.S. to reduce achievement gaps. The demonstration includes participation of more than 15,000 children. Early evidence suggests promising results. An evaluation showed there are 13

percent more Pre-K and 16 percent more Kindergarten-first grade students within the average range or higher on academic achievement, 14 percent fewer students in the lowest 20th percentile of achievement, and a 20 percent gain in instructional support among K-3 teachers.

The Institute has worked with the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services and Educational Services Unit 13 to map that region's early childhood resources, needs and capacity.

■ **The Early Childhood Education Workforce:** Based on research and a comprehensive blueprint for systems-level reform, the Institute convened a statewide commission to develop an action plan for addressing critical challenges facing the early care and education workforce. The Early Childhood Workforce Commission will address issues that have confounded the early childhood field, higher education and lawmakers: low wages and a shortage of qualified providers among them.

■ **Building Consensus, Collaboration:** Acknowledging that no single entity can close achievement gaps alone, the Institute conducted and published studies and hosted meetings, professional development sessions and more.

To learn more, visit:

buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu



On the Cover: Papillion-LaVista Education Association Vice President Jared Wagenknecht knows well the value of political involvement, even though his first attempt to testify before the Legislature was sidetracked by the birth of his second child. Learn more on Page 9.

It Takes Just One



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

Every single
potential
member has
a unique voice,
a unique
perspective,
to add to our
Association
discourse and
dialogue.

”

I love music. Every kind of genre. I could sing all day long.

In fact, on my road trips across Nebraska to meet with and advocate for members, I often wonder what other drivers think when they see me rambling along, belting out a song!

I appreciate good lyrics that tell a story: memories of a concert, a romance, tales of lost or missed chances. Song lyrics can request an action to help others, to urge aid for our fellow man.

It just doesn't get much better than good lyrics matched to a catchy tune.

With the start of the New Year, NSEA is unveiling a new membership campaign that runs through February. It's called Just One. As you might suspect by now, I turned to music to search for lyrics that would tell a story about our Just One drive.

Barry Manilow came in a winner with his composition, "One Voice."

*If only one voice
Would start it on its own,
You need just one voice
Facing the unknown
And then that one voice
Would never be alone...*

Never Alone

Collective power brings an assemblage of voices into the Association – it's like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on steroids. Yet every single voice is important and distinct. Every voice matters and becomes an important part of the support system for our students and public schools.

That single voice, perhaps missing at the moment, may be just the voice your local Association or our state Association needs to flourish and influence change. That voice should never be alone.

Quite Introverted

While I might be singing today, as a child I was the quiet one. I was quite introverted as I grew up. There were times that I felt my voice would not be heard, even when I did speak up. My youngest daughter followed a similar path and did not often speak up in

school. She would share with me her frustration as "talkers" took over the class. Today she is in her final semester working on a master's in business administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I continue to stand in awe as I watch her grow and fine tune her voice.

Like my daughter and me, the voices of our members will develop at different times during their careers. Yet each member has an important voice to add to the discussion. Every single potential member has a unique voice, a unique perspective, to add to our Association discourse and dialogue.

Indispensable Difference

The Just One membership campaign asks every NSEA local to enroll one new member over the next 60 days, and allows membership on a prorated basis for the remainder of the school year. Enrolling one new member per local association should not be too difficult, yet it will make a meaningful difference. When completed, the Just One drive will add nearly 300 new members to our Association and our collective voice. Think of the difference that will make for our local Associations as well as at the state level!

The Just One drive makes second semester a ideal time to visit with potential members about the need and importance of adding their voice to the Association, and the indispensable value of adding their experiences and their perspectives in the Association's work on behalf of public school students.

The Collective Power

Manilow's song reminds that it all starts with just one voice, and that we join together to have a stronger collective voice.

*So they hear what's on your mind
And when you look around you'll find
There's more than one voice...
Joining with your one voice.*

Your voice is important. Every voice is important. Find one more voice, tell them about the collective power of our voices, and ask them to join us.

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Teacher Academy to Address Shortage

Scott Gift Will Position University to Better Meet Teacher Workforce Needs

Enrollment in Nebraska's pre-K-12 schools has grown rapidly, from 334,000 in 2009-10 to more than 361,000 today.

The teacher preparation pipeline has not kept pace. The number of Nebraska college students majoring in education has fallen from 7,500 in 2003-04 to 3,600. The number of teaching positions vacant or filled by someone other than a fully qualified teacher has more than tripled, to 232.

With a generous gift from the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation, the University of Nebraska system will be in an even stronger position to meet this most critical workforce need.

The Scott gift will allow the university to pilot one cohort of a new Teachers Scholars Academy to recruit, retain and develop a larger, highly qualified and more diverse pre-K-12 teaching workforce.

The University of Nebraska at Kearney, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha will begin immediate recruitment for the Teachers Scholars Academy. An inaugural class of more than 100 students is expected next fall. The broad focus will

include preparing those educators to serve diverse populations, work in rural schools and teach English language learners.

"Research and common sense tell us that the quality of care and education we receive starting at birth has enormous implications for our success and well-being later in life. It's vital that we have enough highly qualified educators in Nebraska to carry out this important work," said University President Hank Bounds.

"We are fortunate to have a wonderful education system in Nebraska staffed by teachers who are great at what they do. There just aren't enough of them. We're making this investment in the Teachers Scholars Academy because the future of our state demands we provide a quality education to our young people and families," said Ruth and Bill Scott.

The gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation will provide full-tuition

scholarships plus \$8,000 annually for other costs for 104 students who want to become teachers. Students will have access to learning communities and peer networking to strengthen retention and maximize their professional development.

The university and NU Foundation will now begin raising funds for future Academy cohorts.

'We are fortunate to have a wonderful education system in Nebraska staffed by teachers who are great at what they do. There just aren't enough of them.'

— Ruth and Bill Scott

SEAN Leader: The 2018-19 officers for the Student Education Association of Nebraska are, from left: Abigail Innis, University of Nebraska Omaha, Metro Region representative; Alicia Laufenberg, University of Nebraska Omaha, president-elect; Megan Wallace, Peru State College, Southeast Region representative; London Bercey, Wayne State College, president; Adrienne Kruger, Wayne State College, Northeast Region representative; Kaylee Prenosil, Wayne State College, secretary; Ethan Molifua, Hastings College, Western Region representative; and Emily Mize, University of Nebraska Omaha, Underclass representative.



Reminder: Letter of Intent Date is March 15

Know Your Rights Concerning Intent

Hard to believe, but distribution of letters of intent began before the end of 2018 in some Nebraska school districts.

That's early, since state statute does not require Nebraska's PK-12 teachers to return signed letters before March 15.

Letters of intent are no laughing matter, and PK-12 educators should be aware of their rights, said NSEA Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan.

State law allows school districts, on or after March 15 each year, to require certificated employees – teachers, counselors, speech pathologists, psychologists and others – to sign binding letters of intent and/

or individual contracts. Such letters signify whether the teacher intends to return to employment in that district the next year.

In recent years, teachers have been asked to declare intentions early, said Guinan. Some administrators have sent letters as early as mid-January. In rare instances – including this year – the letters have been sent out before Jan. 1, sometimes asking for response within 10 days.

Guinan advises that members not rush to sign, but be deliberate in the process and use the time allotted by law. She said state statute is clear: "A school district cannot require teachers to make a commitment before March 15."

Failure to sign and return the letter by stated deadlines that fall on or after March 15 is a threat to a teacher's employment.

State Statute 79-829 addresses permanent certificated employees and contracts says, in part, "the certificated employee shall not be required to signify such acceptance prior to March 15 of each year."

Guinan offers this advice: If administrators distribute such a letter/contract prior to March 15, and ask for its return prior to that date, a local association representative should fax a copy to Guinan or their assigned organizational specialist at the NSEA (1-402-475-2630). In the meantime, an appropriate response to the letter by teachers is "I don't know yet" or "I'm not sure."

If the letter is distributed on or after March 15, or asks for a return after that date, it's important to sign and return it by the due date.

Questions? Call your organizational specialist, or Guinan, at 1-800-742-0047.

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>Kaitlyn Clark

Musical director, Gothenburg Public Schools

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An Unexpected Gift

Tilden Man's Estate Aids Children's Fund

Harold Ritter was many things. He was a farmer, folk artist, bachelor, machinist, woodcarver, storyteller, inventor, recycler, patent-holder and more.

He was also thrifty. His niece, Karen Ritter, said that when Harold gave 77 acres of farmland to a conservation group, he encountered a cable company man inspecting the property. The company man noted Harold's tattered and worn coat.

