

THE

VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ May 2019



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- Teacher of the Year: 'I Will Never Be the Same'

Nebraska State Education Association
605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
nsea.org
402-475-7611 · 1-800-742-0047

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Executive Director **Maddie Fennell, NBCT**
Assoc. Executive Director **Neal Clayburn**
Director of Public Affairs **Karen Kilgarin**
Assistant Comm. Director **Al Koontz**

NSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President **Jenni Benson, Lincoln**
jenni.benson@nsea.org
Vice President **Paul Schulte, Millard**
meapresident@hotmail.com
NEA Director **Tracy Hartman-Bradley, Omaha**
trhb1000@gmail.com
NEA Director **Linda Freye, Lincoln**
lfrey62@gmail.com

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‘I Will Never Be the Same’

Teacher of the Year Experience was Life Changing

Why should you apply to become Nebraska’s 2020 Teacher of the Year? Ask 2018 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Michelle Helt. She has a ready answer.

“I will never be the same educator I was prior to being named the 2018 Nebraska Teacher of the Year,” said Helt, a third-grade teacher and member of the South Sioux City Education Association.

“Following my year of professional development and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, my confidence as an educator, and as an advocate for the entire profession, is strong. My eyes have been opened to a bigger picture of education, what is occurring at a variety of levels, and how this will have an impact on what I do in my classroom.”

Helt met and took professional development from Sal Khan at the Khan Academy; Andy Goodman of the Goodman Center; and previous state and national Teachers of the Year. She had a sit-down with U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. She attended NASA’s Space Camp in Huntsville, AL, where she completed a space mission, both as a scientist on the International Space Station and as part of Mission Control on Earth, “each activity pushing me beyond my comfort zone.”

She attended the 2018 College Football Playoff Championship, where Teachers of

the Year from each state were honored. She spent a week in Washington, D.C., immersed in learning opportunities from the Smithsonian, Corwin Publishing, the White House and the Naval Observatory.

She encourages every Nebraska educator to consider applying. Sans that, she encourages educators to nominate a deserving colleague.

Application forms for the 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year are available through every school district superintendent or principal, or at the Nebraska Department of Education website.

Since 1972, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year program has recognized outstanding Nebraska certified teachers from pre-Kinder-

garten through Grade 12 classroom settings. Qualifications can be found online. The NSEA, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska Association of School Boards, and corporate partner BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska present monetary awards to the recipient. The State Board of Education provides a \$1,000 grant to finalists to be used for a project of the teacher’s choice.

Applications must be postmarked by midnight (CST), Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019. For more details, contact Lora Sypal, Teacher of the Year coordinator, at 1-402-471-5059 or at:

lora.sypal@nebraska.gov



Helt

Lisa Maise

Lisa Marie (Steinman) Maise, 48, a teacher and member at Pender, died April 14, 2019, at Pender.

Maise was born at Pender and graduated from Emerson-Hubbard High School in 1988. She earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education from Wayne State College, later earning a degree in special education. She also completed administrative certification requirements.

Maise taught English at South Sioux City Middle School for 15 years before signing on at Pender, where she taught special education for 7 years. She was active in the community and school. She is survived by husband Jon and four children.

Edward L. Herzog

Edward L. Herzog, 87, of Culbertson, died Jan. 23, 2019, at McCook.

A Kearney native, he served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Following an honorable discharge in 1954, he enrolled at Kearney State College and earned a degree in secondary education.

He taught at Indianola before joining the staff at Culbertson, where he taught math and science for 25 years, retiring in 1994. He was a member of NSEA as an active teacher and joined NSEA-Retired upon retirement. His late wife, Leila, held leadership positions with NSEA-Retired.

He is survived by a daughter and two grandsons.

On the Cover: When the Papillion-LaVista Public Schools announced consideration of departure from the Educators Health Alliance, leaders of the Papillion-LaVista Education Association sprang into action. For all the details, turn to Page 7.

