

# THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ♦ May 2017



## LEADING *the* CHARGE

*Association Celebrates 150 Years; Delegates Elect New Officers*

**Children's Fund at Halfway Mark ♦ Legislature Faces Final Days**



## True or False?

...That Teachers Can be Powerful if They will Organize.

### Lessons of WWII-Era Association Meeting Ring True Yet Today

This is one of a series on NSEA's history as the Association celebrates 150 years.

Sometime during the 1943-44 school year, Ruth Ann Barry attended a county-wide association meeting in Saunders County.

Among Barry's teaching papers donated to NSEA by her daughter, Ann Ballard, was a "True or False" sheet on Association facts. Along the margins, Barry penciled in notes indicating that 'Mead is here!' and 'I don't see Malmo' - referring to members from the some of the county's other community schools. A handwritten note on the back of the sheet indicates the paper came from "a teachers' meeting in Wahoo. Marjorie, Loretta, Lucille, and I went with Stuart. Then we stopped at Thompson's for coffee and rolls."

But the remarkable aspect of the sheet comes in the facts presented on the typed sheet. The first line asks 'Is it true or false?' and then presents 27 statements, including these:

■ That we now have a contractual relations law passed at the last legislature and we hope to extend it to rural schools?

■ That NSEA defeated LB38 in 1941, which saved \$90,000 yearly for the teachers' salary fund?

■ We have a tenure law for Omaha and Lincoln and plan to extend it further at the next Legislature?

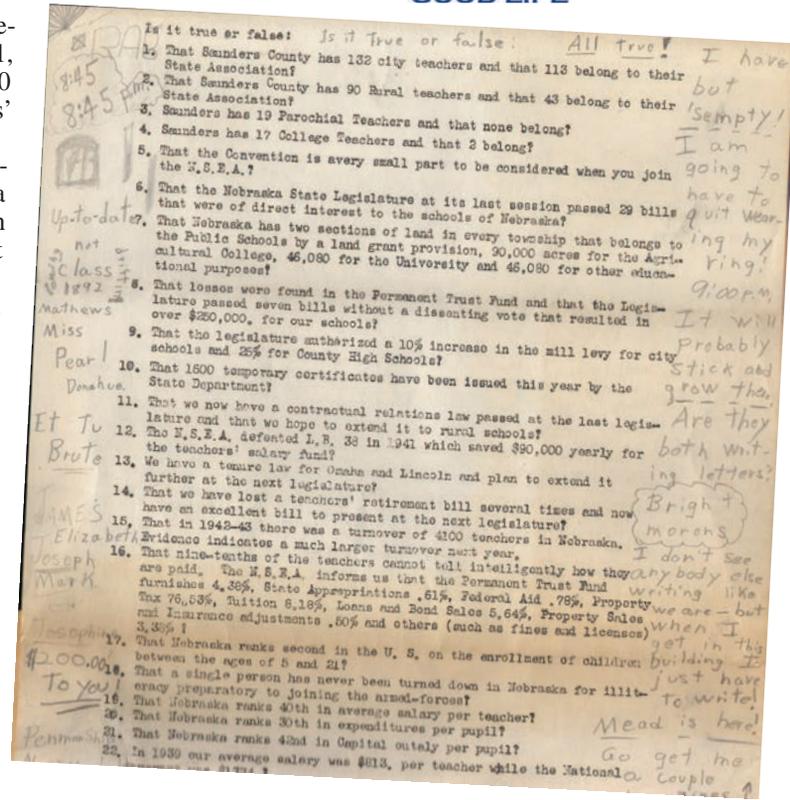
■ That Nebraska ranks 40th in average salary per teacher?

■ In 1939 our average salary was \$813 per teacher, while the national average was \$1,374?

■ That teachers can be powerful if they will organize, support their associations and become properly informed on school matters.

"True" is the correct answer for each question, and the final item, especially remains true today!

Ballard also offered three teaching contracts signed by her mother, for the 1944-45; 1946-47 and 1947-48 school years. Her salary was \$1,100, \$1,575 and \$1,800 in



those years, respectively.

But the final lesson remains now, as it was then, that teachers can be powerful if they will organize...

## NSEA Ends Contract with Access

NSEA has ended its contract with the Access Development Co. that, for nearly 20 years has provided members with discounts at merchants and retail locations across the

U.S. The NSEA Board of Directors decided to end the contract due to cost issues.

Access services will cease on Aug. 31. Watch future issues of The Voice for details.

**Cover:** A new leadership team for the coming Association year was elected at NSEA's Delegate Assembly in April. Clockwise from bottom right are President Jenni Benson, Lincoln; Vice President Paul Schulte, Millard; NEA Director Tracey Hartman-Bradley, Omaha; and NEA Director Linda Freye, Lincoln. For the full story on Delegate Assembly, turn to page

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## Challenge the Future



**NSEA President  
Nancy Fulton**

“

*Always  
remember that  
you have every  
right — and the  
responsibility —  
to be vocal in the  
political process.*

”

As I contemplated writing my final article as your president, I reflected briefly on how swiftly these six years have slipped by.

I truly appreciate the confidence you have expressed in me and the dedication you have for our Association and for our students.

I am proud that NSEA members have worked for 150 years to promote education, our profession and, as was stated in the Association's first constitution, to elevate “the profession of teaching and promoting the interests of schools in Nebraska.”

Other than becoming more student-centered, our mission has not changed. Take a minute to imagine teaching in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the changes our country was experiencing. One room schoolhouses were the norm in rural states like Nebraska and my home state of Iowa.

I started my education as a kindergartener in the small, one room Liberty School, being one of two kindergarteners in a school of about 15 students in grades one through eight. Our lone teacher, Mrs. Vander Linden taught us all.

While I didn't have to walk five miles up hill both ways to get to school, I did ride my bike about two miles on gravel roads most days. Just imagine the autonomy that Mrs. Vander Linden experienced as a teacher in that school.

School consolidation forced Liberty School to close that year and I began 12 years of riding a yellow school bus to and from school, sometimes up to 90 minutes at a time.

### **No Regrets**

I spent the next few years at a satellite school with one teacher assigned to every two grades. I loved listening to Mrs. Ruthvan teach the third graders, while pretending to do my second-grade lessons. I had the opportunity to do a practicum with Mrs. Ruthvan during college and enjoyed going back to my elementary school.

I graduated with a class of 200 in the 1970's — when there was much change following the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. Students were rebellious and challenging existing social norms. My graduating class was no different. Our motto was “We are the class of 1972, bound to be true, and different.” We voted to challenge the system, to bypass the traditional baccalaureate ceremony and graduate in street clothes, not caps and gowns. You can imagine the resistance we received from our school administration and parents.

I then attended college in the same conservative, culturally-rich community — and became a

teacher. In the 40 years since, I've had no regrets. I remember my first day of my first year as vividly as I recall my last day in the classroom.

### **Never Rest**

My personal history in the education field has shaped me as a teacher, just as history and heritage has shaped today's NSEA.

In 1937, the continuing contract law was passed, requiring boards of education to vote to dismiss a teacher before April 15 or the teacher's contract would automatically renew. The first due process law was passed in 1943, allowing for a probationary period, although it took until 1971 for it to apply to teachers outside of Lincoln an Omaha.

The Nebraska Teacher Retirement System was initiated in 1945, the Court of Industrial Relations was created in 1947, a group health insurance plan for teachers in 1959, and a collective bargaining law in 1967. Many of these rights are, frankly, taken for granted today.

Those were major accomplishments, but we should not ever accept the status quo. We must dream for the future, work to maintain relevance, and seek to influence public education in a positive manner for years to come.

### **The Wisdom of Investment**

That is made ever difficult by the rising level of attacks on our union and our public schools.

Our task is further hardened in that we are in competition with others for attention, respect and a fair share of state tax revenues. We must continue to encourage policymakers to see the wisdom of investing in education. It's an investment that will see the greatest return on taxpayer money and will strengthen the entire economy.