"Thinking Harold was destitute, the cable man bought and delivered to Harold a new coat," said Karen Ritter. "Harold made him take it back."

Today, with a gift of \$53,201 from his estate to the NSEA Children's Fund, Harold Ritter is buying coats and other necessities for Nebraska school children.

"Children were one of his loves. He was a very kind-hearted guy," said Karen Ritter.

Established in 1994, the Children's Fund assists children in need of warm clothing, eyeglasses and other needs. Any member who sees a child in need can call NSEA and access funding for such necessities.

Karen Ritter, living today in Brooklyn, NY, has fond memories of visiting her Uncle Harold's farm near Tilden.

"Everything he had was homemade. As a kid, he made a deck of cards, his own Mo-

nopoly game, a ladder and toys," she said. "He made a steam engine – that you could ride! – from scratch. He built an organ and a grandfather's clock."

He was generous with his time. Neighbors from miles around took their repair work to him.

"More than one wife told me that if their husband was late for dinner, they'd know where he was – Harold's," she said. "They'd come by for advice on a problem they were having with their car or truck and would stay for hours."

As an electrical engineering student, Karen Ritter's father was first in a class of 600 at the university and worked for Control Data. But he thought Harold was the "brilliant one." Indeed, Harold held ongoing patents with John Deere.

His lifelike carvings of horses, bears, elephants and other animals are on permanent display at the Antelope County Museum in Neligh. So, too, is a windmill he built from scratch.

Harold lived alone on his farm until he was 94, chopping wood to fuel the furnace every six hours at the age of 93. When he died in 2015, his will directed a portion of the estate to a children's fund. Ritter said NSEA's Children's Fund was a perfect fit.

Much of the rest stayed in northeast Nebraska, including an endowment to the Elkhorn Valley Schools scholarship fund.



Generous Gift: Harold Ritter, Tilden, gave more than \$53,200 to NSEA's Children's Fund. Ritter died in October 2015 at the age of 95.

"This is such an amazing and unexpected gift," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "Harold's generosity will certainly be life-changing for many of the recipients of Children's Fund gifts."

To learn more about the Fund, go to:
nsea.org/childrensfund

Omaha, Bellevue Collections Add to Children's Fund Coffers



Miller

Bobby Miller says Omaha Education Association members embrace NSEA's Children's Fund, and with good reason.

"They know it only takes a phone call to utilize it if they need to, and there is not a lot of red tape," said Miller, president of OEA.

While they use the Children's Fund, they also support the Fund. That was evidenced by the shoebox full of cash and checks that Miller delivered to NSEA Headquarters in December. Inside the shoebox was \$9,541 collected in a district-wide Jeans Week drive.

Combined with another Jeans Day drive by the Bellevue Education Association which collected \$4,391, that made December a banner month for the Children's Fund.

Any member who sees a child in need – whether it be for warm coats, a meal, eyeglasses or other necessities – has only to call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047. There is no red tape.

Miller noted that OEA has a good track record of donations. The December gift built the OEA total to \$34,827 since September 2014. He said another drive is planned this spring.

Bellevue, too, plans a second semester Jeans Day. Combined with Harold Ritter's gift (see story above), the Children's Fund has started the new year in the best shape ever!



Cash-in-a-box! NSEA Comptroller Sheri Jablonski and Associate Staff member Sally Bodkte prepare to count the more than \$9,500 donated to the NSEA Children's Fund by members of the Omaha Education Association in December. Members donated \$5 in exchange for a chance to wear jeans to school for a week.



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Setting an Example: Papillion-LaVista Education Association Vice President Jared Wagenknecht has always urged students to be involved in organizations and causes about which they are passionate. Wagenknecht's Association involvement has grown from PLEA Building Representative to chair of NSEA's Government Relations Committee.

A Labor of Love

Engaging Policymakers a Priority — Unless Your Wife is in Labor, says Government Relations Chair

Some things just take precedence. Like your wife going into labor.

Jared Wagenknecht is in his third year as chair of NSEA's Government Relations Committee, but he has yet to testify before a committee of the Nebraska Legislature.

It isn't that the Papillion-LaVista South High social studies teacher hasn't tried to testify. In fact, he came within minutes of speaking against a charter school bill two years ago. He was in the Education Committee hearing room, awaiting a turn at the microphone. The bill had attracted a long list of speakers.

"I was there all afternoon. I was two people away from getting to talk, and my phone rings," said Wagenknecht. "My wife was going into labor early."

Wagenknecht was lined up behind Millard West High's Tim Royers. He handed Royers copies of his testimony and sped to the hospital.

As Royers reached the head of the line, he handed Wagenknecht's written testimony to a legislative clerk and told the committee why Wagenknecht had to leave.

Wagenknecht learned later that the committee chair said, "We've never heard that excuse before."

Wagenknecht's attempt to testify is a reminder why educators are, and should be, involved in discussions and decisions about policy that affects public education.

The birth of Wagenknecht's child was both the reason he left early and why he was there in the first place — to make certain that

his child, as well as all children, have access to a well-resourced public school and the public education that is guaranteed them by Nebraska's constitution.

A 'Huge Opportunity'

Wagenknecht said he regularly urges his students to get involved with groups that "advocate for things that you are passionate about."

When he realized that he should set an example, he began to invest time as a Building Representative for the Papillion-LaVista Education Association. That eventually led to a seat on NSEA's Government Relations Committee.

"I kept saying 'yes' to things and ended up as chair of the committee," he said.

The committee connects with and educates Association members about education policy action; connects members with policymakers; and educates elected officials about the workings and needs of public schools.

"It's very important for members to be involved so that senators can hear and understand how their votes are going to affect teachers, students and our public schools," said Wagenknecht.

With hundreds of legislative bills proposed each session, Wagenknecht said it is difficult even for state senators to stay abreast of every piece of legislation. That's where NSEA's Government Relations Committee, and members who subscribe to NSEA's Capitol Update, play important roles.

"It's a huge opportunity for us to reach out to the people making the laws that affect us and to tell them 'this is how this law is going to affect us. This is what this bill is going to do in a good way, or in a bad way,'" said Wagenknecht.

Conversely, those on the committee are expected to reach out

to members in their local Association and legislative district to keep all members informed of policy debates and changes.

A Better Piece of Legislation

That outreach is vitally important. Wagenknecht cites as an example a bill introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Lou Ann Linehan in 2017. LB651 proposed to flunk any child who was not reading at grade level by third grade.

NSEA members and leaders voiced strong opposition at every opportunity, including at an Education Committee hearing. Yet Linehan mustered enough votes to pull the bill from committee for consideration by the full Legislature. Time expired before further action, and the bill carried over to 2018.

During the interim, NSEA worked with Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks and Linehan to improve LB651. The two senators toured the state, sat in classrooms, met with teachers, and eventually the retention language was discarded and was replaced with best-practice reading instruction language. LB651 was passed into law with NSEA's support.

"That bill started out as not a very good deal for kids, but by us working with senators to give them the perspective of educators it ended up as a much better piece of legislation," he said.

A second example of educator collaboration arrived via LB295 and LB804. Combined, the bills would have used poor policy to divert substantial state revenues away from public schools.

Particularly onerous was LB295's voucher scheme, a tax change that would have allowed corporations and the wealthy to donate cash to private school "scholarship" funds. Donors could have claimed deductions, and in some cases, have profited in the process. That plan would have cost the state up to \$10 million in revenues in the first years, and more later as the program grew.

LB804 would have cost the state another \$19 million – to start – by allowing a tax break for 529 College Savings Plan donations later used as tuition to private K-12 schools. Combined, LB295 and LB804 would have cost nearly \$30 million, threatening state aid to education cuts.

"That was really a big issue for members, and a lot of people were really concerned," said Wagenknecht.

Insights Benefit Everyone

As Government Relations Committee chair, Wagenknecht leads regular video conference calls to the more than 50-member committee, which includes at least one member from each of Nebraska's 49 legislative districts. Those calls are more frequent when the Legislature is in session.

The calls update members on legislation and NSEA's involvement in policy discussions and debate. Wagenknecht acts as moderator and facilitator.

"I think being on the committee you begin to understand just how much is going on," he said. "It's not unusual for the committee to track and watch well more than 100 education-related bills.

"It's almost impossible for the committee to keep track of all of them. That's why it's awesome that we have organizational staff doing that work to track and monitor those bills," he said.

As a teacher of government and politics, sociology and current issues, the inner workings and the process is of interest to Wagenknecht.

"Hearing the insights from NSEA staff is huge – more than you can get from other sources," he said.