We Work in Support of Your Teaching

NSEA is working to enhance the pathways into the teaching profession.

That was one of several updates we delivered to 300 of your colleagues who served as delegates to the annual Delegate Assembly in Lincoln last month.

Delegates' work at the Assembly is important. They confirm what the Association stands for and develop plans and goals for the coming Association year.

And, we shared with delegates some of the work we do each day in support of your teaching. We believe your teaching is the most important work in the world.

We're using this space to deliver a joint message to all NSEA members, to highlight some accomplishments of the past year, and to build some momentum for next year.

We've arranged these highlights from the last year into the five categories of the Association's Strategic Plan.

Social Justice

With the aid of a grant from NEA, we provided professional development on a Challenging Racism program to 14 members over 11 weekends. Four of those members will train in Virginia this summer and, using another grant from NSEA, next year we hope to have the capacity to train more trainers in the program by 2020-21.

With the aid of another NEA grant, we provided tutoring to nearly 150 college students studying to become teachers over the past year. The tutoring was focused on readying those students to pass the Praxis Core exam required for entrance into Nebraska's colleges of education.

NSEA also supported Social Justice retreats in the Association's Capitol and Tri-Valley districts this year.

We are also in the third and final year of another grant from NEA designed to grow Educators Rising – formerly Future Educators of America – chapters in Nebraska. In particular, the focus of the grant is to encourage growth of new and existing chapters that would produce a high number of teachers of color. While nearly 30 percent of Nebraska K-12 students are children of color, only about 2 percent of our classroom educators are teachers of color.

We've had great success. Where there were about a dozen Educators Rising chapters in the state three years ago, there are about 30 today, with 24 of them very active. Further, the University of Nebraska at Omaha's teacher education program has reached maximum capacity for the coming year, and 30 percent of students there are students of color.

Partnerships

In this category, we are working diligently with national and local affiliates to strengthen our organizational capacity.

We are offering training for higher education members, for education support professionals, for active, retired and student members. That was demonstrated at Delegate Assembly, with 30 sessions of professional development. That will be demonstrated this summer at NSEA University – three days of nearly 180 sessions of professional development (see pages 12-13 for more information).

This effort increases our value to members and gives educators across the state additional reasons to join – no other association or organization offers the professional development, combined with advocacy and other benefits, that NSEA can offer. Period.



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**



**Executive Dir.
Maddie Fennell**

Advocacy

We have been working quite hard for educators in this arena.

NSEA's field staff have noticed a frustrating trend of personal improvement plans for educators across the state being written not to improve teaching skills and methods, but to get educators to quit the profession. We worked with NSEA Attorney Scott Norby and Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop to introduce legislation to make it possible to grieve improvement plans. At a public hearing on LB537, we introduced into evidence some especially egregious improvement plans, which opened the eyes of several senators. LB537 remains in committee, but we are hopeful it will advance.

We held three Advocacy Conferences last fall, educating local negotiators about the latest tools and methods for bargaining your salary and benefits. We continue to work with members across the state, when needed, on cases where their rights have been infringed upon or violated.

Finally, we advocate on a statewide basis through a partnership with the Nebraska Broadcasters Association. For a very minimal cost, we placed more than 30,000 public service announcements on Nebraska television and radio stations in the past year, all supporting children, teachers and public education.

Political Action

We've had another banner year, starting with the election last fall of 17 of 23 recommended candidates for Legislature. Those electees included Democrats and Republicans with one thing in common: support for public education.

Since January, we've read more than 700 legislative bills, testified in 22 legislative hearings, submitted letters on another 46 bills and held lobby days attended by well more than 100 members. It is quite a site to see the capitol rotunda filled with teachers!

In addition, Executive Director Maddie Fennell has had one-on-one meetings with all eight members of the State Board of Education and 35 of 49 state senators. And many of them she has met with more than once.

We're also involved closely with several stakeholder coalitions, including Nebraskans United, Education Coalition, Rebuild Nebraska, Nebraska Child Health and Education Alliance, Better Together Coalition and the Human Dignity Coalition.

