

The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association • January 2020

- Nurture Kids to Alleviate Toxic Stress
- All You Need to Know to Be a Candidate for NSEA Office

Mentoring Poster Inside!



CREATING SAFE CLASSROOMS



THE VOICE

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Letter of Intent Date is Not Feb. 15 or March 1

State Statute Sets Date as March 15

Just a year ago, a few administrators across Nebraska began distributing letters of intent before the Christmas holiday.

That distribution was extraordinarily early, as state statute does not require Nebraska's K-12 teachers to return signed letters before March 15.

Superintendents, in an effort to get a handle on next year's staff sometimes request that this year's staff state their intentions early, suggesting letters of intent be returned as early as Feb. 15 or March 1, or sometimes even earlier.

Letters of intent are important, and PK-12 educators should know 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 the letters are sent out before Jan. 1, sometimes asking for a response within days.

Guinan advises that members not rush to sign, but be deliberate 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.

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."

Letters that ask for a signature and return on March 15 or on a specified date after March 15, are appropriate. In such cases, it is vital to sign and return it by the due date.

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

Time 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 member may request a refund of those contributions for the current membership year. As an alternative to a refund, 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 of the member.

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 post-marked no later than Feb. 15, 2020. In order to efficiently use dues dollars, requests for refunds received by the due date will be processed and mailed in a single batch, after that date.

Send requests to Benson at 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Questions? Call NSEA's toll-free number at 1-800-742-0047.

Would You Like to Write for The Voice?

Would you like to write an item for *The Voice*? Would you like to write an opinion column or an article on what is working in your classroom?

NSEA would like to begin a regular page for members, entitled Voice from the Classroom. Submissions can be classroom-related, humorous, inspiring or otherwise teaching related.

Submit your questions about the process, and your topics to us at:

thevoice@nsea.org

On the Cover: Lincoln teacher Amy Jewell recalls that the February 2019 attack on her by a student was swift and unexpected. NSEA is supporting legislation that would curb such violence. Learn more on Page 7.

For the Best interests of All



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“
**NSEA’s goal
is to ensure
that all students
and staff
can learn
and teach
in a safe
and supportive
environment.**
”

It starts again. When the Nebraska Legislature convenes on Wednesday, Jan. 8, the 49 members of that body will begin making decisions that affect every Nebraskan.

Make no mistake, their work is a huge undertaking. They bear a solemn and massive responsibility. Each senator has expectations, and each will answer to constituents at home, and those constituents also have expectations. NSEA, too, sets legislative expectations – expectations that the legislative decisions that will affect your students, your classroom and your work are made with the very best of intent and with the very best interest and results for all in mind.

NSEA’s goals and expectations, some of which are outlined in the box on this page, clearly frame the need for NSEA’s influence in the discussion and on the debate that happens during the legislative session. Senators need good, solid background when considering all the angles on the student discipline bill. Senators need input from educators when talking about why teachers need more time to teach and students need more time to learn. They need examples from teachers who can explain why low student-to-teacher ratios are important.

In considering the issues and the players, the NSEA Board of Directors and NSEA staff take their jobs very seriously.

Serious Injury Averted

Each of the goals on the NSEA Legislative Agenda are there because they favor students and favor public education. It is important that, collectively, we educate public officials and the public in general about why these Association priorities are important.

One way of doing that is supporting bills that protect children and educators. We believe LB147 does that.

I recently sent an email to all members requesting input regarding assaults and violent incidents in schools. We have received tremendous response from members across the state. Those responses will be collated and used – with strictest confidentiality where needed – in talking to policymakers about the need for LB147.

I’ll also be telling my own stories, gleaned from my career teaching special education for more than 30 years. Working with students with challenging behaviors remains a passion and my life’s calling, despite the fact that I have been assaulted dozens of times.

I filed an accident report after one incident resulted in a shoulder injury. A student charged at a younger and much smaller student. I put my arm around the charging student’s torso as he ran to attack the smaller student. He kept hitting and my shoulder was injured. My principal received an email from the administrative office asking, “What does she expect when she clothes-lines a kid?”

Even though I was relieved I was able to halt what might have been a serious injury to a child, that administrative response floored me. It still bothers me, and I still remember it like it happened yesterday. And that was just one of so many incidents that I stopped reporting my injuries. I was told such attacks and injuries were “part of your job as a special education teacher.” Frankly, that attitude is unacceptable. Our special education teachers, and all staff and all students, deserve better.

NSEA 2020 Legislative Agenda

Among the priorities for the 2020 Legislative Session, NSEA will work with legislators to:

- Provide state and local funding that supports quality public education and equal opportunity for every student;
- Ensure public school students and staff have respectful, safe and secure learning and working environments;
- Provide additional funding for behavioral health services and resources, and provide all school staff with behavioral health training and tools commensurate with their school responsibilities;
- Promote and protect public education programs that benefit Nebraska students, teachers, higher education faculty and education support professionals;
- Ensure that any changes to the state’s tax system are either revenue neutral or provide additional funding for PK-16 public education;
- Encourage state programs giving educators more time to teach and students more time to learn;
- Support efforts to maintain effective student/teacher ratios for optimum classroom learning.

Proactive Approach

There are concerns from some corners about LB147. But over the past several months, NSEA has met with representatives from across the disability community to discuss those concerns. We have accepted every single edit to the bill they have suggested.

NSEA’s goal is to ensure that all students and staff can learn and teach in a safe and supportive environment. Physical intervention is to be used only when a student becomes violent and is a threat to harm themselves or others.

NSEA also continues to advocate for additional mental and behavioral health resources, for counselors, for mental health professionals, for students,

as well as for ongoing training for educators that focuses on de-escalation and prevention.

As we continue our proactive approach to this problem, we must balance the needs of all students against the needs of one. We believe it is necessary to give school personnel the authority to deal with disruptive students while also having protections in place to ensure that those resources are being used prudently and not disproportionately affecting particular groups of students. We do so because all children and staff deserve a safe learning environment.

So, as I said, it starts again. And once again, NSEA will be there to make certain that the best interests of all students and all teachers are represented.



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Nurture Kids to Alleviate Toxic Stress

Illinois Non-Profit's Methods Raise Achievement

During a conversation at a family barbecue years ago, Audrey Soglin and her brother David came to the joint realization that educators and medical professionals could – and perhaps should – work together to help children.

Today their efforts in seven suburban Chicago school districts and 16 southern Illinois school districts makes a meaningful difference for hundreds of children affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). They founded the nonprofit Partnership for Resilience, which has reduced detentions, suspensions and expulsions and has pushed statistically significant math and English gains in Illinois school districts.

Their research led them to understand and reduce the effects of toxic stress on children. Poverty, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence and other homelife stressors can, in some cases, render a child unable to respond or act appropriately and responsibly at school.

“When a child lives in toxic stress, the ability to learn is literally out of the student’s control,” said Audrey Soglin, a teacher for 25 years and now the executive director of the Illinois Education Association. “I wish that I had known this when I was teaching, that the ability to learn, the ability to react is literally out of their control because of the physiological reaction that’s happening in the moment. I would have been a better teacher.”

Soglin and her brother – the chief medical officer at La Rabida Children’s Hospital in Chicago – spoke about their work at the 10th Nebraska Child Health and Education Summit on Dec. 3. NSEA and the Nebraska Association of School Boards co-sponsored the conference, held at Innovation Campus at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. More than 125 health and education professionals from five dozen organizations and school districts attended.

Life-Long, Life-Shortening

Soglin said that despite years of focus, there has been little to no narrowing of the achievement gap. When Soglin and brother David began to consider their educator/pediatrician partnership they first looked to ACEs.

David Soglin said a landmark 1998 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente identified 10 Adverse Childhood Experiences (see box). The study considered 17,000 insured, college-educated subjects. In that relatively middle-class population, only one in three subjects had grown up with zero ACEs. One in six had four or more hits, and one in nine had a score of five or more.