Those insights, and the follow up with other Association members and with lawmakers, help to build a foundation of good education-related policy. That benefits everyone – especially children.

With NSEA, Following the Legislature is Easy

Subscribe, Read, Text, Call or Meet!

Face-to-face communication with senators is simple and easy, says NSEA Government Relations Committee Chair Jared Wagenknecht. To illustrate, Wagenknecht tells a story of an encounter with a senator in Omaha late last fall.

"I saw a senator out and about a couple of weeks ago. I didn't say much, other than 'I'm a public school teacher and I just really wanted to thank you for standing up for public education,'" he said.

Policymakers need to know teachers are interested and watching, he said. They also need to know what is going on in schools so that they can make fact-based decisions.

"Senators want to hear from teachers and their constituents because they (senators) aren't experts on every bill," he said.

Such action is easy to do.

"You cannot over-emphasize how truly accessible the senators in Nebraska are," he said. "It's pretty easy to call your senator and just talk to them or to stop by the capitol if you're in Lincoln. Just drop in and have a five-minute conversation about your concerns."

Keeping abreast of issues is also easy — almost imperative — as

state law touches nearly every action a teacher takes in the classroom. Here are some simple methods for staying on top of the issues:

■ Add your name to NSEA's e-mail list to receive NSEA's weekly Capitol Update emails.

"The Capitol Update is a fantastic resource and the best way to stay up on what is happening," said Wagenknecht.

To get the Update via email, subscribe at:

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■ **Know your senator.** Most senators return home on weekends and meet with constituents. Meet and get to know them.



Thumbs Up! NSEA members met with Sen. Tom Brandt, a Plymouth farmer elected to represent Dist. 32. With Brandt, seated from left, are Darla Chrans and Nancy Fulton, Wilber Clanton; Brandt; NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell. Standing, from left, are Nick Behring, Wilber Clanton; Jordan Mahr, Exeter Milligan; and Chris Martin, Beatrice.



Capitol Relations: Newly elected State Sen. Myron Dorn of Adams, seated at center, was greeted by a baker's dozen of education constituents at the NSEA Capitol District Legislative Dinner in December. Meeting with Dorn were, from left, Susan Wait, Beatrice; Mindy Wolfgang, Palmyra; Sheryl Wiese, Beatrice (seated); Burke Brown, Palmyra; Ed Ankrom, Beatrice; Jolene Walker, Lincoln; Dorn; Kathryn Glenn and Fran Martin, Beatrice; Rick Koenig, Mary Schlieder (seated) and Matt Rosenau, Norris; Gene Martin, Beatrice; and Krystin Jones, Norris.

NSEA Focus: Expanding Quality Learning

Challenges Abound in 2019 Session

Significant challenges face state senators and public education as the Nebraska Legislature prepares to convene on January 9.

NSEA's 2019 Legislative Agenda, approved by the Association's Board of Directors in December, cites revenue as an issue, quality teaching and learning as a focus, and a coalition-led effort (see sidebar) that seeks improved access to mental health services for educators and students, among other goals.

An average of more than 100 bills each year affect public schools. Challenges facing the Legislature in 2019 include:

- A projected revenue shortfall of \$95.1 million in budget year 2019-20.

- Meanwhile, advocacy groups have targeted reductions in both property tax and income tax rates that would affect the ability of Nebraska public schools to provide quality education.

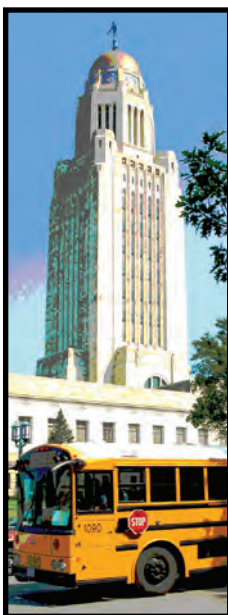
- Nebraska continues to sit at the bottom – 48th – of rankings in state aid to K-12 education, forcing an overreliance on local property taxes for funding.

- A governor who publicly advocates for policy supporting private education at the expense of public education.

NSEA will focus on:

- Legislation expanding both the quality and quantity of learning in public schools. This includes efforts to ensure safe and secure working and learning environments, additional funding for behavioral health services and resources, more time to teach and to learn, and maintaining effective teacher/student ratios.

- Legislation adding to the tools and resources available to educators, because well-trained and well-equipped educators provide professional excellence.



**Nebraska
Legislature '19**

Special Ed, Early Childhood, Mental Health Targeted by New Collaboration Coalition

Ten education organizations in Nebraska, including NSEA, have joined to form the Nebraska Education Collaboration.

The coalition will aim at a substantial list of goals to further invest in children and our future through a 21st century education.

At the top of the list is expanding access to early childhood education for working families, and work to increase early childhood education reimbursement for public schools.

Because nutrition plays such a key role in a child's health, the group seeks to cover reduced price meals for all eligible students.

The coalition will also seek to increase the state's level of special education reimbursement. State statute calls for 80 percent of special education funding to be reimbursed to local school districts. Much of that cost is now funded by local property taxes.

Surveys of educators have identified mental and behavioral health challenges as the top unmet need in schools. The coalition will work to expand behavioral and mental health services available for students.

Other issues to be tackled include school safety, teacher recruitment and retention and school funding. To learn more, go to:

www.needcollaboration.org

Coalition members include NSEA, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Department of Education, Schools Taking Action for Nebraska Children's Education (STANCE), the Greater Nebraska Schools Association, the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association, the Educational Service Units Coordinating Council, Beyond School Bells, Stand for Schools and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

- Legislation increasing state aid for public education.

- NSEA will work with senators to ensure changes to the state's tax system are either revenue neutral or provide additional PK-16 funding. The Association will also encourage that a sales tax on internet purchases is used to help fund public schools.

How an Idea Becomes Law in the Nebraska Legislature

When a senator, citizen or group sees the need to change, create or repeal law, the process begins with an essential foundation: research. That research may be conducted by the senator and staff, the citizen, a group or the Legislature's research division.

Introduction

Once research is complete, the bill drafter's office puts the proposal into the proper legal format, and the bill is introduced by a senator or one of the Legislature's 14 standing committees during the session's first 10 working days.

Upon **INTRODUCTION**, the bill is numbered and the Reference Committee assigns it to a committee. If the bill requires an outlay of more than \$50,000, the Legislature develops a fiscal note with three estimates of implementation costs – one each from the Legislative Fiscal Office, the governor's office and any state agency affected by the bill.

Public Hearing



General File



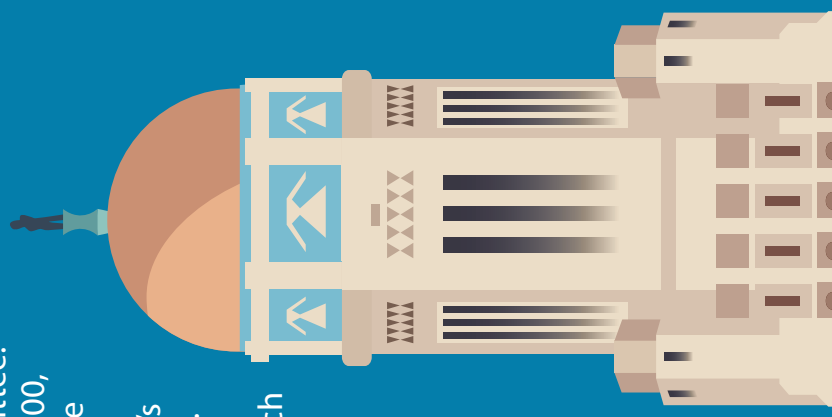
Select File



Committees hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** on each bill, and citizens may testify in favor, in opposition or in a neutral capacity. Committee members debate the bill's merits, propose amendments and vote to send the bill to the next step, called General File; vote to indefinitely postpone (kill) the bill; or take no action.

On **GENERAL FILE**, the entire Legislature can debate, amend and vote on the bill. It takes 25 votes to amend or move a bill from General File to the next stage, Select File.*

SELECT FILE is another round of debate and potential amendments. Bills may be



Final Reading



Governor

and potential amendments may be advanced to the next stage on a voice vote (if there is a call for a machine vote, 25 votes are needed) or indefinitely postponed.*

At **FINAL READING**, a bill may not be amended but may be returned to Select File for amendment. Proposed constitutional amendments require 30 votes for placement on the General Election ballot. An emergency clause requires 33 votes and allows the bill to take effect at once.