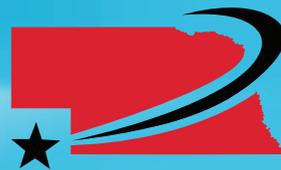
That message, however, must come from you. There are powerful individuals and interest groups that do not want us to have a voice — and they are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to silence us. Always remember that you have every right — and the responsibility — to be vocal in the political process.

Academy award winning actress Ruth Gordon said “Courage is a muscle, like a muscle, it strengthens by use. The more you exercise it the stronger it gets.”

We will continue to celebrate our past. We also must be committed exercising our courage and challenging the future.

My sincere thanks to each of you for your support of children, education and NSEA — our professional Association.

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# Fulton Scolds Ricketts for Proclamation Refusal

## Governor Denies 150th Proclamation; Fulton Calls Act 'Indefensible'

Gov. Peter Ricketts' refusal to issue a proclamation commemorating the 150th Anniversary of NSEA is a "slap in the face" to Nebraska public school teachers, said Association President Nancy Fulton in a letter sent to the Governor in late April.

Fulton called the action "mean-spirited and indefensible" and said the denial showed disrespect for NSEA's 28,000 members "and the hundreds of thousands of former members who spent their careers teaching children in Nebraska."

The governor's office responded that NSEA "demanded" he sign the proclamation, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Fulton's letter noted that NSEA followed procedures outlined by the Governor's office regarding the request; made the request two months ahead of time; then followed up the request with phone calls, emails and even an in-person visit with the Governor's staff. In every step of the way, NSEA staff was cordial and respectful to the office of the governor.

"This was an appropriate and reasonable request," said Fulton. "Each day, Nebraska public school educators work to teach more than 318,000 children. Governor Ricketts' denial of the proclamation says NSEA members – Nebraska's public school teachers and education support professionals – and their professional organization are not deserving of recognition for their hard work, or for their Association's 150 years of advocacy for children, public education and the teaching profession."



**State Board Resolution: State Board of Education President Pat Timm, Beatrice, right, hands NSEA President Nancy Fulton a resolution commending NSEA for 150 years of tireless work and service for public education and children.**

A governor's office spokesman responded that it had been re-evaluating education-related proclamations and in the future will focus such proclamations on achievement and innovation. That "review" did not stop a handful of other education-related proclamations that were issued after NSEA's request.

"If the governor would like to reward achievement and innovation, all he needs do is stop in any Nebraska public school," said Fulton. "Achievement and innovation happens in our public schools every minute of every school day."

Fulton's letter noted that for years the issuance of gubernatorial proclamations has been a ceremonial, apolitical function of "the office that you hold at this moment."

The Governor this spring issued proclamations honoring the Nebraska Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers for that organization's centennial in Nebraska, as well as the Nebraska Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for that group's sesquicentennial in Nebraska. He has also issued a proclamation honoring the Nebraska Farm Bureau for its centennial.

"Nebraska teachers and their professional organization are no less worthy than these professionals and their organizations," wrote Fulton. "As a 34-year public school teacher, I am offended by your clear and complete lack of respect and appreciation for the thousands of public school employees and their advocacy organization – the NSEA. Your refusal also clarifies your lack of respect for and understanding of public education as one of the foundational institutions of American freedom: our public schools."

Fulton also sent the Governor a copy of a publication entitled "A 150-year History of the Nebraska State Education Association."

## 'Crossing Boundaries' Series Emphasizes PPC Standards

### Six Videos Available for Discussion, Also Found on YouTube

Nebraska educators are held to a high professional standard. In an effort to promote a better understanding of what is expected, the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission (NPPC) has released a series of six videos entitled "Crossing Boundaries."

The videos are based on actual cases that have come before the NPPC where educators were in violation of ethical and professional standards. The videos cover topics including testing protocols, alcohol, inappropriate relationships, social media relationships and more.

The videos were produced by Nebraska Educational Television and come with a facilitator's guide and scripts for each video, as well

as discussion questions designed to engage participants in conversation related to ethical and long term effects of each situation.

NPPC Clerk/Administrator Kelly Muthersbaugh encouraged future and current educators to watch the videos, and asked administrators to use the series to start discussions about professional standards.

The "Crossing Boundaries" series and related material can be found at the NPPC website at [nppc.nebraska.gov/videos](http://nppc.nebraska.gov/videos), and on YouTube by searching for "Nebraska Professional Practices Commission." There are also six previously created case studies depicting even more situations in which educators were in violation of professional and ethical standards and came before the NPPC.

Muthersbaugh is available to speak to pre-service students and educators. For details, call her at 402-471-2943 or email to:

[kelly.muthersbaugh@nebraska.gov](mailto:kelly.muthersbaugh@nebraska.gov)

## Nebraska Department of Ed Seeks Your Comments on ESSA

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) seeks to engage educators in a series of activities that will inform the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. ESSA replaces what was formerly known as the No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA requires each state to submit a plan that outlines how it will ensure success for all learners, particularly learners who have been historically

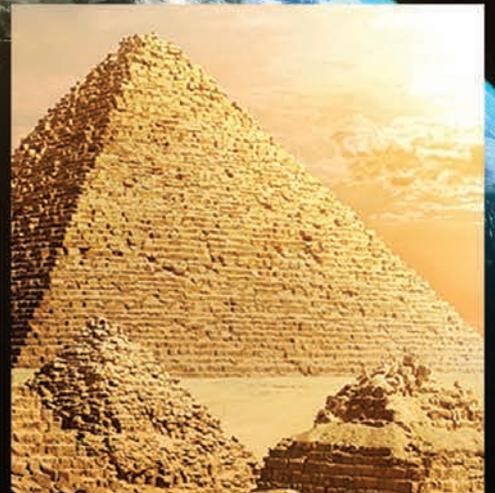
disadvantaged, underrepresented, and underserved. The NDE survey has been developed as one way to gather stakeholder input.

Stakeholders input will allow the NDE to craft a plan that truly responds to the needs of Nebraskans. The survey should take about 25 minutes, and all input is valuable. To participate, go to:

<http://bit.ly/ESSAinNE>

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**Dress-up Affair:** Looking fashionable in basic black, these four Lincoln Education Association members dressed up NSEA's Sesquicentennial Gala at the Lincoln Station in April. From left are Stephanie Howell, NSEA Vice President Jenni Benson, Isau Metes and Michelle Fonck. Benson was elected to a three-year term as president during the Delegate Assembly the following day.

# A Fitting Celebration

## Style and Action Take Center Stage at Association's 150th

Educators got dressed up on Friday night and then got down to business on Saturday as members observed the 150th anniversary of the Association's founding April 21-22.

Friday evening's event celebrated NSEA's Sesquicentennial with a gala affair at Lincoln Station. Nearly 400 members and dignitaries attended to toast the NSEA's 15 decades of advocacy for public schools. NSEA was founded in October 1867 in Brownville.

The following day, members were all business at the Association's 156th Delegate Assembly, electing a new team of officers; approving an update to the Association's strategic plan; backing a push to review mental health resources and identify how to deal with violent and disruptive students; and propelling an often-proposed Bylaw change into the books.

Seven times proponents have sought to give the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee ex officio representative a vote on the NSEA Board of Directors. This year, on a vote of 207-74, the amendment easily passed the needed two-thirds threshold.

A second Bylaw proposal, based on a two-year analysis of the Association's governance structure, failed. That amendment would have reduced the size of the NSEA board, while also giving voting seats to the EMAC representative, as well as Higher Ed, Student Education Association of Nebraska, and NSEA-Retired representatives. While a simple majority of delegates favored the amendment, uncertainty

about the inner workings of the revisions, among other concerns, left the plan short of the two-thirds vote required.

The debate on both proposals was hearty, and along with the pomp and celebration of Friday night, marked a fitting turn for the Association toward the 200 year mark.

"This was as inspiring a Delegate Assembly as we've had in several years," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "We celebrated, we debated and we accomplished much."