A more recent study, said David Soglin, indicates a much heavier ACE burden on students of color and students in poverty. The effect of those adverse conditions is not only lifelong, they are life-



Sibling Act: Pediatrician Dr. David Soglin, left, and Illinois Education Association Executive Director Audrey Soglin, his sister, formed a non-profit in their home state of Illinois to help children who have been adversely affected by toxic stress.

shortening.

“People who had four or more ACEs have a greater risk of heart disease and obesity,” he said. “In the population of people with six or more ACEs there is a reduced longevity of 20 years. To put that in perspective, chronic cigarette smoking reduces longevity by 10 years.”

If no child suffered from ACEs, he said, projections indicate that obesity would fall by 2 percent; coronary artery disease would fall by 12 percent; the incidence of stroke would fall by 24 percent; and depression would fall by 44 percent. Further, society’s cost from social programs, increased crime, educational costs and other factors reaches \$1.8 million for each child who begins life with multiple ACEs.

What Are ACEs?

Abuse & Neglect

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect

Household Dysfunction

- Domestic violence
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Divorce/Separation
- Family member jailed

Behind in Social Skills

The effects of ACEs intersect with a child’s education at an early age, said David Soglin.

“We see language and other behavioral and developmental delays,” he said. “We see more injuries, more obesity, more somatic complaints – those kids who are always complaining of stomach aches and headaches.”

Food-insecure children are more likely to be behind in social skills and reading performance in kindergarten. By elementary school, they’re four times more likely to need mental health counseling.

He cautioned that while the original study was landmark changing, it looked at just 10 adverse issues. And what it really identified was toxic stress. “We know that racism is a cause of toxic stress. We know that living in a community with violence, that being bullied – there are a host of other toxic stresses that they didn’t know to ask about,” he said.

Big Goals

Clearly, Audrey Soglin said, when ACEs rise, academics fall.

While the ACEs explain inappropriate behavior, they don't excuse it; consequences must remain. The key is to shift from so much punitive response to more restorative actions, from blaming to understanding.

"That's our mission," she said. "We're trying to integrate education, healthcare and community organizations to create a trauma-informed and family focused system that measurably improves the academic health and social outcomes for children."

Their discussion at a family barbecue led to further exploration of the issue with six others, and then to a 501c3 non-profit formed to approach three school districts on the south side of Chicago. That led to 40 conversations with educators to determine their concerns.

Those conversations identified key needs: primary health care, behavioral health care, parental engagement. Providing those services, encouraging relationships and contacts with each child, practicing mindfulness – all those efforts make a difference.

"We should be promoting social norms that protect against violence and adversity. We should be ensuring a strong start for children, which means early childhood education, home visitations, high-quality child-care," she said. "Social emotional learning is critical. Teaching adolescents about safe dating and healthy relationships."

'Start Somewhere'

The non-profit, the Partnership for Resilience, seeks to reduce human suffering through a decrease in mental and medical illnesses, a reduction in risk behaviors like smoking and substance abuse. They would like to decrease the inter-generational transmission of ACEs and would like to see improved educational and occupation attainment, decreased crime, and increased productivity and life expectancy.

"Those are big goals, but if you break them down to individual students and individual classrooms, they're doable. A school can change. A school can become trauma-informed. The school can change the outcomes for their students. It's very possible, and it's doable, but they can't do it alone."

She urged those at the conference to work together in Nebraska for similar goals.

"You're a group of people who together can support students in this community and their families. Start somewhere. Find a school, find a couple districts, find like-minded people who will help you start to change the trajectory for many of your students."

For more about Partnership for Resilience, go to:

partnership4resilience.org

In the Moment, On the Mind

Our days are filled with information coming at us at a rate we've never seen before and our brains sometimes don't know where to focus. We tend to skip back and forth between items which is exhausting as our brains are meant to just focus on one thing at a time. Think about your typical day and see if you can note any times during the day when you are only thinking about the task in front of you. Challenging to do? If so, mindfulness might be a good option for you!

Mindfulness is an effort to consciously focus on the here and now and being fully aware of what's going on now rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Mindfulness includes not judging ourselves while we're trying to be mindful.

There's a lot to that explanation of mindfulness – you probably thought it was just being, well, mindful! Hopefully you have mindful moments where you are fully present but, for most of us, there are just a few.

While it seems like being mindful would be easy, it's actually challenging for us to just "be." When we're mindful, we're not "stopping" our thoughts – our brain is wired

to think so we will keep doing that. Mindfulness helps us be aware of our wandering mind and brings it back to the present, non-judgmentally.

Mindfulness is a great strategy to help relieve stress and to focus on taking care of yourself in positive ways. Mindfulness can help lower blood pressure, improve immune function, lower anxiety levels and more.

Practice is key when it comes to mindfulness – you can actually train your brain to be mindful over time.

Here are a few ideas to get started with mindfulness:

- Each time you walk through a doorway, pause and take 1-3 deep breaths.
- Brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand.
- Pick up an everyday object like a pen and describe all of its features.
- Eat your lunch slowly, in a quiet place, and focus on every bite.

Try some of these methods and find more on the internet. You'll be glad you did!

Provided by the Educators Health Alliance Wellness Program.

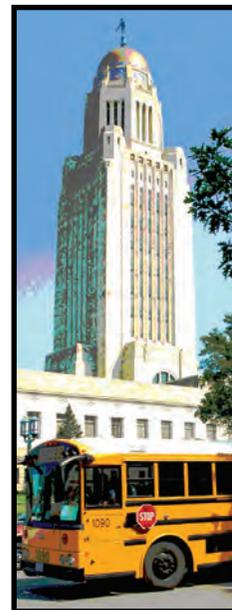
A photograph of a man and a young boy sitting at a table, looking at a document together. The man is pointing at the document, and the boy is holding a pen. The image is used as a background for a promotional message.

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Nebraska Legislature '20

LEA Assistance! Special education teacher Amy Jewell received support from the Lincoln Education Association after she was punched by a student.

A Case for Classroom Safety

Lincoln Teacher Supports Need for Bill to Protect All from Classroom Violence

Amy Jewell recalls the attack as swift and unexpected. Over four years, the student had transitioned to Lincoln Southwest High as Jewell built a trusting, solid relationship with him.

Jewell teaches students with disabilities who are often unable to care for themselves. Her co-teacher's students are more independent, but not quite on grade level.

"When you work with students with significant disabilities, you build relationships with them," she said. "He was doing really well. We just didn't have the behavioral concerns we once did with him."

That changed suddenly on a Tuesday in February 2019. The students had finished a big group lesson and the co-teacher had returned her students to their classroom through a connecting door. Meanwhile, the student had left a pencil and papers on the floor. Jewell asked him to put them away. He was unhappy with the request yet did as asked and returned to his classroom.

Then Jewell heard "a ruckus."

"Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought it would have been this student. We hadn't had any problems with him all year," she said.

She stepped into the adjoining room and found the student pounding fists on a wall repeating "I'm going to slit her throat." When the co-teacher asked what he was talking about, he pointed at Jewell. As Jewell tried to talk to him, he walked to her, pulled back his arm and punched her hard in the side of the face. Her head swung back and he hit her again, this time in the back of the head. He shoved her aside and left the room.

Classroom Safety Bill

Far too often in classrooms and hallways across the state students lash out at other students or at teachers and staff, threatening to injure others or themselves. Uncertain about state discipline parameters, and with different policies and varied levels of administrative support from district to district, educators are frequently and understandably hesitant to step into situations that might require the use of physical intervention.

Jewell was injured at the same time that Nebraska state sena-

tors were considering a bill that would allow school personnel to use physical intervention to safely manage the dangerous behavior of a student until the student is no longer a danger to themselves or to others. The bill would require that school districts have a policy on how and when a student can be removed from class. The policy would state how and when a student may return to class via a clear and consistent process.