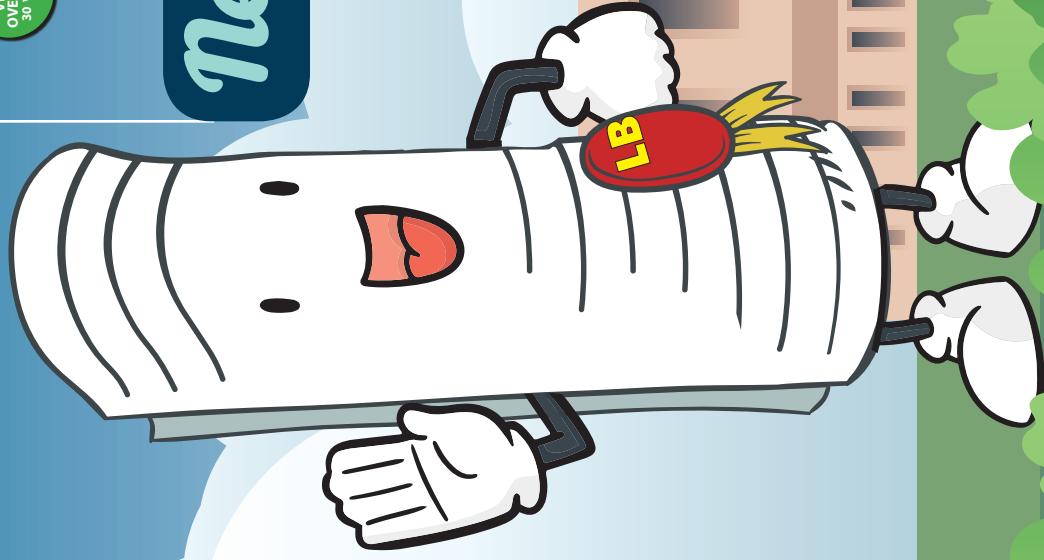
*A cloture vote (33 votes required) ends a filibuster by ceasing debate and allowing an immediate vote on advancement.

Nebraska Law

Follow education-related legislation by signing up to receive the NSEA Legislative Update: www.nsea.org/subscriber



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'Just 1' Drive Underway

Campaign Could Add 300 Members to Association

Because there is power in numbers, and because membership development is a year-round effort, NSEA has kicked off a campaign with a goal of signing nearly 300 new members by Feb. 28.

The 'Just One' campaign asks each of NSEA's nearly 300 local associations to work to sign up at least one new member before the campaign ends on Thursday, Feb. 28.

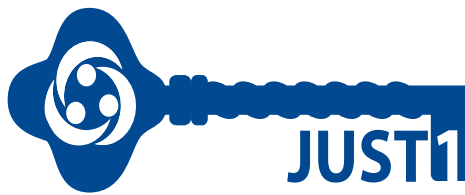
"Membership is key," said NSEA President Jenni Benson, reiterating NSEA's 2018-19 theme. "That membership growth would translate into more collective support for students and teachers when dealing with education quality at the local level, more backing at the negotiations table, more input and support for education at the Legislature."

As incentive, each current member who signs a new member to Association membership will be entered to win a smart watch. Every local association that gains more than one new member will earn \$50 to be used at the local level for a membership event of that local's choosing.

Here is the attraction for non-members: those who sign up in January or February will pay pro-rated, half-price dues.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for non-members to join and to get a better understanding and knowledge of what the Association does for teachers and students," said Benson.

To learn more, contact your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.



Nominate Outstanding Mentors for Paid Positions

Do you know of a current practicing Nebraska teacher who has been an outstanding mentor for you or other educators in your district? Let NSEA know!

We need your help to recognize amazing mentors NSEA can contact about serving as a **paid** NSEA Virtual Mentor to support the success of a new teacher, whether that teacher is a member or potential member. This is a great opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding mentoring you or new teachers in your district have received.

Please complete the brief form (using the link below) by Monday, Jan. 14, and Dr. Cindy Copich, NSEA's Teaching and Learning Specialist, will contact the nominated teacher to see whether they are interested in participating in a paid mentoring opportunity for NSEA members.

Nominate at this link:

bit.ly/nominatementor19

Negotiations Tip: Check the Details

Don't Delay Wrapping Up Your 2019-20 Agreement

As local association bargaining teams near the end of negotiations, NSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Randy Gordon urges leaders to be deliberate in the process and to pay attention to details.

"Those last few steps are significant," said Gordon. "Don't let the relief of completing negotiations at the table interrupt your diligence in wrapping up the final details of your negotiated agreement."

Whether you're finalizing the 2019-20 negotiated agreement in January or completed bargaining in December, there are still important steps to address with the finished document. Gordon recommends that local association leaders:



Gordon

■ **Share:** If you haven't shared the settlement details with your NSEA Organizational Specialist, contact them with the key changes to the agreement (base increase, changes to benefits, etc.) and a timeline for the member ratification vote and board approval.

■ **Read and Review:** Once the agreement is ratified and approved, thoroughly read through the final copy before signing. Check every sentence for accuracy in language changes, changes to dates, salary schedules, extra duty positions, and insurance levels. Increases in both health insurance premiums and deductible levels for 2019-20 will affect all EHA plans and need to be reflected in the agreement.

■ **Attach:** Include all appendices like salary schedules, extra duty pay, and variances or any board policy references, before signing and copying.

Some bargaining teams initial and date each and every attached page before making copies to ensure that the most current pages are included.

■ **Report Online:** In addition to sharing copies with members, it's important to enter any changes to the agreement on the joint NASB/NSEA Settlement Reporting Site. Your NSEA Organizational Specialist will share the login and password so your team can complete the form. It's important to update your side of the site so that any contradictions can be addressed. School boards and administrators use that data to conduct North Star comparability studies, so any errors or contradicting information can create problems next fall when school districts prepare for the next round of bargaining.

Remember, your NSEA Organizational Specialist can answer questions and help establish a routine for completing the settlement process. Call your Organizational Specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

FILE FOR OFFICE

From **Jan. 1 - 27**, members can file for state offices to be elected in February.

VOTING

Voting for statewide officers, RA At-Large & Cluster Delegates, and Higher Ed. Academy will take place from **Feb. 15 - March 3**.

DA CLUSTER DELEGATES

Filing for NSEA Delegate Assembly Cluster Delegates runs **Feb. 25 - March 8**.

NEA DIR., HIGHER ED, ESP, EMAC AT-LARGE BOARD REPS

Elected at Delegate Assembly. Candidate's campaign materials for delegates are due **by March 12**.

VOTING

Locals with less than 26 members will vote for NSEA Delegate Assembly Cluster delegates **March 15 -24**.

LOCAL NSEA DELEGATES

Locals of 26+ members will elect delegates by secret ballot and report verified delegates **by March 25**.

NSEA-RETIRED

Election of NSEA-Retired officers, and delegates to both DA and RA will be by mail-in ballot **in March**.

SEAN

SEAN members will vote for their NSEA Delegate Assembly delegates at the SEAN Delegate Assembly in Omaha, **April 12**.

NSEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

April 26 - 27
The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel.
Election of NEA Director, Higher Ed, ESP & EMAC Board Reps.; bylaws, 2019-20 dues.

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Nat'l. Education Assoc. Representative Assembly
Houston, TX
July 2 - 7

OFFICIAL ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT

ALL NSEA MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR DISTRICT OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY AT-LARGE DELEGATES.
VOTING WILL BE FEB. 15 - MARCH 3.

ALL MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR THEIR LOCAL ASSOCIATION DELEGATES TO NSEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY.
CLUSTERED LOCALS WILL VOTE MARCH 15 - 24. LOCALS WITH MORE THAN 26 MEMBERS, TALK TO YOUR LOCAL PRESIDENT FOR YOUR LOCAL ELECTION TIMELINE.

NSEA ELECTIONS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

It is time to consider filing for Association office or as a delegate to the statewide and/or national assemblies. Elections will occur in the coming months in order to comply with federal statute which dictates all officers and delegates must be elected by secret ballot. Here are the details:

NEA Director, Higher Ed. and ESP Board Representatives: 3-year terms, EMAC At-Large: 2 year term

Deadline to File: Friday, April 26

Elected at NSEA Delegate Assembly

The NEA Director is a member of the NSEA Executive Committee, and is one of two Nebraska seats on the NEA Board of Directors. The Higher Ed, ESP and EMAC At-Large Representatives are voting members of the NSEA Board of Directors representing those specific constituencies. Nominations for these three offices are taken from the floor of the NSEA Delegate Assembly at the opening session on Friday, April 26, in Lincoln.