Representation

We've also worked to make the Association governance more responsive to members. We've streamlined district budgets, aligned Bylaws documents for the six governance districts, will host local officer training in July and corresponded on a regular basis with local officers.

We've conducted several surveys of leaders and members to take the pulse of the Association, and we always welcome member input and member questions. This is, after all, your organization.

So here we are, nearing the end of another school year, closing in on the end of another Association year. We do this work for you, but we could not do it without you. Thank you for your membership, and for all you do for children and public education in Nebraska. Best wishes for a great summer!



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13 Nebraska Schools Aid ‘Big Vision’

TrueSchool Plan: Teachers as Leaders of Design, Innovation

A truly “big vision” has been put forth by the professional learning organization TrueSchool: to launch, by 2023, a nationwide fellowship for educator-led innovation to develop knowledge, skills and mindsets of 25,000 educators as leaders of school design and innovation.

That vision is being piloted in North Carolina and 13 Nebraska schools.

The selection of states was based on evidence of vision-aligned leadership at the district level; momentum around improving early literacy achievement; a climate conducive to innovation; the opportunity to achieve significant impact; and the potential of the state to serve as a model of education innovation.

Teams from selected schools have worked on innovations that will serve as models. Schools created a team of 4-6 members, including the principal and three or more teacher leaders, to focus on designing innovative models to improve early literacy in grades pre-k to 3. Team members hold formal or informal leadership roles at their school. The teams serve a student population that is 55 percent federal free or reduced lunch qualified, with 42 percent of the students of color. The Nebraska schools are:

- A.B. Newell Elementary, Grand Island.
- Betz Elementary, Bellevue.
- Chapman Elementary, Chapman.
- Engleman Elementary, Grand Island.
- Ezra Millard Elementary, Omaha.
- Gates Elementary, Grand Island.
- Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer Elementary, Humboldt.
- Knickrehm Elementary, Grand Island.
- Rohwer Elementary, Omaha.
- Twin Ridge Elementary, Bellevue.
- Two Springs Elementary, Bellevue.
- Wheeler Elementary, Omaha.
- Willowdale Elementary, Omaha.

The program is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and is equivalent to \$15,000 per school. TrueSchool will recruit schools in Nebraska for the 2019-20 TrueSchool Innovation Fellowship year this summer. For details and to sign up for the 2019-20 application, go to:

www.trueschool.org

Nebraska Salaries Move Up in NEA Ranking

State Fares Well in Latest NEA Estimates

The standing of Nebraska teacher salaries has improved in recent years, and the state’s investment in K-12 education has improved slightly. But the public school student population in Nebraska is growing five times faster than the hiring pace for new instructors.

According to NEA’s annual *Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2018 and Estimates of School Statistics 2019*, the average one-year increase in public school-teacher salaries was in the U.S. was up 1.58 percent to \$60,477.

The average salary for a Nebraska public school teacher grew 3.58 percent from 2016-17 to 2017-18, reaching \$54,213. That put Nebraska teacher salaries at 25th in the nation. Nebraska’s rise came at the expense of other states that have invested less in teacher salaries. NSEA President Jenni Benson was not surprised.

“Our local association negotiators have done an outstanding job in recent years,” she said, noting that the expertise of NSEA staff has assisted that success.

Just 10 years ago, in 2008-09, Nebraska ranked 42nd in the nation. “Sadly,” said Benson, our improvement is due in part to salary reductions in other states.”

Nationally, when using constant dollars, K-12 public school teachers are making about 4.5 percent less in 2018-19 than they were in 2009-10, according to NEA. Nebraska teachers fare better, making about 1 percent more in 2018-19 than in 2009-10.

“There is more work to be done,” said Benson. “We lose excellent, dedicated teachers every year because they can’t afford to make ends meet. Low pay short-changes the teaching profession, and thus, our students.”