### Delegates, Dignitaries

At the gala, delegates and dignitaries, including members of the State Board of Education, state senators and past presidents enjoyed a plated meal at the historic Lincoln Station in the city's Haymarket area. Former NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen gave the keynote, "Making Sense of our History...and Our Future."

The first copies of Christiansen's update of the NSEA history were distributed to dignitaries at the gala. Members received copies as they registered for Delegate Assembly. Historical photographs and artifacts were on display at the gala and at Delegate Assembly the following day.

Saturday's highlight included election of three new members to the four-member Executive Committee. NSEA Vice President Jenni Benson was unopposed in her bid for president. She is a past president of the Lincoln Education Association, and is also a past member of the



**A True Friend:** NSEA President Nancy Fulton gave the 2017 Friend of Education Award to retired actuary Bert Peterson of Hastings. Peterson has written scores of letters and guest columns to newspapers across the state, all in support of the work of public schools and public school teachers.

NEA Board of Directors.

Elected NSEA Vice President was Millard Education Association President Paul Schulte. Lincoln Education Association member Linda Freye was elected to the NEA Board of Directors, joining Omaha Education Association's Tracy Hartman-Bradley as Nebraska's representatives to that board.

### **New Business Action**

Delegates also debated and enacted several new business items, including a call to hold a statewide consortium to identify the resources needed for students with mental and behavioral health concerns. The consortium will also work to determine methods to provide ongoing training for educators on how to deal with disruptive, threatening and potentially violent students.

Delegates also voted to create a committee to develop and implement an Early Career Educator Program that will work to reverse the downward trend in college students seeking to become teachers and to improve teacher retention rates (see page 9 for New Business Item details).

### **Strategic Plan Unopposed**

NSEA Vice President Jenni Benson introduced the proposed Strategic Plan update and noted that the plan had not been altered in 25 years. In the current political environment, she said, the Association must be proactive, rather than reactive. The new plan will assist in that transition. The plan includes four goals:

- That 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 organizational capacity.

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

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

- The NSEA supports governance structures that are responsive to the needs of membership.

Delegates approved the plan on a voice vote with no dissent.

### **'Be Courageous'**

In her final Delegate Assembly address as president, Fulton thanked members "for the confidence you have expressed in me." She also urged members to remain vigilant.

"The attacks on our public schools are unprecedented," she said. In the face of those attacks, "be courageous and committed to the future."

Newly-minted NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell followed Fulton's remarks later and said when it comes to policy-makers, it does not matter "if you have an 'R' or 'D' behind your name as long as you have an 'E' and 'K' – education and kids – in your heart."

In the face of attacks on public education, Fennell urged members to go on the offense; to be politically active; to speak of their successes, particularly when talking to naysayers; and to support NSEA's changing value proposition.

That proposition gives educators a reason to join the Association beyond the usual benefits of bargaining and liability insurance. Fennell believes that education drives Nebraska's economy; that educators are the engine; and NSEA is the fuel. In that formula, she said, the Association must take the lead.

"We are the guardians of our profession, not the Legislature," she said.

"There is no other time to do this but now. If not, the battle has been lost and the others have won," she said.

### **Awards and Honors**

Fulton presented the Friend of Education Award to Bert Peterson, a retired actuary who uses his training to analyze student achievement scores and other data and then writes clear, concise and no-bar-holds commentary to Nebraska news outlets. Peterson's letters and guest columns are well-reasoned, well-researched and written with a clarity that make clear his ardent support of Nebraska public schools. They have appeared in newspapers across the state for several years.

The 2016 Teaching Excellence Award went to Lincoln Education Association member Doreen Ainslie, a seventh-grade social studies and reading teacher at Lincoln's Mickle Middle School. NSEA's 2017 Rookie of the Year, Raeanna Carbaugh, a Niobrara Education Association member.

Becki Wulf, a Norfolk City Education Association member is coordinator of the Alternatives for Success program at Norfolk Senior High School, and is NSEA's 2017 Community Service Award recipient.

NSEA's 2017 Public Education Advocate recipient was Jon Kipper, the chief bureau officer for two local FM radio stations, an AM radio station, and a News Channel Nebraska television station available on cable at Falls City.

The Great Plains Milestone Award, which celebrates the development, advancement and protection of human and civil rights, this year recognized "Unity in Action" – an organization that has been active in assisting the Latino community in South Sioux City.

Members also approved a \$7 increase in dues for the 2017-18 Association year.



**Presidential Lineup:** Seven NSEA presidents attended the Association's Sesquicentennial Gala in April. From left are Craig R. Christiansen, 1992-98; Duane Obermeier, 1998-2005; Mary Buglewicz Duffy, 1979-80; Nancy Fulton, 2011-17; Joe Higgins, 1982-83; Jim Rea, 1988-92; and Dennis Lichty, 1976-77.



**Excellence:** NSEA President Nancy Fulton, right, awards the 2017 Teaching Excellence Award to Doreen Ainslie of the Lincoln Education Association.



**Service:** Vice President Jenni Absalon, right, gave the 2017 Community Service Award to Becki Wulf of the Norfolk City Education Association.



**Rookie:** Niobrara Education Association's Rae Carbaugh earned the 2017 Rookie of the Year, given by Nebraska NEA Director John Heineman.



**Equality:** Nebraska NEA Director Tracy Hartman-Bradley, right, hands the Great Plains Milestone Award to Balbina Valadez of South Sioux City's Unity in Action organization.



**Membership:** President Nancy Fulton handed the 2017 William Gallagher Award to Elkhorn District President Tracia Blom. The award recognizes high membership levels.



**Reporting:** Jon Kipper of Falls City's News Channel Nebraska received the Partner in Education Award from Vice President Jenni Benson for excellence in education reporting.

## Action Taken on Early Educators, Mental Health

Members at the 2017 NSEA Delegate Assembly approved four New Business Items, calling for action by the Association over the next 12 months.

### **New Business Item No. 1**

The NSEA shall form a committee consisting of early career educators in their first seven years of service, SEAN members, and NSEA Board of Directors members with the charge of identifying key issues affecting early career educator retention and Association membership. The committee will then create a strategic plan to develop a program for early career educators that addresses these key areas. At the 2018 NSEA Delegate Assembly the committee will report a summary of their research and strategic plan and, if appropriate based on their

findings, propose the formation of an early career educator program in Nebraska.

### **New Business Item No. 2**

Direct NSEA's President and Executive Director to send a joint letter to state senators opposing income tax cuts that would reduce state revenues and hurt funding for education in Nebraska.

### **New Business Item No. 3**

Direct NSEA's Governance and Staff to work with key stakeholders (i.e. State Senators, Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska State Association of School Boards, mental health practitioners and others) to hold a consortium that will research and identify the additional resources needed to help students with mental and behavioral

health concerns, to determine methods for providing ongoing training for educators on how to deal with students that are disruptive, threatening and potentially violent, and to provide training that will focus on de-escalation and prevention.

### **New Business Item No. 4**

NSEA will utilize existing resources to advocate and educate around LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersexual, Asexual) and Ethnic Minority issues. This includes but is not limited to raising awareness of NEA (and identified partner organizations) resources and establishing professional development and supporting already successful NSEA events such as the annual Metro District Social Justice Conference on these issues.



**Legislative Learning:** Sen. Dan Watermeier, Syracuse, visits with members of the Peru State College chapter of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) during a recent visit to the State Capitol by SEAN members. Students quizzed senators about retirement bills, school funding and other issues. With Watermeier, from left, are Emily Whipple, Jordyn Leffler, Kaylee Gill, Megan Wallace, Amanda Antholz, Stephanie Scales and Elly Lempka.

# NSEA Opposes Retirement Cut

## Legislature Debates Plan to Lessen Rule of 85 Retirement Benefit

April showers might bring May flowers, but it is still uncertain what May's unsettled legislative debate will bring to Nebraska students, teachers and taxpayers.

By the middle of the first week of May, senators had effectively killed an incredibly ill-timed tax cut plan that fell short of advancing by a fairly narrow margin. Had LB461 moved on, it would have greatly constricted future state spending on schools and other important budget items.