Candidates seeking these offices who wish to have campaign materials posted for delegates must submit that information to NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell by 11:59 p.m. CST on Tuesday, March 12. Candidates are responsible for reviewing the candidate policy guidelines found at:

www.nsea.org/delegateassembly

NSEA Board of Directors 2- and 3-year terms

Deadline to File: Sunday, Jan. 27

Elected during statewide online elections

Members in five of NSEA's six governance districts will elect representatives to serve on NSEA's statewide board of directors.

The NSEA Board of Directors meets in Lincoln seven times each year, and once via webinar. The board carries out

the Association's mission as directed by members at the April Delegate Assembly.

There are three open seats on Capitol District; two on Metro District; and one each on the Tri-Valley, Elkhorn and Panhandle districts. There is no vacancy in the Sandhills District. (see map)

District Officers 2- and 3-year terms

Deadline to File: Sunday, Jan. 27

Elected during statewide online elections

Each of NSEA's six governance districts includes a set of officers and executive committee members. Officers from each district are elected by members in that district. The term of office is determined by the Bylaws in each district. Members will fill these vacancies:

- **Capitol District:** vice president.
- **Elkhorn District:** president, vice president, four seats on the executive committee.
- **Metro District:** president, three seats on the executive committee (subdistrict seats 2, 5 and 8).
- **Panhandle District:** treasurer, secretary and three seats on the executive committee (Area 1, Area 3 and Area 4).
- **Sandhills District:** president, vice president, one seat on the executive committee.
- **Tri-Valley District:** three seats on the executive committee (East, West and Central subdistricts).

NEA RA At-Large District Cluster Delegates: 1-year term

Deadline to File: Sunday, Jan. 27

Elected during statewide online elections

The 2019 NEA RA will be held in Houston on July 2-7.

To elect members to serve as voting delegates to the National Education Association's annual Representative Assembly business meeting, **local associations with fewer than 76 members** are grouped in clusters per district. For instance, all local associations in Elkhorn District with fewer than 76 members will vote on a common set of candidates to serve as delegates to RA.

Cluster delegates fund their own RA costs. The exact number of openings will be set after the membership count for 2018-19 is finalized in mid-January, but there are approximately:

- **Capitol District:** 10 openings
- **Elkhorn District:** 10 openings
- **Metro District:** 8 openings
- **Panhandle District:** 3 openings
- **Sandhills District:** 7 openings
- **Tri-Valley District:** 10 openings

NEA RA At-Large Statewide Delegates: 1-year term

Deadline to File: Sunday, Jan. 27

Elected during statewide online elections

Delegates from **local associations with more than 76 members** must be elected by secret ballot, according to federal statute.

Any active NSEA member is eligible to place his or her name on the statewide, at-large delegate ballot for NEA Representative Assembly by filing at nsea.org. Members elected as statewide delegates will be reimbursed for transportation, lodging and meal expenses. Depending on the final mid-January membership count, three to four delegate slots will be available to at-large candidates.

NSEA-Retired Officers, Delegates to NSEA Delegate Assembly and NEA RA: 1-year term

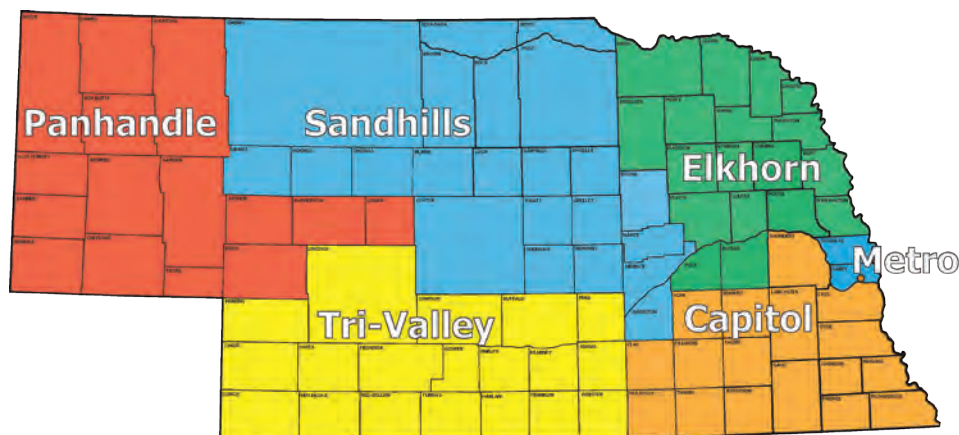
Deadline to File: Friday, Feb. 8

Elected during mail-in ballots in March

Members of NSEA-Retired will use mail-in ballots in March to elect the following positions:

Board of Directors

- **Treasurer** (3 yr. term)
- **Secretary** (3 yr. term)
- **Metro Board Member** (3 yr. term)
- **Panhandle Board Member** (3 yr. term)
- **Tri-Valley Board Member**



● In order to comply with NEA guidelines, Springfield/Platteview Education Association will be included in Capitol District.

(3 yr. term)

- **Capitol Board Member** – New Position (2 yr. term)

Delegate Assembly

- **Capitol District:** 4 Positions
- **Elkhorn District:** 3 Positions
- **Metro District:** 5 Positions
- **Panhandle District:** 1 Position
- **Sandhills District:** 1 Position
- **Tri Valley District:** 3 Positions
- **At Large:** 2 Positions

Representative Assembly

- **Metro and Capitol Districts:** 2 Positions
- **Other Districts and Out of State:** 2 Positions
- **At Large:** 1 Positions

Higher Ed Academy 3-year terms

Deadline to File: Sunday, Jan. 27

Elected during online elections for Higher Ed members only

Vacancies on the statewide NSEA Higher Education Academy exist in several positions. Because Higher Ed members are now integrated into NSEA's six districts depending on workplace, Higher Ed members will receive two election-related emails: one alerting them to NSEA statewide elections and one alerting them to Higher Ed Academy elections.

Higher Ed Academy elections will be held for these positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, higher education faculty representative, academic professional representative and educational support representative.

Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) Delegate to NEA RA: 1-year term

Members of SEAN will elect NSEA Delegate Assembly delegates at the

SEAN Delegate Assembly in Omaha on Friday, April 12. Watch for the SEAN newsletter for details.

SEAN members will elect NEA RA delegates in statewide balloting following the SEAN Delegate Assembly.

NSEA Delegate Assembly At-Large District Cluster Delegates: 1-year term

Deadline to File: March 8

Elected during online election by cluster locals per district, March 15-24

To elect voting delegates to NSEA's annual Delegate Assembly business meeting, **local associations with fewer than 26 members** are grouped in "clusters" in each of NSEA's six governance districts. For instance, all local associations in NSEA's Capitol District with fewer than 26 members will vote on a common set of candidates for delegates to DA.

The exact number of openings will be set after the membership count for 2018-19 is finalized in mid-January. There are approximately:

- **Capitol District:** 8 openings
- **Elkhorn District:** 11 openings
- **Metro District:** 1 opening
- **Panhandle District:** 6 openings
- **Sandhills District:** 8 openings
- **Tri-Valley District:** 13 openings

NSEA Delegate Assembly Local Delegates: 1-year term

Deadline to File: Set by Local Assoc.

Secret ballot elections held at the local level, delegates reported by: March 25

Delegates from **local associations with more than 26 members must be elected by secret ballot**, according to federal statute. Presidents from those associations will be notified of the number of delegate representatives they may elect, based on their local membership.

Rest Up Before NSEA's 2019 Assembly!

Professional Development, National Speaker Will Highlight 2019 Event

Association members hoping to attend the 2019 NSEA Delegate Assembly might be advised to get plenty of rest ahead of the April 26-27 event.

The meeting in Lincoln will be packed with professional development opportunities, a keynote of national stature, elections, issuance of awards, discussion and debate of education issues and plenty of networking opportunities with colleagues.

Last year, Delegate Assembly included a pilot offering of professional development sessions to members. NSEA leadership plans to improve on that model (see box), which will be a lofty goal.

"This was an amazing experience. I can't wait to get more involved," wrote one member in an evaluation of the 2018 Assembly.

Members will elect a Nebraska representative to a three-year term on the NEA Board of Directors. Nebraska has two representatives on that board.

Also to be elected: voting positions on the NSEA Board of Directors from the higher education and Education Support Personnel memberships. Delegates to the 2017 Assembly amended long-standing Association Bylaws to give those constituencies a voting position on the Board of Directors. Due to a resignation, members will also elect a representative to a two-year term on the NSEA board to represent the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (see page 23 for story).

NSEA leadership is finalizing details on a speaker of national stature to address delegates between professional development sessions Friday evening, April 26. Details will be announced soon!