LB147, the Student Discipline Act, was stuck in committee for most of the 2019 legislative session. It cleared the committee hurdle near the end of the session and is ready for action by the full Legislature during the session that begins on Jan. 8.

While the bill does not address the need for more mental health professionals in schools or the funding issues that would put more paraprofessionals in classrooms where more trained adults are needed, it would help standardize what educators can and cannot do and codifies case law giving them protection when they do intervene.

Floor debate on LB147 begins Monday,

Jan. 13.

"LB147 would do much to make our classrooms and schools safer for students and teachers," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "We will do all that we can to see it through to passage."

Unprotected and Scared

Jewell has been hit and kicked by her special education students in the past but this incident was different. "When I have been assaulted in the past, it has been by an individual with severe disabilities who can't control and doesn't understand what they are doing," she said. "He punched me like an adult male would punch someone in a bar fight."

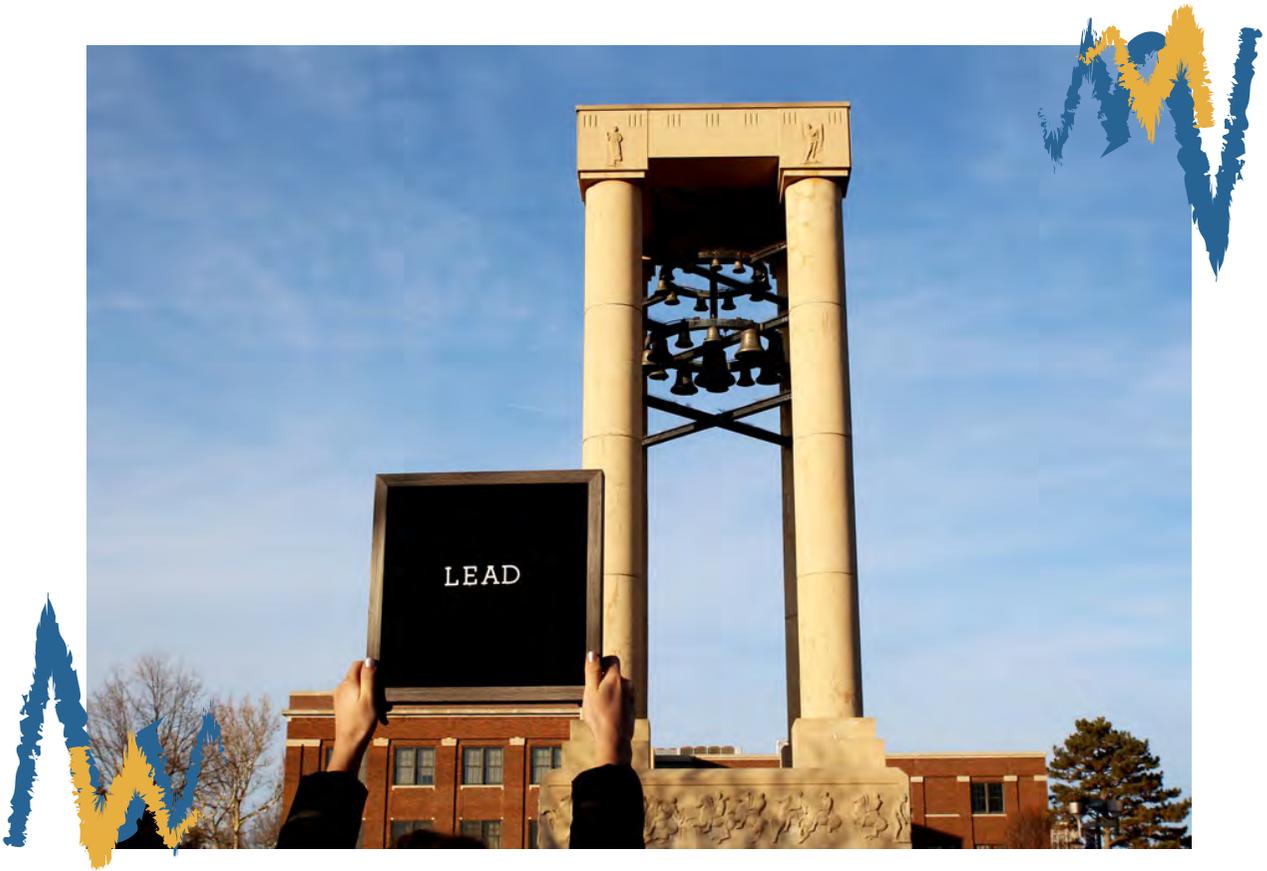
Afterward, Jewell was checked out by the school nurse and declined treatment. Her principal, program coordinator and even a district official checked in on her.

By Saturday, Jewell's jaw was still sore and she began having headaches, so she visited a doctor. Slowly, the incident began to take an emotional toll, coming to a head the following Monday. At a meeting with her co-teacher, her coordinator and district officials, she was told the student could return to his classroom following a five-day suspension. She also learned that while the student had said he was sorry, he admitted that he might hit her again.

"That was when I really got upset. The meetings should have

'There was nothing to stop him from coming over and hurting me again or hurting the students in my classroom who are in wheelchairs and unable to defend themselves.'
— Amy Jewell

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stopped and he should not have come back to our classrooms, let alone our school,” she said. School officials initially proposed a shortened day for the student, reading and math only, in the room of Jewell’s co-teacher.

“There was nothing to stop him from coming over and hurting me again or hurting the students in my classroom who are in wheelchairs and unable to defend themselves,” she said.

Jewell asked to move to an unused room on the far side of the building. She was settling in when a close friend and co-worker stopped to check on her. That’s when Jewell broke down, cried and realized she felt unprotected and unable, emotionally and physically, to argue for that protection.

The friend’s reply? “You are a member of the Lincoln Education Association. You need to let them know,” said Jewell. “That’s when I was put in touch with Mandy.”

Serious Consideration

NSEA Organizational Specialist Mandy Faripour told Jewell that she deserved to be back in her classroom and should not need protection from a student in her classroom. A meeting was quickly arranged with district officials. Faripour pointed to a clause in the LEA-LPS contract that mandates final plan approval by the teacher involved in such incidents.

“I can’t tell you what a comfort it was with Mandy there reassuring me,” said Jewell. “She immediately went into action and things started happening. For that I will be forever grateful.”

With Faripour’s help and insight, Jewell returned to her original room. The student moved to a room on the far side of the building, two teachers working at his side. Jewell received a schedule of his daily movements.

Jewell is proud of Southwest’s special education program and the relationships that have been made with parents and students. She was pleased with the support of her principal, supervisor and security officials and the way the situation was resolved in her interest. She was also thankful for her LEA/NSEA membership.

“Mandy helped me accomplish what needed to happen in order for me to feel safe moving forward.”

Jewell said LB147 requires serious consideration.

“I think legislation would be great if there was something in place to protect teachers in the event this happens again. Because it will happen again.”

Attacked by a Student

Just 10 years ago, the student who beat Carrie Brison and punched Amy Rosenau might have been placed in a regional center setting.

Instead, he found his way to Lincoln High School last February. By October he had been involved in three assaults on teachers, the last of which sent Brison and Rosenau to the ER by ambulance.

Both believe more paraprofessionals and teachers in special education classrooms, and more mental health care for students in general, could cut the number of outbursts educators encounter.

In some cases student placement might be in error. “The type of student who attacked me more than likely would have been placed in a regional center type setting in the past, even just 10 years ago. And he probably would be very successful there. It’s very structured, very routine,” she said.

Brison would know. She manages a hefty case load that includes clients in the Lincoln Regional Center. She completed student teaching for her behavior endorsement at the Lincoln Regional Center when Morton School was still part of the programming at the Regional Center. She is a former MANDT (de-escalation/restraint) trainer for LPS and is MANDT-certified. She previously taught in the Behavior Core Program and now has 20 years with LPS.