Still alive, however, was LB415, a bill that would reduce retirement benefits for future school employees; change the Rule of 85 to the Rule of 95; and greatly restrict the ability of teachers to accept post-retirement employment in the education field.

Sen. Mark Kolterman's bill was ostensibly introduced to protect the state's teacher retirement plan, even though the plan is 90 percent funded (80 percent or above is generally regarded as sufficient) and on track to be 108 percent funded in the next 20 or so years.

An actuarial review of LB415, delivered to Kolterman and retirement officials on April 21 but held back from others until the first week of May, estimated Kolterman's proposal would have negligible effects on the \$10 billion retirement plan.

Although at least one senator alleged confusion on NSEA's part regarding LB415, Association President Nancy Fulton said there was no wavering.

"We have been opposed to LB415 from the start. Period," she said.

### Three-Year Ban

One of the most onerous aspects of LB415 would bar teachers who accept early retirement incentives of even a dime from teaching in any other Nebraska school district for three years.

Such a ban is not only unfair to retirees, it eliminates a broad swath of potential substitute teachers at a time when subs are hard to find.

NSEA worked with Fremont Sen. Lynn Walz to introduce an amendment to eliminate that three-year ban, but senators had not



**Working with the Senators:** Omaha Sen. Sue Crawford, left, listens as Bellevue's Brad Wellmann, center, and Omaha's Eddie Ventura Jr., ask her to oppose LB415. Both members of the NSEA Board of Directors, Wellmann and Ventura were in Lincoln for the NSEA Delegate Assembly.

acted on that amendment at press time.

Among other changes, LB415 moves the early retirement age to meet the Rule of 85 from age 55 to 60. That effectively turns the Rule of 85 into the Rule of 95, as most educators have been in the classroom for 35 years – or more – by the time they reach age 60.

The bill also institutes a 180-day ban on any activity in the teach-



'17 Nebraska Legislature

ing field for those who retire early. Early retirees will not be able to teach, substitute or even volunteer in a school for six months from the date of separation. Further, if the retiring teacher takes a dime of early retirement cash from the school district, the teacher may not teach, substitute or even volunteer in a Nebraska school district for three years.

The fact that most early retirement settlements barely cover the cost of health insurance to the age of 65 is ignored.

Changes in LB415 would be effective on July 1, 2018, and would effectively create a new, third tier in the state education employee retirement plan. Four years ago, senators created a second, slightly lesser, tier of retirement benefits that went into effect for teachers hired after July 1, 2013.

### **Early Retirement Opposition**

Finally, although early retirement settlements have saved Nebraska school districts more than \$26 million in property tax dollars over the past five years, senators are on the verge of action that would all but eliminate such settlements.

LB512 would no longer allow expenditures on early retirement settlements to be outside the \$1.05 spending lid. That change would curtail, if not outright kill, the use of early retirement settlements.

Both LB415 and LB512 would also further decrease the already constricted pool of available substitute teachers in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Association of School Boards is solidly against LB415 and LB512.

### **It's the Property Taxes!**

Senators debated the governor's tax relief package, which focused on income tax cuts rather than property tax reductions. Property tax increases are clearly the sore spot Nebraskans have been clamoring about for the better part of a decade!

The bill would have given \$10 in income tax relief for every \$1 of property tax relief.

The plan offered a series of reductions in income taxes for individuals and corporations, and also put a value on ag land using a formula that would base value on both income potential and market value.

Had the governor's tax cut plan, LB461, been in effect last year, however, Nebraska budget builders would now face a statutorily mandated tax cut of up to \$450 million on one hand while staring at the existing nearly \$1 billion revenue shortfall on the other.

"In times of a state budget shortfall such as now, the sheer volume of the income tax cuts proposed will put pressure on the Legislature to push more state funded responsibilities like education onto local property taxes to balance the state budget," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton.

Fortunately, state senators saw the folly of income tax rate cuts during tight budget times. LB461 fell to a filibuster, with a motion to end debate garnering just 27 of the needed 33 votes.

Meanwhile, senators had whittled the \$1 billion shortfall to less than \$400 million. But that remaining shortfall could make it difficult for full funding of state aid to be realized in the coming school year.

That said, cynics will point out that the state doesn't meet the promise of fully funding state aid anyway – and in fact the Legislature has tinkered with the state aid formula in 12 of the past 15 years to make the formula needs match available revenues.

### **Bill Penalizes Third Graders**

Finally, Elkhorn Sen. LouAnn Linehan took the rare step of filing a motion to pull a bill, LB651, from the Education Committee. LB651 would mandate that school districts hold children back in the third grade if they are not proficient in reading. The governor supports LB651. The bill was pulled from committee on a 30-13 vote.

NSEA believes a decision to hold a child back should be made at the classroom, not the state government level. NSEA President Nancy Fulton – a former third grade teacher – said such a decision should be made collaboratively with teachers and parents in accordance with a local school board's policy.

# Tax bill would only help a select few

*Fremont Tribune, April 26, 2017*

## Now is not the time for talk of tax cuts

*Grand Island Independent, April 24, 2017*

## Nebraskans are rightfully troubled by tax-cut plan

*Omaha World-Herald, April 21, 2017*

Agriculture leaders say tax bills unacceptable as proposed; more needs done

*West Point News, April 19, 2017*

## Tax-cut bill raises concerns

*Omaha World-Herald, April 20, 2017*

## LB 461 SOLVES A PROBLEM FEW THINK IS A PROBLEM

*Fairbury Journal-News, April 14, 2017*

## Tax breaks going to wrong class

*Seward Co. Independent, April 19, 2017*

**Headlines Tell the Story:** Headlines on news stories and editorials over the past month have shown a general dissatisfaction with LB461, the governor's tax cut package.

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**An Arm's Length: Nebraska NEA Director John Heineman, Lincoln, stretches as he buys an 'arm's length' of tickets sold by North Platte's Amy Sabatka during NSEA's Delegate Assembly. A \$20 donation to the Children's Fund purchased the tickets, with the top prize a 'split the pot' total. The fundraiser and sale of gift baskets raised more than \$1,400.**



# Children's Fund Drive Nears Halfway

## Campaign Picks up Steam in Quest for \$150,000

A flurry of activity over the past month — and nearly \$1,500 given by members at NSEA's Delegate Assembly in April — have pushed the #150k 4Kids campaign to the halfway mark.

By the end of April, there was \$74,000 in the coffers as a result of the year-long drive to put the Children's Fund on sound footing. NSEA's six district presidents conceived the drive as a salute to NSEA's sesquicentennial and as a way to secure financial stability for the Children's Fund.

Your local Association still has time to complete a quick drive for cash, or to plan an event for next fall that will raise money for the fund. The drive concludes in October, with the formal end to NSEA's 150th celebration. The Association was founded in October 1867 in Brownville.

The Children's Fund benefits children in need of basic items like eyeglasses, winter coats, clothes and more. All a member must do when they see a child in need is to call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047. Assistance is almost immediate, and there is no red tape.

Donations cover most of the cost, but expenses have been steadily rising to the point that the average yearly expenditures top \$50,000. NSEA absorbs all overhead costs.