Professional development sessions will occur on Friday evening. On Saturday, delegates will discuss and debate changes to Bylaws, any proposed new Resolutions or New Business Items. Dues for 2019-20 will also be set by Delegates on Saturday.

The Delegate Assembly is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 26-27, at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel.

To make your interest in serving as a delegate known, contact your

30 Sessions of Professional Development Scheduled at 2019 Delegate Assembly

As a pilot project last year, the professional development sessions offered at NSEA's annual delegate Assembly were a rousing success.

Now, with planning for the 2019 Delegate Assembly advancing at a rapid pace, members can be assured that last year's model of success will be repeated. More than a dozen topics will be provided at the 2019 event, some of them repeated, giving delegates and non-delegates alike a chance for no-cost professional development.

Certain to be on the list of topics: trauma informed classrooms. Also a certainty: a session on Delegate Assembly 101, aimed at informing novice delegates of the Assembly's purpose and workings.

While nearly 20 options are already under consideration or are being arranged for inclusion, there is still time to suggest topics for professional development sessions. To suggest a topic, go to:

bit.ly/2019dapd

Honor a Co-Worker with a Nomination

With deadlines near, now is a good time to give serious consideration to who you or your association might nominate for one of the honors to be awarded 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. 15, 2019, 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 at:

www.nsea.org/delegateassembly

The 2019 Delegate Assembly will be held at Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel April 26-27. NSEA members are eligible for:

■ **NSEA Rookie of the Year:** To honor a first-year teacher who excelled in the 2017-18 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.

local association president, your local association building representative, or your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047. All delegates must be elected at the local or cluster level (see page 17 for more details on delegate elections at the local level).

Time is Near to Request PAC Refund

NSEA's Political Action Committee (NSEA-PAC) is supported by voluntary donations collected with NSEA dues.

Support for election of recommended candidates is provided by an annual contribution of \$15 from each NSEA member.

Any NSEA member may request a refund of those contributions for the current membership year. As an alternative to re-

fund, members may also direct that the \$15 contribution be directed to bond election and school ballot issues.

Refund requests must be in writing to NSEA President Jenni Benson. Each letter must be individually composed, and contain an original signature. Photocopied, computer copies or e-mail messages are not accepted. Each letter must indicate whether

all or part of the contribution is to be refunded, or whether the entire contribution is designated for statewide ballot issues.

Requests for refunds must be postmarked no later than Feb. 15, 2019. All refunds will be mailed after that date.

Send requests to Benson at 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508. Questions? Call NSEA's toll-free number at 1-800-742-0047.

Start a Healthy 2019 Using Click & Save!

Embrace a healthier self for the New Year using NEA's Click & Save online discount buying service for members. Check out these "Buy-lights" for January:

■ **GNC:** Check out one of the world's largest nutritional supplements and health aids companies. Get up to 50 percent off.

■ **Weight Watchers:** WW has helped millions change their relationship with food. Sign up to save. Online-only program available.

■ **Reebok:** Find workout apparel, training shoes and more. Get up to 50 percent off and free shipping on orders of \$49 & up.

Check Click & Save often for unadvertised, limited offers, including discount dining certificates from Restaurant.com. Join thousands of members already registered for NEA Click & Save at:

neamb.com/clickandsave

It's Not Too Late to Get Vehicle Deals

Dealers want to clear the lots, so take advantage of savings on 2018 model-year cars. The NEA Auto Buying Program through TrueCar is the place to start your search! NEA members enjoy preferred pricing year-round, save an average of \$3,383 off MSRP on new cars, and get these other benefits:

■ **Used Car Discounts:** Save hundreds off the list price (Discounts not available on all cars or in all states).

■ **See What Others Paid:** See what others have paid for the same car so you know when you're getting a good or a great price.

■ **Upfront Pricing:** See pricing, price rankings, and lock in guaranteed savings on the car you want before you leave home.

■ **A Hassle-Free Experience:** Bring your Price Certificate to a dealer or show it on your cell phone.

Members also receive TrueCar Buyer's Bonus Benefits at no additional cost, including Auto Repair Reimbursement and Auto Deductible Reimbursement – benefits that could be worth up to \$2,000 (available in most states). For more, go to:

www.neamb.com/buyacar

How to Break Through

Use Innovative Communications with Parents

By Eileen Delia

I like to keep very open lines of communication with my students' parents. Parents want to be updated with what is going on with their child at school and the best thing for teachers to do is keep them in the loop and be transparent. However, there is little time for physical sit-downs or lengthy calls these days. The consumption habits of parents have also changed drastically as more millennials are becoming parents. More on-the-go mobile and online tools help to reach parents where they already are, on their phones or computers.

Here are some tools I have found helpful for communicating with parents in a 21st century way:

■ **The Remind App:** a simple way of texting parents to send out reminders, homework, or motivational messages for students straight to their phones. It's a major time saver for busy teachers and parents and allows for keeping touch on-the-go. You can set designated "office hours" on the app to let parents know the best times to respond to "chat" on the app and lets parents send permissions slips, assignments, or voice clips straight from their phone. The app also lets teachers send reminders to all parents and allows you to see who has viewed the announcement.

■ **A Class Website:** a customizable way to set up your "online classroom" that can be a resource for parents and students. Teachers can keep everything in one place for parents by uploading documents to their website

instead of having to send attachment after attachment in emails to parents. Creating your own class website is also becoming easier to do with the vast amount of online tools available that help even the least tech-savvy of us create something useful.

■ **The Bloomz App:** a kind of hybrid messaging tool and classroom website all in one app. This online tool allows parents to connect with their child's teacher and other parents. It's easy to keep parents involved with the "class updates" feature that allows for photo and video sharing, the class calendars with itemized events that can be linked to pages with additional information, and the communication feature that allows for sending messages with student timelines and behavior tracking. The app also has a "social networking" feel to it as it encourages sharing and "liking" posts from parents or teachers.

Last but not least, I take tons of pictures of our classroom lessons each year. I like to bundle a few months worth of photos up and make them into a fun slideshow with music on iMovie. I send them home to parents a few times during the school year. I have found it to be a great way for me to showcase students work to parents while also keeping in touch with them over more than an email or text message.

Putting in time to keep in touch with parents and reach them where they are has shown great results. Try incorporating one of the techniques above into your parents-teacher communication routine and in your classroom this year!

New Tools to Stop Robocalls

Cell Providers Take Aim at Spammers, Spoofers

By Brendan Pedersen

If it seems as if you're getting more-frequent robocalls, you're right. Calls from robots are on track to make up nearly half of all calls in the U.S. by early 2019, according to phone security company First Orion.

But help may be on the way. Next year, many mobile carriers plan to start rolling out a new line of defense: a kind of caller authentication dubbed Stir/Shaken. The service is designed to cut down on "spoofing"—the trick spammers use to make their calls appear to come from a local number. Once Stir/Shaken is implemented by Verizon, AT&T,

Sprint, T-Mobile and other mobile companies, phone calls made on their networks will carry a digital key that will make it difficult for spammers to disguise their identities.

There are plenty of other ways to cut down on the number of robots in your call history. Review options your phone provider offers for rejecting or screening anonymous calls, and consider third-party apps, such as YouMail or Robo-Killer, that automatically reject calls from suspect numbers. These apps aren't fool-proof, but once Stir/Shaken is available, you can expect them to be more effective.

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A Bright FUTURE

For NEA Members and their families



The NEA® Smart Option Student Loan® by Sallie Mae®

You know the value of higher education; making it a reality is a smart decision. The NEA is here to help you or a member of your family* find a way to achieve your goal.

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Great rates — no origination fees. The NEA® Smart Option Student Loan® by Sallie Mae® offers competitive rates¹. Borrow up to 100% of the school-certified undergraduate or graduate school expenses not covered by scholarships, grants or federal loans². The NEA Exclusive Rate Reduction lets you reduce your interest rate by a quarter percentage point after making your first 12 on-time principal and interest payments³. Plus, there are no origination fees or prepayment penalties. All offered for NEA Members and their families.

To learn more, visit www.neamb.com/sl or call 1-866-898-5198.



*The NEA Student Loan Program has been developed for NEA members and their families. Parents, spouse or domestic partner, and children are eligible family members.

Borrow Responsibly

We encourage students and families to start with savings, grants, scholarships, and federal student loans to pay for college. Students and families should evaluate all anticipated monthly loan payments, and how much the student expects to earn in the future, before considering a private student loan.