At work: After an October assault sent them both to the ER, Carrie Brison and Amy Rosenau are back on the job.

‘I Felt My Neck Pop’

In October, Brison was in her classroom working with the student on IEP-related coursework when, unprovoked, the student came after her. The call-for-help button in her room was unreachable from where the student had her pinned after pulling her down by her hair. She was being punched in the base of the head and neck repeatedly. She yelled for help, hoping someone would come to her aid.

Her cries were answered by Rosenau who quickly hit the call button. At that point, the student had Brison by her ponytail and “was just pounding her,” said Rosenau.

The first call button was either not heard or was not pushed hard enough. The button was pushed several more times as both teachers called out again for help.

In the meantime, the student threw a board at Brison and lifted a chair into the air in an attempt to strike Brison. They both grabbed the chair and managed to get it to the floor. The student proceeded to push both teachers and the chair toward the back of the classroom where they became entangled and fell to the floor. The intercom came on and a staff member asked if they needed help, both teachers screamed “YES!” The student then began punching Brison again.

“I yelled at him to stop, and he came at me. He punched me in the jaw. I felt my neck pop and everything kind of went black for a little bit,” said Rosenau.

Shortly after that, a school resource officer entered the room, and the student just stopped.

“He later told the officer he was hitting me with all his force,” said Brison. “He made it abundantly clear that had he had knives, he would have stabbed me to death and I wouldn’t be able to do anything.”

Said Rosenau: “That tells me that he is cognitively aware of what he is doing, and the repercussions of what he is doing.”

The Trauma is ‘Outrageous’

School officials summoned an ambulance, and Brison and Rosenau were taken to a hospital, treated and released. Both are still in physical therapy and dealing with lifting restrictions. Even so, they each pushed to return to the classroom, taking just a couple of days off.

“These kids depend on us for dignity and safety, so we can’t have that many people gone,” said Rosenau. “They have to be taken to the bathroom and changed. They have to have their tube feedings at the nurse’s office. If there’s not enough people...”

They agree that more help is needed. “Staffing is No. 1,” said Brison.

“We need more people, so many more resources,” said Rosenau.

Brison believes an immediate debriefing would have been a good idea. “I’m trained to work with individuals such as this student. I never want to touch a student in crisis, but this time, I was never given the opportunity to protect myself, or keep myself safe. It is an isolating, scary situation,” she said.

On a larger scale, she said such assaults need to be reported and measured in one statewide system that collectively looks at the data, perhaps giving the child a “trauma” designation in the computer system, alerting staff to a background of trauma.

“We get notices of a student having an IEP, why not trauma?” said Brison. “The amount of trauma kids come to us with is outrageous.”

Broader support for mental health care would help. The amount of trauma and safety situations we see on a daily basis is alarming, and funding and programming continues to be cut, said Brison.

“We’re providing clothes for these kids. We’re providing food, but we’re not providing a way to make it better,” said Brison. “It’s going to require money. It’s going to require training. It’s going to require time. And it’s not going to go away.”



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De-escalation Strategies to be Next Webinar Topic

NSEA's Monthly Series Will Improve Your Teaching Skills

The January edition of NSEA professional development webinar series will look at a topic every teacher can appreciate: how to recognize behavior that is escalating, and how to intervene quickly and effectively to de-escalate that behavior.



Brand

Presenting will be Michele Brand, the grades 6-12 At-Risk Coordinator for the South Sioux City Community Schools. Barnes has the experience to speak to de-escalation methods. She began her career teaching at a residential treatment facility. Over her nine years in that position, she taught programs ranging from the sub-acute

mental health unit to a drug treatment program.

For 11 years at South Sioux City, she taught middle school students who were not successful in the general classroom setting. That work included teaching kids who simply did not do their homework to students who brought weapons to school.

"Having this much diversity in my classrooms really made me aware of the need to be more aware of behaviors and the quick ways to de-escalate behaviors," she said.

Today, Brand works with a minimum of 35 students from grades 6 to 12, guiding them on social skills, attendance, behavior and academics, with the goal of graduating from high school and making a successful transition into adulthood.

Brand is a trained mentor for the Check and Connect Program



WEBINAR SERIES

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WWW.NSEA.ORG/WEBINARS



MENTORING POSTER

Display the poster on the following pages to promote the NSEA Mentoring program.

out of the University of Minnesota and is her district's crisis prevention intervention trainer.

Her presentation through the NSEA webinar will introduce easy and common-sense approaches to de-escalating behaviors. Time will also be spent examining teacher's roles in escalating and de-escalating behaviors.

The webinar is set for Thursday, Jan. 9, at 6:30 p.m., CST. Any NSEA member interested may participate. Members can register at this link:

www.nsea.org/webinars

NSEA's professional development offerings are a component of the Association's plan to provide professional growth in the profession. Utilizing the Zoom platform allows NSEA to reach teachers across the state, wherever they are most comfortable learning.

The Jan. 9 session will be followed a week later, on Thursday, Jan. 16, with a group coaching session and extension of learning. That gives time for participants to "test drive" strategies learned in the earlier session. The group coaching session will also allow participants to ask questions, fine tune their delivery and share their successes with colleagues.

Future monthly webinar topics include:

- Preventing Burnout, Thursday, Feb. 13.
- Trauma-informed Classrooms, Thursday, March 12.
- Restorative Practices, Thursday, April 9.

For more details, call or email NSEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich at 1-800-742-0047, or:

cindy.copich@nsea.org

Planning for 2020 Edition of 'NSEA U' Well Underway

'All-in-One' Super Summer Conference Again Planned for Innovation Campus

Last July, NSEA leadership and staff took a bold step and combined three longtime staples of Association conferences into the first-ever NSEA University.

The key feature of the inaugural NSEA University was the offering of nearly 180 professional development sessions, at no charge to members. Nationally known keynote speakers headlined the final three days. Plans are now shaping up for the second NSEA University, scheduled for Monday through Thursday, July 14-16, at the University of Nebraska Lincoln's Innovation Campus.

The goal: to provide professional development that will improve the skills of Nebraska educators.

The 2019 effort was an exercise in pure success.



"It was astounding," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "Evaluations were great, the location was ideal, and we're going to do it again — and even better this time."

The event will feature tracks for Leadership Institute invitees, for early-in-their-career educators, as well as members of any kind. Other tracks will offer topics under the five provisions of NSEA's strategic plan: bargaining, membership, politics, governance and social justice.

The event combined the Leadership Institute, membership meetings for local leaders across the state, and the annual fall bargaining conferences members might be familiar with from past years. More details will be available in the February edition of *The Voice*, and at:

www.nsea.org

Benson advised members to do one thing: Save the date. "This is going to be a great conference," she said.

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CSC has also designated an individual to coordinate the college's efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Inquiries regarding Title IX may be directed to: Ted Tewahade, Title IX Coordinator, Chadron State College, 1000 Main St. Chadron, NE 69337, Telephone: 308-430-0980, Email: titleixcoordinator@csc.edu.

Delegate Assembly Attendees Will Fill Exec Team Vacancies

NSEA President, Vice President, NEA Director to be Selected

At NSEA's Delegate Assembly in Lincoln on April 24-25, delegates will elect members to fill three open slots on the Association's Executive Committee. Each elected candidate will serve a three-year term.

Open for election are the positions of president, vice president and one of NSEA's two seats on the National Education Association's

Board of Directors. All are for three-year terms beginning on Aug. 1, 2020. Any active NSEA member in good standing is eligible to file for election to these positions.

Events on Friday night, April 24, will open with a call to order, and will be followed immediately with two rounds of professional development sessions. No other formal Delegate Assembly business will be conducted, and the usual practice of nominating candidates for the three open positions will take place during the morning session on Saturday, April 25.

Candidates who wish to secure vendor tables at the Delegate Assembly site must make that request of the NSEA executive director no later than 45 days in advance of the April 24 event.