Here is a list of recent substantial drive donors:

### PLATINUM

Aradius Group  
Bellevue Education Association  
Crete Education Association  
Fremont Education Association  
Grand Island Education Association  
Gretna Education Association  
Horace Mann  
Karen Kilgarin  
Lux Middle School  
Millard Ed. Association Cupcake Caucus  
Nebraska Staff Association  
Nebraska State Education Assoc. Staff



**Funding Finesse: Two local associations were cited at Delegate Assembly for raising funds for the Children's Fund. Deb Carlson, left, accepted on behalf of the Bellevue Education Association, which raised the most cash — more than \$11,000 — of any local in the last year. At right, is Katie Renfro of the Um'ho' Nation Education Association, which gave an average of more than \$50 per member.**

Norby & Wade  
NSEA Elkhorn District  
NSEA Retired  
Papillion-LaVista Education Association  
Um'ho' Nation Ed. Association  
Union Bank & Trust  
Waverly Education Association

### GOLD

Battle Creek Education Association  
Bellevue Education Association-Retired  
Sally Bodtke  
District OR-I Education Association  
EMAC  
Lincoln Education Association  
Ellen Ott  
Rita Price  
Michelle Raphael  
Joan Sparks  
William Umberger

### SILVER

First Nebraska Educators Credit Union  
Nancy Fulton  
Diane Green

Hays Spring Education Association  
Hickman Presbyterian Church  
Janice Kriha  
Millie Lemon  
Maureen Nickels  
Deb Rasmussen  
Gary and Martha Schaffer  
Carla Schwahn  
Sidney Education Association  
Wisner-Pilger Education Association  
Women of the ELCA Salem-Fontanelle

### BRONZE

Neil Bateman  
Sharon Bohling  
Genevieve Bowen  
Neal Clayburn  
Cindy Copich  
Ruby Davis  
Madaline Fennell  
Fillmore Central Education Association  
Mary Freil  
Mary Kay Gibson  
Giltner Education Association  
John and Jane Gorman  
Hastings Public Schools District 18  
Barbara Howard  
Sheri Jablonski  
Lisa and Robert Johnson  
Knobmasters Cribbage Club  
Lorrie Krejci  
Tricia Martis  
Tamra Mick  
Ne. Council of School Administrators  
North Platte Education Association  
Duane Obermier  
Panhandle Dist. Cowboy Up Conference  
Pender Education Association  
QBE  
Cathy Schapmann  
Larry Scherer  
Kristen Sedlacek  
Seward Education Association  
Student Education Association Nebraska  
Tekamah-Herman Education Association  
Wayne State Education Association  
Westside Education Association  
Ellen Yates

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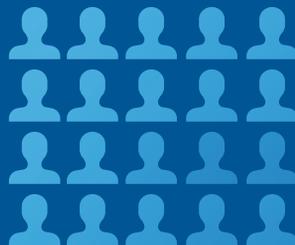
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\*Tuition is subject to change.



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EDUC 512	Technology and Mediated Instruction	June 5 - July 27, 2017	3
EDUC 601	Study Design and Data Collection	June 5 - July 27, 2017	3
EDUC 605	Cognition and Learning	Sept 2 - Sept 29, 2017	3
EDUC 553	Using the Internet	Sept 30 - Oct 27, 2017	3
EDUC 540	The Master Teacher	Oct 28 - Nov 24, 2017	3
EDUC 600	Sociology of Education	Jan 13 - Feb 9, 2018	3
SPED 500	Inclusionary Practices	Feb 10 - March 9, 2018	3
EDUC 552	Introduction to Multimedia Authoring (or elective or Graduate Transfer Credit)	March 10 - April 6, 2018	3
EDUC 621	Curriculum Development	June 4 - July 27, 2018	3
EDUC 602	Statistical Methods and Data Analysis	June 4 - July 27, 2018	3
EDUC 569	Teachers as Collaborative Leaders (or elective or Graduate Transfer Credit)	Sept 1 - Sept 28, 2018	3
EDUC 623	Assessment of Instruction (8-week capstone)	Sept 29 - Nov 23, 2018	3

*\*First course is free if the cohort meets the enrollment requirement of 30 students.*

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Course	Title	Term Completed	Credit Hours
EDUC 512	Technology and Mediated Instruction	June 5 - July 28, 2017	3
EDUC 601	Study Design and Data Collection	June 5 - July 28, 2017	3

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# Registration Open for Confab on Racial, Social Justice

Online registration for the NEA Conference on Racial and Social Justice is now open.

The conference aims to provide a unique space for educators, students, parents, families, organizers, community members and leaders to unite for the advancement of justice in education. Through interactive workshops, sessions, panels and plenaries, attendees will have the opportunity to access information and resources to plan, strategize and engage on issues that impact educational opportunities for communities of color, LGBTQ and women.

The conference will be held June 28-29 in at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center just prior to the NEA Representa-

tive Assembly. The early registration deadline is May 19 (\$125) and the final registration deadline is June 2 (\$150).

Register for the conference at:

[nea.org/racialsocialjustice](http://nea.org/racialsocialjustice)

Direct questions to Aisha Haynes by leaving a voicemail at 1-202-822-7702 or by e-mailing to:

[ahaynes@nea.org](mailto:ahaynes@nea.org)

In addition, tickets to the Human and Civil Rights Awards dinner are available at [www.nea.org/hrcawards](http://www.nea.org/hrcawards) for \$75 each, or a table of 10 for \$750. The dinner will be held on July 1 in the Grand Ballroom of the Convention Center.

## Youth Speakers Sought for Lincoln TEDx

A call has gone out for youth speakers to participate in a TEDxYouth event in Lincoln on Saturday, Aug. 19.

The event will offer a platform for youth who are thinkers, visionaries and learners to come together to be inspired and have the opportunity to inspire others.

TEDxYouth@Lincoln is a local, independent event striving to re-create the unique experience of TED, where the world's leading thinkers and doers meet to share what they are most passionate about.

At its core, the fundamental goal of TED and TEDxYouth@Lincoln is to foster and spread great ideas.

The format will be a suite of short, carefully prepared talks, demonstrations and performances on a wide range of subjects relating to the theme "What Now?" to foster learning and inspiration.

Interactive activities will provoke conversations that matter. The theme "What Now" is broad and can relate to any number of subjects – technology, education, the humanities, culture, society, the list goes on. What is your idea to change the world – or at least reframe someone's perception? We want to know! For details, go to:

<https://podio.com/web-forms/18042618/1212004>



**New SEAN Team: Members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska elected 2017-18 officers at the SEAN Delegate Assembly last month. Seated, from left, are Elizabeth Milliken University of Nebraska-Omaha, Metro Representative; Evann Vrana, Southeast Representative; Tommy Eckhart, Western Representative; and Bailey Schleuter, Northeast Representative.**

**Standing, from left, are Alicia Laufenberg, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Underclass Representative; Megan Wallace, Peru State College, secretary; Madison Kinney, York College, president; and London Bercey, Wayne State College, president-elect.**

## Still Plenty of Time for Teacher of the Year Application

Application forms for the 2018 Teacher of the Year are now available through your superintendent or principal, or by calling the coordinator at the number listed below.

Applications must be submitted or postmarked by midnight (CST), Aug. 11, 2017. A selection panel will review applications, and up to five teachers will be advanced. Finalists will be interviewed in September, and the Teacher of the Year will be selected from those finalists. An awards luncheon will be held in November.

Begun in 1972, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding Nebraska certified teachers who teach

in a pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 classroom setting, and who plan to continue in an active teacher status in a state-approved or accredited school. Three letters of support and a YouTube classroom video presentation must accompany the application. Questions on the application seek information on educational background and personal development, community involvement, philosophy of teaching and learning, and the teaching profession from the viewpoint of the applicant.

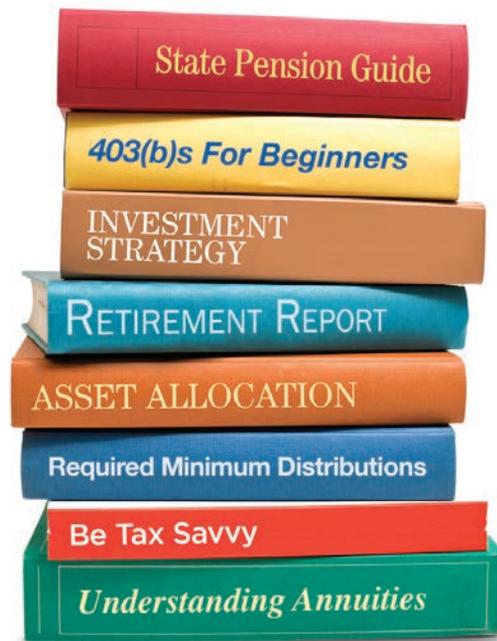
The NSEA, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska Association of School Boards, and corporate partners Blue

Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) will present a monetary award to the Nebraska Teacher of the Year. Each of the remaining finalists will receive a monetary award from sponsoring corporate friends and education associations. The Nebraska State Board of Education will provide a \$1,000 grant to the Awards of Excellence winners and the Teacher of the Year to be used for a project of the teacher's choice in his/her school. Finalists receive other gifts as well.