¹ Interest rates for Fixed and Deferred Repayment Options are higher than interest rates for the Interest Repayment Option. You're charged interest starting at disbursement, while in school and during your six-month separation or grace period. When you enter principal and interest repayment, Unpaid Interest will be added to your loan's Current Principal. Variable rates may increase over the life of the loan. Advertised APRs assume a \$10,000 loan to a freshman or first-year graduate, as applicable, with no other Sallie Mae loans.

² Sallie Mae reserves the right to approve a lower loan amount than the school-certified amount.

³ NEA Members can earn a 0.25 percentage point interest rate reduction by making their first 12 on-time principal and interest payments or paying ahead an amount equal to the first 12 on-time principal and interest payments. Although you may still earn the benefit if you pay ahead the required amount, the benefit will not be activated until after the 12th principal and interest payment would have been due. Any period in which your loan is in a forbearance, deferment, or Graduated Repayment Period will not count towards satisfying the on-time principal and interest payment requirement.

NEA's Member Benefits Corporation receives compensation from Sallie Mae for this program. NEA's Member Benefits Corporation does not receive any dues dollars from NEA to support Member Benefits programs. This information is for borrowers attending degree-granting institutions only. Applications are subject to a requested minimum loan amount of \$1,000. Current credit and other eligibility criteria apply. SALLIE MAE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY OR DISCONTINUE PRODUCTS, SERVICES, AND BENEFITS AT ANYTIME WITHOUT NOTICE. Smart Option Student Loans are made by Sallie Mae Bank or a lender partner. Sallie Mae, the Sallie Mae logo, and other Sallie Mae names and logos are service marks or registered service marks of Sallie Mae Bank or its subsidiaries. All other names and logos used are the trademarks or service marks of their respective owners. SLM Corporation and its subsidiaries, including Sallie Mae Bank, are not sponsored by or agencies of the United States of America. Information advertised valid as of 2/26/18. © 2018 Sallie Mae Bank. All rights reserved. MKT13343 0318

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The Value of Our Work



**OEA Chief
Negotiator
Molly Davies**

“
...just
compensation
is an expression
of the
importance
of our work,
and we believe
the community
wants us
to be justly
compensated.

”

Some of the greatest unsung heroes in our Association are members who serve on local negotiations teams across the state. They toil for hours on compensation studies, develop contract proposals, and sit across the table explaining what teachers need to meet the needs of students as well as their own families.

For several years the Omaha Education Association bargained in open session, inviting members and the public to listen. I recently had the opportunity to read the opening statement from Molly Davies, lead negotiator for the OEA and an ESL teacher at Omaha Central High School. I was so impressed by her passion that I asked Molly if I could share her words:

“Poet and writer, Clint Smith III, had four principles for his students when he was a classroom educator: read critically, write consciously, speak clearly, tell your truth. These principles have been a guiding mantra throughout this process as we waded through its history and entered into the narrative of how the teachers of Omaha Public Schools relate to and partner with their leadership. In my view, the collective agreement is a document that tells this story, and adjustments to the agreement each tell of the advancement or degradation of that partnership.

“We have learned that minor changes can bring major, and sometimes completely unexpected, policy effects. We have learned that we must operate with equal measures of generosity and caution, and it is the latter that makes this process stressful. We have learned that the commodification of our vocation, to educate and love the children of our community, has had a lasting and pejorative effect on the way in which we are compensated and considered. In the last contract negotiation, we expressed and abided by a desire to collaborate. This desire was enshrined in the collective agreement and we continue to move in that direction with the intent to push administration to an even greater degree of partnership with educators.

“Our proposals reflect the needs and beliefs of our membership, as revealed in the results of our internal survey. In short: the workload is intense; the compensation for many of our teachers is not sufficient; we are very concerned about the social and emotional welfare of our student population and how that affects instruction and academic success; and despite the fact that we as a collective question the district’s valuation of us as professionals, we are proud to be OPS teachers. As chief negotiator, I read all 1,100 of the responses to the narrative questions on our survey. They embodied our stories of concern and struggle as educators, and as people trying to live out vocations of service to our communities and to our own families. Not surprisingly, safety, time and money surfaced as primary concerns.

“The model of shooting for the moon when asking for something, and alternately devaluing teachers when trying to conserve resources, is dysfunctional. It places us in a consistently adversarial position which drags out the process and leaves us debating issues that, for people committed to the care and growth of children, seem trite. Teachers are made to feel as though asking

for a just wage is selfish, a denial of the importance of the children we teach and a demand on the community that provides the money for our service. In actuality, just compensation is an expression of the importance of our work, and we believe the community wants us to be justly compensated.

“I want to be clear about the targets of our financial proposal: we have suggested improvements to the compensation package that value teachers who have been neglected in the past few agreements and incentivize teachers to stay with OPS. Our financial proposal is not shooting for the moon; it is 100 percent of our array...not 102 percent...not Cadillacs and champagne. It is just compensation.

“The contrast with the district’s financial proposal is stark, especially considering that our compensation and benefits package currently is below 98 percent of that array. No teacher will view a frozen salary schedule and the denial of previously promised compensation as anything other than an insult.

“Our compensation is already broadly viewed as beneath the educational levels and job demands of a teacher. The districts surrounding us will benefit from our losses as we fall further behind in attracting and retaining the best in our profession.

“I hope that we share the goal of attracting and retaining the best educators in our city. I am heartened by the pride of our members as expressed in our internal survey, but also attuned to the reality that many of our teachers are strained, stressed, and under-resourced in their buildings and the ability to provide for their families.

“So here we are. We understand that the district is facing financial challenges. We are educated as to the specifics of those challenges and their history. We know Nebraska ranks 48th in state funding for public education and we want to partner with administration in advocating for our schools. Our district is part of the greater national debate about the funding of public education and the compensation of teachers and we want to support our appointed and elected leaders in entering fully into that conversation.

“We are excited about having a new leader and hope for a new day of respect and shared values with Dr. Logan at the helm. We are confident in her. We are aware of what other bargaining units in our district have faced in negotiating their compensation packages and we believe it is our responsibility to advocate for all the professionals in our schools by proposing changes to the agreement that value the human beings that work in them. As a result, we will continue to read critically, write consciously, speak clearly and tell our truth, and we will maintain a balance of generosity and caution.”

Mollie’s remarks adhere to the advice of poet Smith in clarity, brevity and truthfulness. Her words apply not just to the bargaining process in Omaha, but in every local association in Nebraska, from smallest to largest. Many locals are deep into the bargaining process, yet it is not too late to take her message to heart and remind your colleagues across the table to value the work that our teachers do every single day.

Grant to NSEA-Retired Serves Future

NEA Grant Monies Will Assist New and Future Educators

NSEA-Retired recently learned word that the organization has earned \$5,500 from NEA-Retired in a grant labeled “Partnering Educators on the Professional Pathway.”

This money will be used to provide information, classroom materials, and travel for retired members to local events for members of Educators Rising high school groups, Student Education Association of Nebraska members, and new educator members. The Lincoln Education Association-Retired members, for example, are putting together “welcome to the profession” baskets for new Lincoln Education Association educators. Some of the grant monies are being used to assist in the project.

Several NSEA-Retired members are attending a SEAN meeting in February at Wayne State College. If you would like to be involved in various such activities or have an idea on becoming involved in this grant, please contact NSEA-Retired President De Tonack at:

dtonack@neb.rr.com

Openings for NSEA-Retired Elected Positions

This year, there are numerous opportunities to assume a leadership role in your NSEA-Retired!

Open positions on the NSEA-Retired Board of Directors, each for a three-year term, are treasurer, secretary and one board member each from Metro, Panhandle and Tri-Valley districts.

This year, an additional board member from Capitol (now allowing 2 members from Capitol, equal to Metro’s total of 2 board members) will be elected. The first term for this Capitol position will be 2 years, followed by 3-year terms thereafter. Terms of service for all of these positions will begin on Aug. 15.

Retired members will also elect representatives for NSEA Delegate Assembly. Tentative numbers will call for election of 4 delegates from Capitol District; 5 from Metro; 3 each from Tri-Valley and Elkhorn; 1 each from Panhandle and Sandhills; and 2 at large.

Election of delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly will also be held. Members will choose 2 from the Metro and Capitol districts combined; 2 from the other 4 districts and out-of-state membership; and 1 at-large.

The filing deadline is Feb. 8, 2019. Complete details on how to file for these elections will be posted in January at:

www.nsea.org/retired

Lobby Day Set for Feb. 12

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, Feb. 12, at NSEA Headquarters: NSEA-Retired Lobby Day.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to get an update on Nebraska legislation, to visit with state senators, and to enjoy lunch, conversation and a luncheon speaker.