In addition, any candidate who wishes to have campaign material included in the electronic materials available to all



delegates in advance of Delegate Assembly must submit that information to NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell not less than 45 days prior to April 24. The actual deadline for both those actions is 11:59 p.m. CST on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Contact Fennell at:

maddie.fennell@nsea.org

Candidates may also advertise in NSEA's monthly magazine, *The Voice*. For rates and deadlines, email:

al.koontz@nsea.org

The 2020 Delegate Assembly will be held at Lincoln's Marriott Cornhusker Hotel.

Questions? Contact NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Three Dozen District Seats Open

Is it time to step forward and consider a leadership role in your association?

Starting Friday, Feb. 21, NSEA members will vote for candidates to fill nearly three dozen district leadership posts, as well as openings on the NSEA's Board of Directors. Electees will assume roles in determining the Association's future. But first, those candidates must file.

The window for filing opens on Wednesday, Jan. 1, and closes Sunday, Feb. 9. Voting takes place online, and will begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 21. It will close at midnight on Sunday, March 15.

To view the vacancies, and to file, go to the NSEA website and click on the '2020 District Elections' link. Select your district, and then select the office of interest. Candidates will need their 10-digit NSEA membership number. That number can be found above your name on the mailing label of *The Voice*, or on the email that delivers the digital edition of *The Voice*. Call NSEA for details 1-800-742-0047. The NSEA website is at:

www.nsea.org

Nominate a Co-worker for NSEA Recognition

Now is a good time to begin discussing who you or your association would like to nominate for one of the honors to be given at NSEA's 159th Delegate Assembly in April.

In addition to awards presentations, elected delegates will conduct association business, and elect a president, vice president and NEA director. Up to 30 sessions of professional development will be offered to delegates and the general Association membership.

For the awards, any NSEA member may nominate a member teacher, ESP or deserving group. Mailed nominations must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 14, 2020, and should be sent to NSEA Awards, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Nominations may also be submitted online, with required supporting material mailed to the NSEA. Online nomination forms are found under the 'Call for Nominations' link at:

www.nsea.org

The 2020 Delegate Assembly will be held at Lincoln's Marriott Cornhusker Hotel on Friday evening and Saturday, April 24-25. NSEA members are eligible for:

■ **Rookie of the Year:** Honors a first-year teacher who

excelled in the 2018-19 school year.

■ **Award for Teaching Excellence:** Honors a teacher who has excelled over 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.

FILE FOR OFFICE

Jan. 1 - Feb. 9, members file for state and district offices to be elected during Feb. 21-March 15 voting.

VOTING

Voting for district officers, NSEA board, RA At-Large & Cluster Delegates will take place from **Feb. 21 - March 15**.

DA CLUSTER DELEGATES

Filing for NSEA Delegate Assembly Cluster Delegates runs **Feb. 24 - March 8**.

NSEA PRESIDENT, NSEA VICE PRESIDENT & NEA DIRECTOR

Elected at Delegate Assembly. Candidate's campaign materials for delegates are due **by March 10**.

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 Wayne, **April 3-4**.

NSEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

April 24 - 25
The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel.
Election of NSEA President, Vice President, and NEA Director, plus Bylaws, 2020-21 dues.

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Nat'l. Education Assoc. Representative Assembly
Atlanta, GA
July 2 - 6

OFFICIAL ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT

ALL NSEA MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR DISTRICT OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY AT-LARGE DELEGATES. VOTING WILL BE FEB. 21 - MARCH 15.

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 and/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:

NSEA President, NSEA Vice President and NEA Director 3-year terms

Elected at NSEA Delegate Assembly

The NSEA President, Vice President and NEA Director are members of the NSEA Executive Committee. The NEA Director is one of two Nebraska representatives on the NEA Board of Directors.

Nominations for these three offices are taken from the floor of the NSEA Delegate Assembly at the opening session on Saturday, April 25, 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 10. 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, Feb. 9

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

as needed, electronically. The board carries out the Association's mission as directed by members at the April Delegate Assembly.

There are two open seats on Metro District; and one each on the, Capitol, Tri-Valley and Elkhorn districts. There are no vacancies on Panhandle or Sandhills Districts. (*see map*)

District Officers 2- and 3-year terms

Deadline to File: Sunday, Feb. 9

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:** president, treasurer, secretary and one seat on the executive committee.
- **Elkhorn District:** treasurer, secretary, two seats on the executive committee.
- **Metro District:** vice president, three seats on the executive committee (subdistrict seats 3, 6 and 9).
- **Panhandle District:** president, vice president and two seats on the executive committee (Area 2, Area 3).
- **Sandhills District:** treasurer, sec-

retary, one seat on the executive committee.

- **Tri-Valley District:** treasurer, secretary, and three seats on the executive committee (one each from the East, West and Central subdistricts).

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

Deadline to File: Sunday, Feb. 9

Elected during statewide online elections

The 2020 NEA RA will be held in Atlanta on July 2-6.

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 2019-20 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

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 Wayne beginning on Friday, April 3. Watch for the SEAN newsletter for details.

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

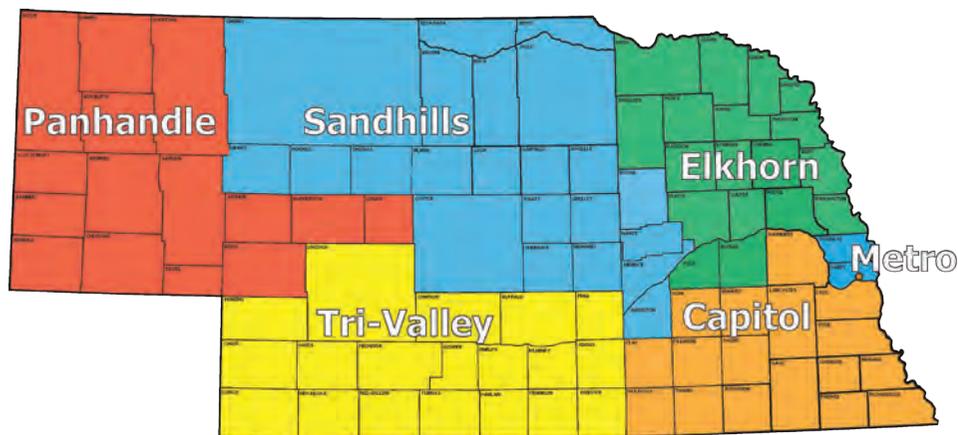
NEA RA At-Large Statewide Delegates: 1-year term

Deadline to File: Sunday, Feb. 9

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 state-



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

wide, 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 five 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. 7

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

- **President** (3-year term)
- **Vice President** (3-year term)
- **Capitol District Representative** (3-year term)
- **Elkhorn District Representative** (3-year term)
- **Sandhills District Representative** (3-year 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 Position

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

Deadline to File: Sunday, 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 2019-20 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