For details, contact Teacher of the Year Coordinator Lora Sypal at 402-471-5059 or:

[lora.sypal@nebraska.gov](mailto:lora.sypal@nebraska.gov)

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- **Fund an important event:** Make a wedding, family reunion or milestone celebration even more memorable.

- **Pay for medical expenses:** Take care of your kid's braces or other family needs.

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### NEAMB Expands Hours

NEA Member Benefits knows your time is limited at the end of the school year. To better serve you and other NEA members across the country during this busy time, we've expanded our Member Service Center hours for the month of May as follows:

- Weekdays: Monday, May 1 – Wednesday, May 31: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Saturdays: May 6, 13, and 20: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Note that the Member Service Center is closed on Saturday, May 27, and Monday, May 29, for the Memorial Day holiday.

Whether you want to take advantage of all the Member Appreciation Month offers and giveaways available, register or update your beneficiary for your free NEA Complimentary Life Insurance, or find out how your Association benefits can help you plan a great summer, we hope May's extended hours will make it all more convenient.

Call the Member Service Center toll-free at 800-637-4636, or send an email to:

[Ask-Us@neamb.com](mailto:Ask-Us@neamb.com)

You can also chat with us online at:

[www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com)

Remember, we're here to help you make your life better all year long!

*Susan Estes is Nebraska's NEA Member Benefits representative*

# Setting Financial Goals an Important Step

## Financial Security Based on Your Goals

By The Editors of Kiplinger's Personal Finance

You probably don't expect to attain great wealth in your lifetime. Simple financial security would do, if only you knew what that meant. It's a slippery notion, all right, but it does have a few characteristics you can grasp. Here's what you should consider:

You need a steady source of income. This comes from your job, or your business if you're self-employed, or investments if you're fortunate and alert. Future income is the bedrock on which financial security is built.

You need financial reserves. Cars break down, household appliances wear out, roofs spring leaks. Kids aspire to college educations, and someday you'll want to retire. These are expenses you have to provide for with savings and investments.

You need protection against financial catastrophes. In a word, this means insurance. You need it in sufficient amounts to cover your life, your health, your ability to earn an income, and your family and your possessions. Without insurance, the best-laid financial plans can be wiped out in an instant.

You need to get further ahead each year. If you stand pat, even modest inflation will grind away at your financial reserves just as surely as if you were spending the money. To stay ahead of the cost of living, you have to be alert for opportunities to make your money grow. These things don't come to you by accident. You have to go after them, and that means setting some goals.

The most important step toward financial security is to translate it into your own terms. What, exactly, are your personal financial goals? If you have trouble sorting them out, try classifying them as either wants or needs. Go a step further and add long-term or short-term to the description. Now you have some useful labels you can

apply to your priorities.

Say you're going to need a new car soon. Gathering the money for a down payment without borrowing or dipping into savings would be a short-term need. Let's call it, and other short-term needs such as your daughter's braces or a new winter coat, priority number one. Longer-term needs, such as contributions to a retirement fund, can get priority two. That vacation in Bermuda next spring is a short-term want -- making it priority three. The 42-foot sailboat you'd like to own before too many years go by is a long-term want, so it gets a four.

You could shift priorities around, of course, and use lots more numbers. Actual goals and their priorities will vary with your circumstances. The important thing is to give serious thought to your goals and try to anticipate the expenses coming up, whether they're close at hand or several years away.

Choose goals you can get excited about because that will make you more determined

to reach them. "Financial security" sounds good, for instance, but we've already admitted that it's hard to quantify. It needs some skin and bones. Define what it means to you. How about this? "I want to own a million dollars' worth of stocks by the time I'm 50." Or this: "We want to retire to Arizona in ten years with enough money to buy a house near Phoenix and enough income to travel in Europe for a month each year." Now you've got goals you can put a future price on, and that price can be translated into a savings and investment plan that you can start today. Put your goals in writing; that makes for a great motivational tool.

The trouble is, exciting goals and good intentions need cash to back them up. That's where budgeting comes in. It's your best bet for distributing your limited resources among competing goals.

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## This is Our Reality



**Executive Director  
Maddie Fennell**

“

*We are the quality control guardians of our profession, not the Legislature!*

”

Thirty-one years ago, I attended my first Delegate Assembly as a member of the Student Education Association. I've been a member of this Association longer than I've taught and I'm very proud of that fact.

It's because of people like you that I succeeded as a teacher. It's because of leaders in the Association that I've met that I'm able to serve as the 14th executive director and only the third woman executive director in Association history. It's a humbling honor and one I take very seriously.

During my first few weeks on the job I met with every staff member. I was taken aback by the tremendous passion, caring and commitment staff showed not only to each of you, but to every student.

Know this: Someone always has your back when you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation. You have the NSEA staff working for you around the clock.

### **Our Reality**

Your Association is fiscally sound and healthy. While we are healthy, it is a very precarious time for teachers and unions. Our biggest threats aren't in Washington, D.C. They lie across the street from the NSEA building – in the legislature and the governor's mansion.

There are those who want to destroy public schools and your Association. They work to elect politicians who vote to severely limit public school resources and attack teachers' unions. Meanwhile, public school teachers are blamed for a lack of student progress. That “lack of progress” leads to so-called “reform” like charter schools, vouchers, grading schools A-F, lowering the bar for educators and attacking teacher retirement.

This is our reality; we can see the above happening right now in Nebraska. You see it as our own governor chooses to recognize Charter Schools Week, yet refuses to honor the state's public school teachers with a proclamation honoring NSEA's 150th anniversary.

The bottom line is this: NSEA doesn't care whether an elected official has an 'R' or a 'D' behind his or her name, as long as that official has an 'E' and a 'K' – for Education and Kids – in their heart. That's what we care about.

### **Develop That Relationship**

I have three requests of you.

First, I ask that you be politically active. Every decision in education is a political decision. The num-

ber students in your room, your salary, your duty-free lunch – all are political decisions.

To protect our students and our profession, we must be active in elections. We need you for the serious role of candidate recommendation teams. We need you to campaign and vote for those 'E' and 'K' candidates! You must knock on doors with and talk about our recommended candidates – with your families, your book group, in the grocery line.

We can't outspend the Koch brothers but we can out walk them. They're not going to be knocking on doors, and they're not known or trusted in our communities like you are! You can make a huge difference in elections!

Second, develop your relationship with your senator. If you got 'em elected, keep supporting them. If you didn't get them elected, treat them like that special, challenging student you have to love a little bit more! Take them to coffee, call them, go to their events. They need to know you care and that you're watching.

### **A New Narrative**

The final request is that you support NSEA's new value proposition.

Our business at NSEA is to make great teachers across this state. Ten years from now I don't want anyone to say “the union protects bad teachers.” I want that narrative to be “NSEA is the group that creates and supports great teachers.”

We can afford to do this by starting a new 501c3 – Leading Excellence and Robust Networks “LEARN” – that will help fund the professional development of educators across the state. We will welcome educators whether they are a member or not because this is what we owe our profession.

We are the quality control guardians of our profession, not the Legislature!

As much as I love this Association, I can't do this alone. I can't do this with the fantastic staff we have. We need to engage every educator – member or not – in this fight. It is truly a fight for public education in this country.

If we don't take on the fight now, the battle is lost and the other side will have won. As professional educators, we must model for our students how to stand up for ourselves, our profession and our students.

*Editor's Note: This month's column is a synopsis of Executive Director Maddie Fennell's comments at Delegate Assembly on April 22.*

## From Antarctica to One Room Schools

### Retired Members Enjoy Active Month

April was an incredibly busy month for your NSEA-Retired elected representatives and members.