More findings from the report:

■ Student population grew 1.39 percent from 2016 to 2017, to 323,273. During the same time, number of teachers in Nebraska grew by just 0.27 percent.

■ Nebraska is 45th in state aid to K-12 schools, up from 47th a year earlier. Only 37.7 percent of K-12 funding in Nebraska comes from the state. Five of seven adjacent states provide from 6 to 29 percent more in state aid to K-12 schools. The report is at: nea.org/edstats/images/18rankings.pdf

Permanent Certification Earned by Four

Four local associations this year have added their names to the roster of locals to have attained permanent bargaining certification status. Members at Lewiston, Grand Island Northwest, McPherson County and Chadron voted in favor of the permanent certification.

Certification removes one step from the local association’s ‘to do’ list each fall. Under provisions of a 2011 rewrite of the state’s collective bargaining statutes, local associations are required each year to formally request that the local school board recognize the local association as the bargaining agent for members. That recognition requires a vote of the school board. With permanent certification, however, a local association can forego the formal request, and instead simply request that negotiations begin. Statutorily, those negotiations must begin by Nov. 1 each year, unless a multi-year agreement is in place.

The elections are conducted by the Nebraska Commission of Industrial Relations. NSEA staff and attorneys worked with local association leaders at each site to insure the CIR’s rigid election guidelines were met, that elections were conducted fairly and properly, and that all members of the bargaining unit – even non- Association members – had their voice heard through the balloting.

Members in those locals clearly favored certification. Cumulatively, 97 percent of bargaining unit members in those locals voted to certify the local association as their bargaining agent. Nearly, 100 percent of Northwest and Chadron members supported certification. In both McPherson County and Lewiston, more than 83 percent of valid ballots favored certification.

There are two advantages to holding a certification election: it shows the strength of the association, and it eliminates the possibility that the formal request for recognition might become a stumbling block in the negotiations process in the future.

NSEA Collective Bargaining Organizational Specialist Randy Gordon said some local associations have struggled to get bargaining underway in the past.

“There are a variety of reasons why the recognition request might go unfulfilled or might not be approved,” said Gordon. “Having permanent certification simply removes one more potential pothole on the road to successful contract negotiations.”

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



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In the Nick of Time

Association Action Key to Preserving Papillion-LaVista's Health Care Plan

Last November, Papillion-LaVista Education Association leaders knew a school district committee was exploring the health care coverage provided to employees through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska.

They knew the committee had met twice. But the ink on a tentative, two-year contract agreement between the Association and the district was still damp when they learned what was likely to happen at a third meeting.

“We didn’t realize there was going to be a committee recommendation,” said PLEA President Dave Herbener.

That recommendation reportedly was to ask the school board to end a decades-long relationship with Blue Cross for the promise from another insurance carrier of \$2 million in savings the first year and \$1 million in savings the second year. While Herbener understood the allure of savings, he said the proposal soon raised the blood pressure of hundreds of employees who had scores of questions about the future of their health care coverage.

“There was an overall concern about the level of care that people would receive under a new carrier,” said Herbener.

The concerns included the future of coverage for retirees and soon-to-retire district employees. There were concerns that existing doctors, dentists, specialists and mental health providers might be outside the new network. The new network’s long-term stability was a concern. Would there be a big bump in premiums in the third year?

Also watching were members of the Educators Health Alliance Board of Directors – which includes six NSEA members. The EHA board manages the Blue Cross plan for more than 250 Nebraska school districts.

What ensued in the four months following that November turning point was a series of lessons about Association work and the benefits of Association membership. Those lessons covered grassroots organizing, contract appendices, the worth of insurance pools, the value of mental health care and more.

The most important lesson of all was this: There is value in the collective power of Association membership.

Blue Cross Blue Shield ‘Did It Right’

Following the exploratory committee’s third meeting, Herbener and NSEA Organizational Specialist Judy Roach met with district

officials to gauge the status of the recommendation. By mid-January, Herbener was certain the district would depart from EHA, and that administrators had not talked to Blue Cross about options.