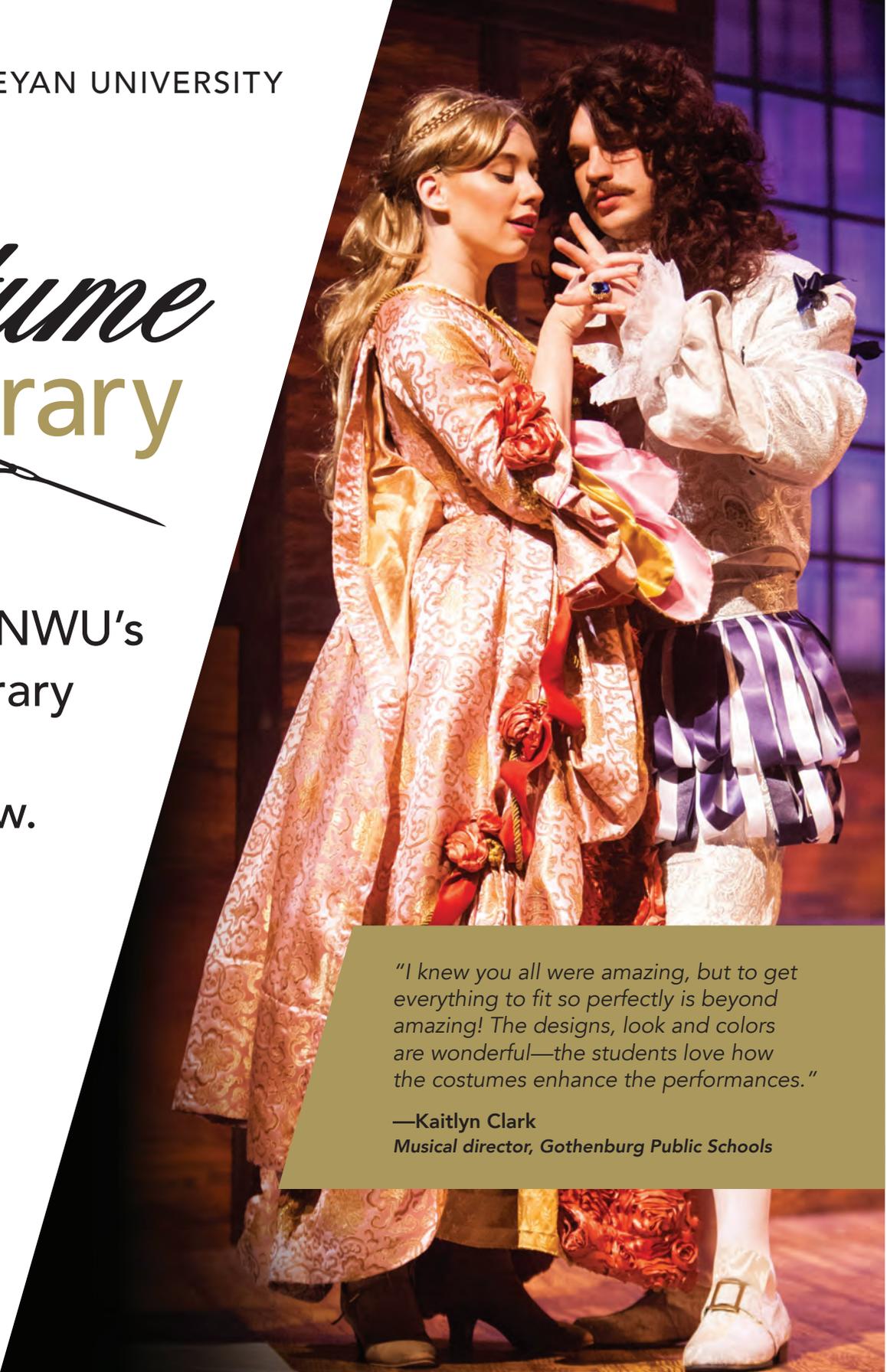
Delegates from **local associations with more than 26 members must be elected by secret ballot**, according to federal statute. Presidents from those associations will be notified of the number of delegate representatives they may elect, based on their local membership.

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Even though you just got back from Winter Break and may be already stressed about lesson planning, grading, writing college recommendation letters and dealing with the way Snow Days are messing up your schedule, you are just about half way through the year and need to start thinking about Spring Break and your plans for the summer.

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■ Did you make a New Year's resolution to travel more? Not only do we have deals on cruises and other beach vacations, but our website has a quiz to help you find your 2020 dream trip. After you take the quiz, you can enter to win our Dream Vacation Sweepstakes! Learn more at: neamb.com/travel

■ Did you graduate last spring and now you're worried about your student loan payments kicking in? We can help you learn how to lower your monthly payments and even how to qualify for student loan forgiveness—just go to: neamb.com/studentloans

■ With the end of the year it's hard not to start thinking about tax season and your financial wellness. We can help you understand the 6 essential financial moves to make before the end of the year as well as how to set yourself up for financial wellness in 2020, all at: neamb.com/finance

Little Steps Toward Big Change, Less Stress

By Henry Watson
For NEA Member Benefits

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Those are the words of the late Nelson Mandela, and whenever I hear them, I automatically start imagining the faces of all the students who've come through my classroom. It may sound trite, but it's no less true: These students will be the ones who shape the future of our world. And I can't wait to see what they can do.

For now, it's on us — the educators — to give young people the tools and confidence they'll need to drive change at any scale, whether in their own lives or for the whole world. That's a lot of responsibility for anyone, and a lot of pressure for someone just starting out in education. I know: I've been there. I can admit that the day-to-day challenges of a career education can still be daunting and discouraging. But I've also learned, firsthand, that a little motivation — with daily reminders from a friend like Mandela — goes a long way. It also gets easier as you start to see students finding their voice, and making it heard out in the real world. Just look at what David Hogg, Emma González, and Jaclyn Corin are doing!

In the meantime, here's some more practical inspiration I've found helpful in getting through the challenges of the day without losing sight of the reason we do this work.

Find your happy medium.

Struggling to strike a sustainable work-life balance isn't unique to educators, but I think it's safe to say it can be a challenge for us, especially when we're just starting out.

This came into sharp focus for me when I had my son, now a one-year-old. Both my work and my family are incredibly important to me. So it was like two worlds colliding. But after four years of teaching, I had the experience to preserve a healthy balance. If you're a new educator, build your time management skills now. An easy first step is to break up your day into clear blocks of activity. It not only keeps you organized, but at least for me, it also helps silo my various responsibilities so I don't get overwhelmed throughout the day — an all too familiar feeling for a lot of early educators.

Always have a plan.

Your actual job alone may be overwhelming enough, but an educator's job never ends at the classroom door. I can speak from experience. After becoming a chair of the special education department at my school, I've had to learn to keep up with departmental duties while bal-

ancing the demands of my classroom students. At times, some roles need more attention than others. Toggling back and forth between your duties may seem arduous at first, and obviously frustrating, but with time, it becomes more manageable. Getting to that state of manageability is easier said than done, but it's doable if you focus on managing your time and planning ahead. Plan every part of your day. Plan for things to go wrong. Plan a backup for your backup. If you can, try to work in a bit of flex time to make space for something that might need extra attention. As educators, one of our key job requirements is preparedness, and honing this skill early will pay off exponentially.

It's the little things.

It might seem trivial, but I highly recommend the use of sticky notes to keep yourself on track. Make little notes for yourself to remind you of even the most minute parts of your day. Stick them all around your room. Stick them on your students if you have to! (Don't actually do this.) And if sticky notes aren't your style, you can always use your phone or computer to set reminders for yourself. There's also the classic simplicity of keeping a notebook to track your schedule. If these don't fit your style, use whatever method works best for you and keeps you efficient.

Find something that will keep you motivated through it all.

This shouldn't be news to anyone, but being a teacher can have its ups and its downs. There's no one-size-fits-all solution. At the end of the school day only you know what works for you. For me, it's Mandela's quote. Remembering that I'm working with children who'll reshape our world, who'll become the future leaders of our nation, it makes a big difference for me. It reminds me how much my work matters.

But just like our students, every educator is different. You'll need to find your own guiding light — whether it's a grand vision of changing the world or the simple satisfaction of seeing a lesson click with a student for the first time. Whatever inspires you do this work, don't lose sight of it. And when you inevitably have a tough day — because we all do — take a moment to remind yourself of why you're pushing through, and it may just get a little easier.

Watson is a special education teacher at Kenneth Gardner Elementary school in South Carolina. He has been teaching 3rd and 4th grade special education (self-contained – all subjects) for more than four years. Last year, he was selected as Teacher of the Year for his school/county. He is a member of Teach For America (2014 Alumni) and very active in SCEA (South Carolina Educational Association).