It started with your NSEA-Retired Spring Conference, and a day later saw nearly two dozen retired members at the NSEA 150th Gala and Delegate Assembly in Lincoln. Here are reports on both events.

#### Annual Spring Conference

The annual spring conference was held on Thursday, April 20. The keynote was delivered by Lincolnite Robert Kay, who discussed how he conquered Mount Everest. Kay has also climbed the highest peak in every U.S. state, as well as the highest peak on every continent.

The Spotlight on Nebraska speaker was Shannon Fickes, who talked about her experience living, surviving and thriving in Antarctica. Fickes worked in Antarctica as a firefighter at the McMurdo Station, the U.S. research center at the bottom of the world.

Attendees were glad to have a nice spring day to travel to the conference, even with such chilling presentations.

#### Delegate Assembly

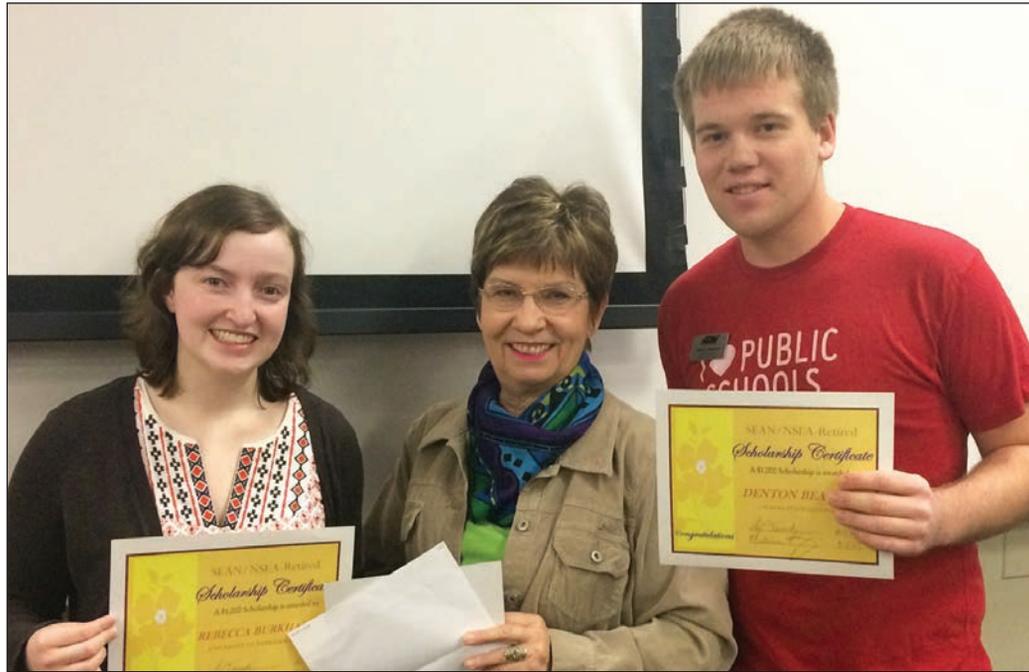
Delegate Assembly was held on April 21-22 in Lincoln.

Retired members were well-represented with Capital District was represented by Pat Etherton, Arlene Rea, Bill Hayes and Marty Peregoy. Elkhorn District leaders were Frances Rohrich, Dan Schiefelbein and Art Tanderup. Representing Metro District were John Jensen, Liz Rea, Carol Krejci, Walta Sue Dodd and Ruby Davis. James McDermott served as Panhandle District representative, while Sandhills District representative Dee Gillham completed the group.

#### It Started As a Small Request!

The idea of “One Room Heroes” started the beginning of 2016 with Betty Stukenholtz requesting “nominations” for one-room, country school teacher honorees for a plaque to be unveiled at a Peru State conference last summer. The response was overwhelming. Then it blossomed into the idea of a book.

The plaque dedicated at the 2016 conference has 250 names. People sent stories and photographs with their nominations, and they continued to pour in. There are well over 300 now. It was Betty’s intent to have the information available in 2017, but she left us too soon. It seemed fitting to make the request again this year in her honor.



**Scholarships Delivered:** NSEA-Retired President-Elect De Tonack, center, awarded \$1,000 scholarships to members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) recently. Recipients were Rebecca Burkhardt, the University of Nebraska-Omaha, left; and Denton Beacom, Wayne State College, right. Not pictured is Jaci Jenkins, Wayne State College.

“One Room Heroes” will be published in 2018 in memory of Betty, with proceeds going to support the Nebraska Country School Association. If you would like to submit the name of a teacher to honor, please send to:

[necountryschoolassociation@windstream.net](mailto:necountryschoolassociation@windstream.net)

Please include the years taught, name of school and district if possible. Photographs of schools, classrooms and teachers are welcome as jpeg attachments. Due to the volume of mail received last year, we must request emails, word documents and scanned images only to the address above.

#### Why Should I Join NSEA Retired?

The NSEA-Retired is a statewide association of educators that is committed to:

- protecting current pension and Social Security benefits
- advocating on retirement issues
- advancing quality public education.

NSEA-Retired is the ONLY retired association that guarantees continuation of your NEA Member Benefits and NSEA-Retired services. Members conduct business at a fall and a spring conference, featuring workshops and speakers. Each spring the membership elects officers and delegates to the NSEA Delegate Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly.

Active NSEA members may join as Pre-Retired Lifetime members, while still teach-

ing. Retired educators may join as Lifetime members or Annual members, if they are at least 50 and were an Active member in the Association, the year they retired.

There are many benefits of membership in NSEA Retired. NSEA-Retired works:

- with the Educator’s Health Alliance (EHA) advocating for improvements in the BC/BS retiree health plan.
- to improve your retirement benefits and provide affordable health care.
- to monitor and act on legislation that affects retired educators
- to communicate regularly about updates on retiree issues, via newsletters, publications and email.

If you are 50 years of age or older, and wish to continue your Educators Health Alliance (EHA) health insurance after retirement, you must be a NSEA Special Services member. All NSEA-Retired members benefit from reduced Special Services fees.

As a NSEA-Retired member you are eligible for the NSEA BlueSenior Classic Medigap coverage (with Dental option) OR the NEA Member Benefits Medigap coverage. These Medicare Supplement plans are for retirees age 65 and older. Visit the NSEA-Retired website to learn more at:

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

Subscribe today and lock in dues for life!

— Renae Kelly, Editor  
[renaekelly@gmail.com](mailto:renaekelly@gmail.com)

# Lincoln's Janssen Earns 2017 McAuliffe Prize

Each nominee for the Christa McAuliffe Prize for Courage and Excellence in Education is asked to submit their "philosophy of education."

NSEA member and Lincoln Northeast High School social studies teacher Cheyenne Janssen opened hers with a quote that motivates her every day to develop students into world changers: "Education is the most powerful weapon for changing the world."

Janssen has been named the 2017 winner of the McAuliffe Prize by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Education and Human Sciences.

Those words from Nelson Mandela have special meaning for Janssen, a social studies teacher at Lincoln Northeast High School.

Janssen says she wants her students to do well academically and to be life-long learners, but mostly she wants them to use their knowledge to change the world. "It's my passion to create students that understand that life is much bigger than them, and who take an active role to stand for what they believe, to take the knowledge learned in

geography, civics, U.S. history and government and apply it—to create students who become adults who exemplify courage and excellence."



**Janssen**

An example of how Janssen gets her students engaged in the community comes from Chapter 25, a non-profit that helps feed the hungry locally, nationally and internationally. Executive Director Becky Snedeker spoke to one of Janssen's classes about her organization, but it didn't end with a PowerPoint. With Janssen's support and guidance, the students raised funds to package and distribute food globally.

"For Cheyenne, it was not enough for her students to simply learn—she wanted them to react," said Snedeker. "A great teacher enthusiastically takes on the challenge to expand that knowledge to a classroom far bigger than four walls."