“The district was under the impression that Blue Cross wasn’t going to do anything different,” said Herbener. He urged administrators to reach out to Blue Cross. Intrigued, the district made the call, and met with Blue Cross reps in mid-January.

“Blue Cross did it right,” said Herbener. “In fact, they kind of knocked their socks off.”

One administrator told Herbener that Blue Cross “gave us a lot to think about.” That included a plan to save the district \$1.2 million in 2019-20.

In addition, the Educators Health Alliance and Blue Cross had been working for more than a year to develop a program to lower costs using alternate networks. The company had targeted Papillion-LaVista and four other districts as pilot locations, though no offers had been extended.

While the proposed \$1.2 million in savings and the Blue Cross record of stability and excellence were compelling arguments, Herbener said there was still no indication the district would waver from the recommendation to cut ties to EHA.

So, PLEA leaders rolled up their sleeves and went to work.

The Grassroots Get Organized

By mid-January, it was known that school officials were planning informational meetings for employees covered by Blue Cross.

With the help of Roach and other NSEA staff, informational fliers were assembled. PLEA’s Building Assistance Teams (BAT) got busy distributing the fliers, spurring discussion, answering questions and reminding members of meeting dates as they became known.

“We knew that it was really important to get staff talking about this and asking questions,” said PLEA Vice President Jared Wagenknecht.

The fliers and the BAT team members urged staff to ask legitimate questions about the switch to give the leaders as well as district officials a better understanding of staff needs regarding health care.

“The more people we had involved, the better,” said Herbener, “and they were all talking about it.”

PLEA leaders also helped the district develop a survey of district



Grassroots Approach: Four months of action by members of the Papillion-LaVista Education Association, including Vice President Jared Wagenknecht, left, and President Dave Herbener, preserved the district’s health care plan through the Educators Health Alliance.

employees. Nearly 900 employees responded, and the results reflected PLEA-led discussions in the buildings, the flier and social media posts. Wagenknecht said the survey results “played a major role” in the district’s ultimate decision.

“It was almost unanimously ‘we do not want to switch to a non-EHA carrier,’” said Wagenknecht. “I think the board was genuinely surprised.”

Even with survey results in hand, Herbener remained skeptical.

“I was 100 percent certain the district was going to switch. We all felt that way,” he said.

Nothing Beats a Big Risk Pool

Two district informational meetings were held in late January, and another in mid-February. Each was vital for Association members, their families and even the administrators who were tasked with evaluating the recommendation to switch carriers. There was also the issue of stability, not only for Papillion-LaVista employees and taxpayers, but for the statewide EHA family.

“I think long-term stability was important,” said Herbener. Blue Cross, he said, has that stability and reliability.

“Blue Cross has a huge risk pool of almost 80,000 lives covered, compared to a couple of thousand lives in the other carrier’s pool,” he said.

A general principal of insurance is that the more lives covered, the lower the cost; the fewer lives covered, the higher the risk and the higher the cost. The EHA plan through Blue Cross and Blue Shield has a record to show exactly that.

“The EHA plan keeps rates low. The 10-year average (rate) increase is 3.5 percent. Nobody can match that. Not even close,” Herbener said.

About Those Appendices

Beating EHA’s Blue Cross program costs, while matching services, was going to be tough, but that’s exactly what the outside company pledged, with reason. The contract between PLEA and the school district includes an appendix that says if the district switches insurance plans, the new plan must be comparable in both coverage for, and cost to, plan participants.

Herbener and Wagenknecht wondered how the company might match services while promising to save \$3 million over two years.

“They’re not going to give you money up front without taking it from somewhere else. The only other place to take it is to not pay claims. There was concern about that,” said Herbener.

Wagenknecht said the district was following the corporate model used by other school districts, where the service is put out to bid, comes back at a lower cost and “almost always means that teachers get less benefit or less of something.”