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Executive Director Maddie Fennell

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LB147 is one piece of the systemic change that needs to take place as we address student behavior.
”

Several years ago, I arrived home to find my son on his back in our front yard, pinned to the ground by my husband. Darek was yelling, and my husband was trying to calm him down while keeping both of them safe.

What had happened? Bill had been kneeling in the front yard working on the path lights, when Darek came running out of the house and started beating on Bill.

There was no antecedent behavior, no triggers we could find – and trust me, we broke the incident down minute-by-minute to try to find out the ‘why.’ Darek just blew...and Daddy was the target of his anger.

‘I Nearly Blacked Out’

Unfortunately, this kind of behavior also happens frequently in our schools. Kids, sometimes with no warning, become violent and began to hurt their peers, adults or themselves.

It happened to me when I was teaching 6th grade. Words were exchanged by two boys in the cafeteria. I put my arm around the shoulders of one, and we calmly began walking away. The other young man leaped on top of a table and launched himself towards us, clocking me in the jaw and knocking me on the ground.

Last year, LB147 advanced to the floor of the Nebraska legislature, supported by NSEA. The provisions of LB147 would create safer classrooms across the state.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, which we all studied in education courses, notes that safety is a most basic need to be met for students to learn and grow. Classrooms must also be safe places for educators to work.

This fall, an NSEA member was choked, almost to the point of unconsciousness, by her student (see photo). She wrote “one student has strangled me twice and has attempted to do so a third time. During the second incident, I was pinned to the floor as he sat on my chest. I nearly blacked out from lack of oxygen. It took me weeks of leave to recover from injuries I received from these incidents. This student remains in my classroom and may remain there for the rest of the school year, even though he attempts to strangle me at every opportunity.”

LB147 Does Not Allow Abuse

In recent weeks, we received more than 150 responses from teachers and administrators sharing stories of feeling unsafe or being attacked in their own classroom.

“The student became angry when he was told that he could not do something. The student began to knock items off the teacher’s desk, tables, etc. along with tearing down bulletin boards, and scratching the teacher.

The student was brought to me, the principal, where the behavior continued with the student destroying bulletin boards and hallway displays and attempting to leave the building. Along with attempting to hit, kick and spit on me. Since I/we were unable to calm the student down, the foster parent was contacted to assist us.”

There was also this response to our request for details: “Student with anger issues knocked over desks and/or lunged at and hit students in the classroom 2-3 times per week. We created a classroom code word so I could quickly evacuate the classroom if an incident occurred.”

Much has been said about LB147 that is untrue. It does not allow teachers to abuse students with impunity. It has no language allowing for the seclusion of students. It does not allow a teacher to send their whole class to the office on a daily basis for not having a pencil.

I encourage everyone to read the bill, with changes, once the legislature convenes in January.

Two Components

LB147 has two major components: First, it moves language from the 1999 case Daily v. Board of Education from case law into state statute, clarifying that school personnel have the right to preserve order in the schools, or protect persons and property from harm, using reasonable physical contact with a student. Further, it requires school districts to have a publicly available

policy on physical contact and to notify parents within 24 hours if this provision must be utilized.

The second main component says if a student’s behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with the learning environment and the opportunity for other students to learn, the teacher can have the student removed. The goal of the administrator or their designee shall be to return the student to class as soon as possible, after appropriate instructional or behavioral interventions are in place to help the student succeed. The provision also notes the importance of following a student’s IEP throughout the process.

LB147 is one piece of the systemic change that needs to take place as we address student behavior. That is why NSEA and our partner, the National Education Association, will invest more than \$100,000 in 2020 to help Nebraska teachers understand more about trauma-informed teaching and to engage stakeholders across the state in building stronger and better learning models for Nebraska students.

But, as Maslow taught us, we must start with the basics, we must start at the foundation. That means safe classrooms for students and educators.



Severe Injuries: These marks were left on the neck of a teacher who has been a regular target of student violence.

Election Filing Date Just a Month Away

Five Positions on Board Are Open in 2020

Members of NSEA-Retired thinking about seeking leadership should accelerate that process: the deadline for filing is near.

Open positions on the NSEA-Retired Board of Directors include three-year terms for one representative from the NSEA Capitol District, one from the Elkhorn District and one from the Sandhills District. The current board representatives from Elkhorn and Sandhills Districts are term-limited.

The offices of NSEA-Retired president and vice president are also open for three-year terms. Those elected will assume office on Aug. 15, 2020.

Any NSEA-Retired member in good standing is eligible to seek election to these openings. Board members must live in the NSEA governance district they wish to represent.

Projected numbers for Delegate Assembly representation by NSEA-Retired members are four delegates from Capitol District; five from Metro District; three from Tri-Valley and Elkhorn Districts; and one from Panhandle and Sandhills Districts. Two delegates will be elected on an at-large basis. Final representation numbers for Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly will be calculated based on NSEA's Jan. 15 membership numbers.

The NSEA-Retired delegation to the NEA Representative Assembly will include two representatives from the Metro and Capitol Districts combined; two delegates from the remaining four NSEA districts, combined with out-of-state members; and one at-large representative. The NSEA-Retired president serves as a delegate to both Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly by virtue of office. Delegates to both Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly must live in the NSEA governance district they wish to represent.

Filing for NSEA-Retired elections will open online on Monday, Jan. 6. The filing deadline is February 7. A short 50-word biography must accompany self-nominations for the NSEA-Retired board positions and Representative Assembly delegates.



Book Bonanza: Several retired Lincoln educators joined together at the Lincoln Education Association office to help with labeling books for the annual Harvest of Books. Through this effort, all first and second graders in Lincoln Public Schools and parochial schools receive a book of their own. Seated, from left, are Cheryl Svoboda, Joanie Rich and Gayle Alexander. Standing, from left, are Linda Brown, LEA Associate Staff member Emily Mills, Deborah Levitov, Karla Bachman, Jane Aalborg and Judy Strand.

Ballots will be mailed in the third week of February and must be returned by the March date noted on the ballot. To file for election go to:

nsea.org/retired

Mark Your Calendar

The date for NSEA-Retired's annual Lobby Day has been marked on the calendar: Tuesday, Feb. 4, at NSEA.

On that day, registration and refreshments begin at 8:45 a.m. Lobby Day activities begin at 9:30 with materials, information and discussion. This is followed by lobbying state senators at the Legislature. A noon luncheon will feature comments from Seward-area Sen. Mark Kolterman, chair of the Legislature's Retirement Committee.

Registration will soon be available online at nsea.org/retired, under the Calendar and Events link.

Retirement Presentations

NSEA Organizational Specialists Mike Wiesen and Kristen Sedlacek organized and presented information on the Nebraska retirement system for more than 200 Nebraska educators at six sites this fall: Valentine, Palmer, Geneva, Elkhorn, Norfolk and McCook. Members from several local associations attended at some of these sites.

Retired members Marina Garner, Sharon Bohling, Guy Roggenkamp, Jan Greenland, John Heineman and Dot Snesrud helped host the events.

Several more presentations are already scheduled across the state for second semester. For scheduling, or more details, contact NSEA Associate Staffer Rebecca Smith at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

— De Tonack,

NSEA-Retired President

**Re-Elect
Dr. De Tonack**



**President,
NSEA-Retired**

Statewide Roundup

Grievance Settled at YRTC

State College Assn. Elects New Officers

Following the filing of a grievance, NSEA members at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center in Kearney are now being paid an additional \$25 each time they are asked to give up plan time in order to substitute for a colleague. Contract language had seemed clear, but NSEA invested a great deal of time in the grievance process to further clarify language. The 24 members at the YRTC have been receiving the pay since March.



Wergin

NSEA Organizational Specialist Rich Wergin has spent countless hours meeting with members at the YRTC sites in both Kearney and Geneva in recent months as they work to resolve staffing and other employment issues.

YRTC teachers belong to the **State Code Agency Teachers Association**, or SCATA. Other SCATA members are at the Lincoln Correctional Center and the Beatrice State Developmental Center.