Dr. Gregg Wright, associate professor at UNL's Center on Children, Family and the Law, established the award in 1986 as he and his young children followed the Challenger mission closely. McAuliffe, the first teacher in space, was aboard the space shuttle.

## Social Security Number Erased from NSEA Forms

Your cell phone company likely has your Social Security number.

Your cable company probably has your Social Security number.

But starting in May, providing your Social Security number will no longer be required to become a member of NSEA.

The National Education Association has for many years required Social Security numbers on membership forms. That practice ends this month, said NSEA Comptroller Sheri Jablonski.

"You will be asked only for the last four digits of your Social Security number, not all nine digits. We will no longer have Social Security numbers on our membership forms," said Jablonski.

NSEA has for many years assigned members a unique, permanent 10-digit membership number for identification purposes within the membership database. That number will become the primary identifier, making Social Security numbers irrelevant in that regard.



**Lunch on the Lawn: Morgan Zumpfe, a UNL senior majoring in ag communications from Friend, presents ag facts to fourth graders while they enjoy lunch on the State Capitol lawn.**

## Sack Lunch Milestone

### Lunch at Capitol Surpasses 35,000 Fed

The popular Ag Sack Lunch Program, which serves up free sack lunches to Nebraska fourth-graders and teaches them about where their food comes from, wraps up its seventh year in May. Nearly 5,000 students from 95 Nebraska schools will have participated in the program this school year.

The Ag Sack Lunch program is designed to educate Nebraska fourth-graders — and by extension their parents — in a fun way about how important agriculture is to the state's economy. Since its inception in 2010, the program has provided more than 35,000 students with free lunches and an introduction to the state's No.1 industry. Sponsors of this popular program include these industry organizations: the Nebraska Soybean Board, the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, the Nebraska Beef Council and the Nebraska Corn Board.

Each year, more than 20,000 fourth-graders visit the State Capitol Building in Lincoln as part of their curriculum. The Ag Sack Lunch Program ties into these visits by inviting teachers to participate in the free program, which educates youth on how their food is grown and produced.

Program sponsors budget for 5,000 free lunches a year, which consist of Nebraska-produced foods.

Each 20-minute presentation teaches students about the importance of agriculture to the state's economy. Presenters are "Ag Ambassadors" — University of Nebraska-Lincoln students with farming backgrounds trained to conduct the lunchtime sessions.

If you are interested in participating in the program for your fourth graders in 2017-18, watch the September edition of *The Voice* for details.

# ‘Skinny Budget’ Would Starve Educator Learning To Erase Title II Funds

In March, the Trump Administration released its “skinny budget” with a proposed 13 percent cut to the overall federal education budget which would include a total elimination of Title II, Part A.

As well-known educator Linda Darling-Hammond said in the Huffington Post, “the Trump ‘Skinny Budget’ would put educators’ learning on a starvation diet.”

Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act is the section of ESSA that supports educator learning and development. Within ESSA, among many critical reductions, the \$2.4 billion for Title II, Part A, was zeroed out, along with \$43 million in Teacher Quality Partnership grants and \$190 million for the Striving Readers program, which also support teacher professional development. Meanwhile, the budget expands incentives for school choice by \$1.4 billion. To see what the cuts would mean, see the March 28 *Ed Week* blog at:

<http://bit.ly/MarchEdWeek>

The folks at Learning Forward are seeking stories to show the importance of Title II funds in supporting professional learning that aids student results. Learning Forward is actively working to inform Congress about the critical uses of this funding and to ensure Title II funding is not eliminated.

Learning Forward is also seeking stories that illustrate what the funding paid for and the resulting change that occurred. If you have received federal funding for professional development, share a success story through the survey program at:

<http://bit.ly/LearnFwd>

We would also urge you to call or email your federal representatives at:

■ **Sen. Ben Sasse:** 202-224-4224 or find the email form under the ‘Contact’ tab at [www.sasse.senate.gov](http://www.sasse.senate.gov).

■ **Sen. Deb Fischer:** 202-224-6551 or find the email form under the ‘Contact’ tab at [www.fischer.senate.gov](http://www.fischer.senate.gov)

■ **Rep. Adrian Smith:** 202-225-6435 or find the email form under the ‘Contact’ tab at [www.adriansmith.house.gov](http://www.adriansmith.house.gov)

■ **Rep. Jeff Fortenberry:** 202-225-4806, or find the email form under the ‘Contact’ tab at [www.fortenberry.house.gov](http://www.fortenberry.house.gov).

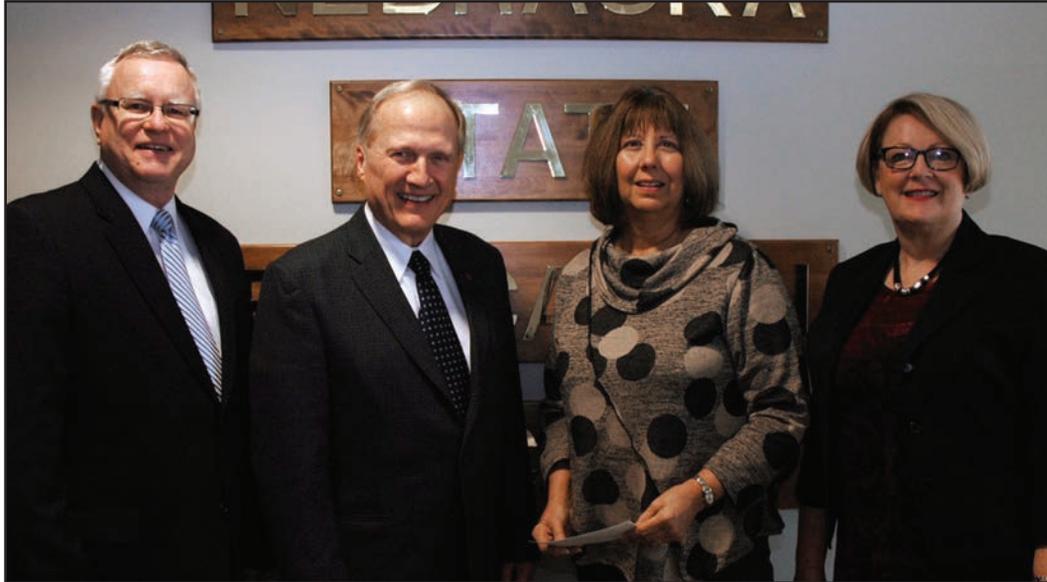
■ **Rep. Don Bacon:** 202-225-4155 or find the email form under the ‘Connect’ tab at [www.bacon.house.gov](http://www.bacon.house.gov)

## Speaking of Education

“For these are all our children. We will profit by or pay for whatever they become.”

— *James Baldwin,*  
*American Author (1924-1987)*

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



**Gala Donation:** The Horace Mann insurance Companies made a gift of \$5,000 to NSEA ahead of time to assist with the costs of the Association’s 150th Anniversary Gala. From left are Keith Jorgensen, Horace Mann Business Development Leader; then-NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen; NSEA President Nancy Fulton; and Cindy Dornbush, Horace Mann Vice President of Operations for Nebraska.

## Document Now to Speed August Setup!

Provided by Diane Postman, a teacher in Virginia:

“Before packing up for the year, document your current classroom set up. Photograph your room arrangement; take many photos to show every detail. It will make it easier to set it back up in fall.

Draw a map/grid of where furniture and rugs go. Measure and label with details.

If your bulletin board paper is still in good shape, cover it with newspaper and reuse - go green! If it is not, keep it up. Then use the old paper as a template when measuring new paper.”



## Bonus Works4Me: Cozy Old & New Teachers

Provided by Carol Aten, a teacher in Pennsylvania:

“I often report to school and begin setting up my classroom before we’re required to be, so I meet new teachers as they move in and offer to assist them. I make a point of seeing them daily to inquire about their day or answer any questions. I also sit with the new teachers at lunch and during meetings. Last year we had a teacher who was new to the area, so we went out to dinner and did social things together to get her accustomed to the town.”

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