The Cause of High Anxiety

“Less of something” began to show after the PLEA leadership began to dig a little deeper.

The leadership team pushed members to check with health care providers and report back. Numerous members found their providers, reportedly part of the new network, were not. Among the findings was a huge drop-off in mental health care providers; a huge drop off in dental care; a drop off in after-care therapy; and a drop in physical therapy care.

“That’s a pretty big chunk of service where there was going to be a pretty big drop off,” said Herbener.

The pending switch also caused high anxiety among already retired and soon-to- retire members. For those who retire before age 65, the existing EHA plan allows purchase of Blue Cross insurance until Medicare age, provided the purchaser was a plan member for five years preceding retirement.

Herbener said that while the new company reportedly had a plan to take care of retirees, no details were ever presented.

“To me, that’s not a plan,” he said.

NSEA & Health Care: A Long History.

NSEA members at the Association’s 1941 delegate Assembly directed the formation of local hospitalization groups. By 1959, more than 200 Nebraska school districts were using an NSEA-endorsed plan with health insurance coverage provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

That relationship further evolved in the 1990s and culminated in formation of the Educators Health Alliance in the late 1990s.

Today, the EHA Board of Directors manages the Blue Cross plan for more than 250 Nebraska school districts and education organizations, setting rates, coverage and deciding other aspects of the health care plan for 80,000 lives. The EHA board also bids the plan on a regular basis, with the last bid process happening in 2016.

The EHA board includes six NSEA representatives, and three each from the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators – including one Papillion-LaVista administrator.

What teachers don’t often know, said Herbener, is that they have six representatives on the EHA Board of Directors. “Teachers have that representation, administrators do, the school board does.

“I think that’s big,” he said.

Grassroots Begin to Grow

Organizing efforts began to pay off at the third informational meeting on Feb. 18. Then, when nearly 300 district staff attended a March 11 board meeting, school leaders noticed.

“There were lots of good questions that were fairly difficult to answer, because they were legitimate, tough questions,” he said.

Wagenknecht agreed. “I think that our organizational capacity to let people know, to get the word out, to get members out, was huge for our members and non-members to see,” he said. “So often people ask, ‘aside from my contract, what is it that PLEA does?’ This was something tangible that people were able to see at every meeting.”

“We had a wide variety of people speak so the board would know it wasn’t just a small group of people with concerns,” said Herbener. “That made the board take notice.”

Alternative Network Savings

Few knew that the EHA Board and BCBS Nebraska had been working on the alternate networks pilot project.

Such networks allow employees to choose coverage from one of three alternate networks – ranging from a broad network of providers to a smaller network. The alternate networks feature fewer hospitals and doctors, and are available in specific geographic areas, all factors that keep costs lower.

The belief is that alternate networks would offer savings for the employee, the district and the EHA plan used by all but four Nebraska school districts. The pilot would help determine whether alternate networks are viable.

With alternate networks, employees understand the need to monitor use of providers quite carefully to avoid out-of-network costs.

“We believe the savings will be attractive to more districts and to members as well,” said Neal Clayburn, NSEA’s associate executive director and chair of the EHA Board of Directors. “And that’s yet another instance of the power of your Association membership.”

The Decision is Made

Leading up to the school board’s two March meetings, Herbener was in contact with district officials, asking whether retention of Blue Cross was on the table. He emailed the superintendent several times to reiterate that the opportunity to keep Blue Cross was still available.

When the board’s March 11 agenda was published, it included the committee’s recommendation to stay with Blue Cross and Blue Shield. The board delayed that vote until March 25. When the vote came, the board voted – unanimously – to stay with Blue Cross.

Herbener and Wagenknecht were both surprised and pleased. Organizing, informing and advocating for members made a difference.

Today, the district is organizing meetings to assist members as they select a network, looking forward to new choices for health care – choices offered under the services of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. That’s the power of Association membership.