Registration will be open by Jan. 7 and will close on Feb. 7. To register, go to:

www.nsea.org/retired

Join Now, Join For Life

Active and Retired members, take note: this is a great time to join your NSEA-Retired and NEA-Retired associations.



Quilting ABC: Lincoln Education Association-Retired member Jan Stamper made and donated this quilt for a raffle to benefit scholarships for education majors.

LEA-Retired Raises Cash for Student Teacher Scholarships

Each year, the Lincoln Education Association-Retired organization has granted four \$1,000 scholarships to graduates of Lincoln high schools who will be in their student teaching semester the following year.

This year, the funding for this project is being earned with a raffle of small items at various LEA-Retired monthly meetings; by redeeming Best Choice labels; and through a raffle of a baby quilt, sewn by member Jan Stamper. In addition, LEA-Retired member Doris Wiens has annually gathered Best Choice labels from members for a \$30 return for every 1,000 labels. Her efforts this year allowed LEA-R to earn \$120 from these labels.

Active members, even if you are many years from retirement, can save money by joining now through a Pre-retired lifetime subscription member by June 1, 2019. Yes, it is a “for-life” option, although annual options are also available upon retirement. As a special offer, you will receive \$100 back from NSEA-Retired for joining. You actually gain an additional savings of \$50 since the NEA-Retired lifetime dues will increase by \$50 on Sept. 1, 2019. As an example, long ago, many of the current retired members joined before they retired, and paid only \$150 or \$200 for a lifetime membership.

To join, go to nsea.org/retired and select the JOIN option. An installment plan is available.

Questions? Call NSEA Comptroller Sheri Jablonski at 1-800-742-0047, or reach NSEA-Retired President De Tonack at:

dtonack@neb.rr.com

— De Tonack, President
NSEA-Retired

Experienced Field Staff Will Benefit Members

Two current NSEA organizational specialists, longtime Lincoln Education Association members and teachers, Mandy Faripour and Todd Tystad, have been assigned to LEA.

Former LEA organizational specialist Bailey Feit began a job at the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation in January. That left her post and a second unfilled LEA organizational specialist job open.

Tystad's territory in west central Nebraska will be filled by Isau Metes, secondary English teacher for the Lincoln Public Schools. Faripour's unit covering nine counties in eastern and southeast Nebraska will be handed to Megan Lyons, an NSEA associate staff member with experience in the advocacy and member rights arena.

The transition to these assignments will take place in January and February.

Faripour taught U.S. history, sociology, criminal justice and advanced placement psychology at Lincoln High School.

She was a faculty rep for LEA, served on LEA's Board of Directors, and by gubernatorial appointment served on the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission. The PPC recommends action and/or penalties after the investigation of a complaint against a teacher.

Faripour has earned National Board Certification, has served on the Lincoln Public Schools Crisis Response Team, and the LPS Appraisal Committee as a member and a trainer of trainers.

She has spent the last five years as an organizational specialist for NSEA, working in the Omaha metro area and southeast Nebraska.

After working on the West Coast, Gordon native **Tystad** returned to his roots in 2018, taking a field staff unit in western Nebraska.

Tystad returns to his roots again by joining the LEA staff. After earning degrees at UNL, Tystad taught elementary school in Lincoln for years before taking work as a literacy coach and administrator at



Faripour



Tystad



Metes



Lyons

the elementary and middle school levels in Los Angeles.

He served on the Lincoln Education Association negotiations team, the school board contact team, was a faculty rep, and was a delegate to several NSEA Delegate Assemblies.

Metes has taught at Lincoln Northeast, Lincoln High, the LPS Career Academy and the Bryan Community Focus Program.

With LEA, she has been a faculty representative, has served on the LEA Board of Directors, the NSEA Board of Directors and has chaired NSEA's Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee. She also served in the Army Reserve for 7 years. Metes' assignment will cover local associations in Thomas, Blaine, McPherson, Logan, Custer, Lincoln, Dawson, Frontier, Hayes, Gosper, Phillips, Harlan, Furnas, Red Willow and Hitchcock counties.

Lyons joined NSEA in 2009 as associate staff for NSEA Member Rights, now known as Advocacy.

In that role, she worked closely with Director of Advocacy Trish Guinan; each of NSEA's 18 UniServ directors; NSEA attorneys; and NSEA members. She filed reports on member rights cases with NEA and assists with NEA's biennial audit of the legal services program.

She is a Nebraska Wesleyan University grad with a degree in communications studies. She has worked in graphic design and website development. Her unit covers Cuming, Dodge, Saunders, Jefferson, Gage, Johnson, Pawnee, Nemaha and Richardson counties.

Belz, Lynch, Krause Award Deadline Approaching

Good teachers are always looking for ways to improve their skill set.

NSEA makes learning easier with dollars from the Belz/Lynch/Krause Educational Grant Fund.

The Belz/Lynch/Krause dollars are awarded for projects related to improving a local association; development of instructional materials; or for staff development for individuals of a local association. Eligible are all NSEA members; any group of NSEA members; or any NSEA local association.

The application must include an abstract of the project, not to exceed four typed pages, including the following information: need; how the project will address the need to relate to professional



Belz



Lynch



Krause

growth goals; project description; timeline; a budget statement; and method of evaluating the project's success. Applications must be submitted online by Monday, March 4. Recipients will be notified later that month.

A letter describing and evaluating the project must be submitted to the NSEA Scholarship and Grants Committee within three months of completion.

The grants are named for John Lynch, NSEA's executive director from 1959 to 1974; Paul Belz, executive director from 1974-84; and Helen Krause, a former NSEA president, and the first Nebraskan to serve on NEA's Executive Committee.

For details and the online application form, visit the NSEA website.

The form will be posted through March 4. The website is at:

www.nsea.org

More details are available from Sally Bodtke at 1-800-742-0047 or via email at:

sally.bodtke@nsea.org

Anderson will Keynote Literacy Conference

‘Turn Pages to Dreams’ is Theme for Nebraska Astronaut

Nebraska native and NASA astronaut Clayton Anderson is confirmed as the headliner for the banquet of the Nebraska State Literacy Association on Thursday, Feb. 21.

Anderson will keynote at the Mary Ann Manning Award Banquet for the NSLA annual conference, scheduled for Kearney. Anderson will speak about how educators can “Turn Pages into Dreams.” Anderson will also sign autographs after the banquet.

Formal greetings at the banquet will be offered by International Literacy Association Chair Bernadette Dwyer, a lecturer and researched in the area of literacy studies.

Banquet tickets are available for all interested parties. Cost is \$30.

More details on the conference, which runs across three days, are available on the website. Registration forms for the conference and for the banquet, are also available on the website at:

www.nereads.org/

For more details, contact Gail Hayes at:

publicity@nereads.org

Critical Issue Forum Reviews Mental Health

The UNL Department of Educational Administration will host the annual Critical Issues Forum on Monday, Feb. 25, from 8:30 am – 3 p.m. at Southeast Community College, 8800 O St. in Lincoln.

This year’s forum is entitled Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities: Understanding and Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Students. The event gathers a broad array of stakeholders, including PK-12 teachers, school leaders, university researchers, policy makers, community groups and social service providers. The free event features concise 25-minute presentations from a variety of perspectives related to student mental health.

Registration is required at:

bit.ly/criticalissue2019

For more, email Dr. Shavonna Holman at:

sholman@unl.edu

Speaking of Education

“By learning you will teach; by teaching you will learn.”

— *Latin Proverb*

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

By the Alphabet, I

From Juanita Mitchell, a seventh-grade science and math teacher in Michigan:

“When I have papers collected by a student, I have an alphabetical list of all students in each class on the wall and have the papers collected in alphabetical order. This eliminates the wasted time used in looking for the kids’ name after the paper is corrected and has made the task of grading papers for me just a little easier. It also helps in identifying that ‘no name’ paper because the stack is in the order of the class roll.”



By the Alphabet, II

From Dianne Blackburn, a sixth-grade language arts, reading and social studies teacher in Ohio:

“I have taught 20 years. Two years ago, I decided to collect everything in alphabetical order. It certainly does help when recording grades and also when a student does not put his or her name on the paper. After two or three weeks, the students just automatically put their papers in the class folder in alphabetical order. I wished I had done this a long time ago. Saving minutes like this makes teaching a little easier.”

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



A Musical Visit: Hundreds of NSEA members were among those teachers who spent time at the Nebraska Music Education Association Conference and In-Service Clinic in Lincoln in November. Among them, Bryan Regier, Hyannis Education Association, shown here at the NSEA booth with Associate Staff member Sally Bodtke. Regier is vice president of NSEA’s Sandhills District.