NSEA Teaching and Learning Specialist and Organizational Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich teamed with South Dakota Education Association's Rich Mittelstedt to receive first place in the Collaborative Effort/Agency Relations category at a recent meeting of the National Staff Association for the Improvement of Instruction (NSAI).

The award came for work with a National Education Association grant that supports retention and engagement of primarily rural early career educators in their profession and in their union. Those early career educators who participate benefit from high-quality professional development, instructional coaching and mentoring they might not otherwise have available. For details, reach Copich at:

cindy.copich@nsea.org

Members of the **Papillion-LaVista Education Association** have done the extraordinary again, contributing \$3,125 to the NSEA Children's Fund. The cash was collected during a Jeans Day campaign, with educators from across the dis-

trict contributing \$5 for the privilege of wearing blue jeans on an appointed day.

The **State College Education Association (SCEA)** has elected new leaders. They are President Christy Hutchison, Peru State College, and Secretary Brian Hanson, Wayne State College.

Serving three-year terms are Vice President Shawn Percy, Wayne State College; Treasurer Tracy Nobiling, Chadron State College; and at-large member James Koehn Chadron State College.

The SCEA represents members at Chadron, Peru and Wayne state colleges. They oversee communication between SCEA and NSEA's six governance districts and deal with salary and workload adjustment issues, changes in job descriptions such as the addition of such non-teaching tasks as student recruitment, and research and travel funding.

The **Chadron State College Professional Staff Association** has elected officers. They are Kristal Kuhnel, president; Tena Cook, vice president; Joy Omelanuk, secretary; Kristol Barnes Cummings, treasurer; Kuhnel and Shellie Johns, negotiators; and Cummings and Johns, executive committee members.

Members of the **Fillmore Central Education Association** supported a bingo stand at the Fillmore County Fair, sponsored a float in the Homecoming parade and provided a scholarship to a graduating senior headed toward a teaching career. Members also voted to give \$400 to the NSEA Children's Fund.

Lexington Education Association member and Lexington High journalism teacher **Erica Brockmoller** has been recognized as the 2019 High School Press Association Distinguished Advisor Award for her work with the school's journalism program. Brockmoller is also the LEA's chief negotiator.

Five **NSEA staffers** celebrated service to members at a December luncheon.

Organizational Specialists Judy Roach and Mandy Fairpour celebrated five years of service. **Organizational Specialist Megan Lyons** and **Membership Specialist Teresa Greve** each celebrated 10 years.

Also honored as new hires in the past year were **Organizational Specialists Isau Metes and Jen Dubas** and **Advocacy Associate Becky Fisher**.

Torey Tuhey

Tory T. Tuhey, 52, died Nov. 22 at Lincoln from ovarian cancer. She was an associate staff member and paralegal at NSEA from 2003 to 2011. She was a customer specialist for As-surity Life.

She grew up at Waverly and was active in Girl Scouts, reaching Gold Award status. She was also involved in Job's Daughters and Eastern Star, earning honors from both.

At NSEA, Tuhey developed an expertise in comparability studies and used that skill to testify on behalf of many local associations during cases before the Nebraska Commission on Industrial Relations.

Recently, Tuhey cared for her parents, and later, for her older brother, Troy, who survives.



Tuhey

Marilyn Rastede

Longtime teacher and NSEA member Marilyn R. Rastede, 69, died Nov. 11, at Yankton, S.D. At the time of her death, she taught English for the Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools.

Rastede was born at Hartington and graduated from Obert High School. She attended Wayne State College and earned a bachelor's degree in education. She later earned a master's in education and a library science degree from the University of South Dakota.

She enjoyed books, movies, her yard and garden. She was active in NSEA and was a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church.

She is survived by husband Tom, two sisters, a brother, and nieces and nephews.

Lisa Jo Groth

Lisa Jo Groth, 43, of Monroe, died in an Oct. 25 automobile accident near Monroe. Groth's 17-year-old daughter, Brooke, also died in the accident.

Groth was the family and consumer sciences teacher at Boone Central High School at Albion and an NSEA member. Brooke Groth was a senior at Boone Central High School. They died when the car they were in collided with a semi pulling a grain trailer at an unmarked rural intersection. Seat belts were in use, and airbags deployed, according to law enforcement officials.

Groth is survived by her husband, Steve, and three children: Ty, Hannah and Audra.

Foundation Grants Aim to Enhance Student Learning Proposals Due Feb. 1

The NEA Foundation awards grants of up to \$5,000 exclusively to NEA members to enhance teaching and learning.

The Foundation's Student Achievement Grants support initiatives that improve academic achievement.

The Foundation's Learning & Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development.

Active NEA members who are practicing K-12 public school teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities may apply online. Preference is currently being given to projects that incorporate STEM and/or global learning, as well as projects with leads/partners that are education support professionals. For information about how to apply visit The NEA Foundation's website at:

neafoundation.org

Speaking of Education

"The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1882-1945

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

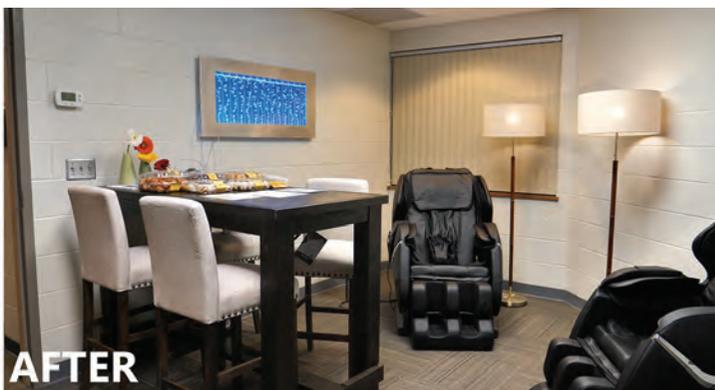
Absolute Deadlines

From Marjorie Steinberg, a teacher in Iowa:

"We started a new grading policy this year. We give 80 percent for academic grades and 20 percent for productivity. Academic grades include those assignments that are tests, quizzes, and projects. Productivity grades include getting homework in on time and also quality of work. I've found this quarter that I needed to impose a deadline (the date the assignment is due) and an absolute deadline (the date that I would no longer accept the work). On the deadline date, I can give productivity points, usually 5 for getting the work in on time. I still take the work for full credit until the absolute deadline, but the students have already lost the productivity points. I have fewer assignments that are turned in late now that they have the absolute deadline to shoot for, and I'm not stressed at the end of the quarter getting in lots of late work. This new grading policy seems to be working!"



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



Extreme Makeover: Where before there was a storage and all-purpose room, there is now a lounge for the teachers at Palmer Public Schools, thanks to California Casualty.

Palmer Teachers Win New Lounge Through California Casualty

The staff at Palmer Public Schools now have a place to recharge during the school day thanks to a \$7,500 School Lounge Makeover from California Casualty. The lounge was unveiled in November.

Palmer Education Association President Mary Gregoski submitted the winning entry for the makeover. Previously, staff at Palmer Public Schools didn't have a teachers' lounge.

"As teachers we're constantly wearing different hats and there are just so many kids who need us," said Gregoski, an English teacher and librarian at the school. "We need to take care of ourselves. A calming and relaxing environment like this is going to be good, not only for us as educators and paraeducators, but it's going to be good for our kids."

The new staff lounge features a TV, two massage chairs, soothing "bubble water wall art," a coffee station, new tables, a refrigerator, and colorful paint and accessories. EON Office designers maximized the area for comfort.

The School Lounge Makeover giveaway was created to provide educators a more conducive environment to take a break, share time and revitalize during their long days at school. This is the 13th School Lounge Makeover provided by California Casualty since the program began in 2011. Gregoski submitted her entry at NSEA University in Lincoln in July.

For more details about California Casualty programs, go to:

calcas.com