Addressing Members: Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld was the luncheon speaker for members of the NSEA Board of Directors, NSEA-Retired Board of Directors, and a group of leaders from the Student Education Association of Nebraska on the morning of April 26. All visited the State Capitol to visit with state senators and legislative aides during the morning.

State Aid Bill Advances

An earnest but complex attempt to solve Nebraska’s overreliance on property taxes drew plenty of critics – including the NSEA – during a hearing before three of the Legislature’s standing committees in April.

After more than a week of working, a modified LB289 was advanced to the full Legislature on a 6-0-2 vote of the Revenue Committee.

The proposal would place a rigid spending lid on school district operational budgets and on building funds and, at the same time, would lower the property tax levy limit from \$1.05 to 95 cents. The latest proposal included \$480 million in new state aid to public schools in the first year and \$563 million in the second – amounts certain to lower property tax collections across the state in both rural and urban settings. Of that first-year relief, about \$370 million is projected to come from a half-cent increase in the state sales tax, as well as the elimination of sales tax exemptions on about 20 services.

Another \$110 million would come from a reduction in the state’s property tax credit program, reducing the program’s funding from \$224 million to \$115 million.

The Three-Legged Stool

The hope was to reduce property taxes collected by K-12 school districts by an average of 20 percent. Revenue Committee Chair Sen. Lou Ann Linehan said LB289 would move Nebraska from 47th to 20th nationally in school district reliance on property taxes.

Few opposed the goal, but the path to property tax reduction drew much criticism during a lengthy hear-

LB289 Would Broaden Sales Tax, Cut Property Taxes; Stringent Budget Lids, Revenue Source are Troubling

ing before the Revenue, Education and Appropriations committees.

NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell

testified and applauded the leadership of senators who acknowledged the need for tax reform. However, she said, components of LB289 do not provide equitable tax reform nor do they provide Nebraska school districts with funding stability.

“If we are to balance the three-legged stool of school finance (sales, income and property taxes), we must be willing to repeal more exemptions, beyond the four listed in this bill,” said Fennell.

Senators must have listened – the latest version of LB289 repealed about 20 sales tax exemptions.

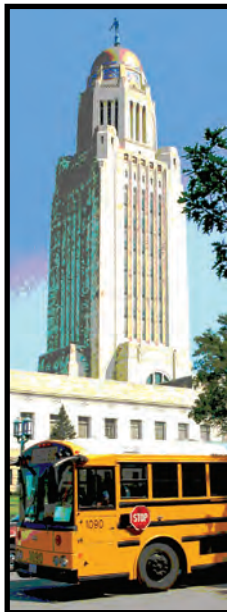
Fennell also encouraged senators to broaden the income tax base in an upward direction.

“LB289 falls short as it does nothing to require large corporate and high-income earners to increase their contribution in the effort to address this issue. We do not believe Nebraskans support a tax policy that allows a millionaire to pay the same income tax rate as an individual making \$30,420,” she said.

Placing any additional revenues intended for education in a trust fund, like the Highway Trust fund that is used for roads and highways, would be ideal.

Fennell said the education community also questions the severe, stringent new spending lid that would, year after year, ratchet down funding for schools.

“We already have spending and revenue restraints on our schools; more are not needed,” said Fennell.



Nebraska Legislature ‘19

Private School Tax Credit

Linehan’s LB670 advanced from committee and re-

GRADUATE LEVEL

opportunities for teachers

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— Angela Mosier, Midland M.Ed Faculty, Westside High School Math Teacher
Nebraska Teacher of the Year, 2013

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mained on General File in early May.

NSEA opposes LB670, which creates a tax credit that would reduce state revenues. An income tax credit would be given to corporations, estates and individuals that contribute to organizations that grant scholarships to private schools. Students may qualify if their families have income that is less than twice the reduced-price lunch threshold – approximately \$93,000 for a family of four.

It is estimated that LB670, if fully utilized, could cost the state \$90 million a year in revenues within 10 years. Those revenues are public tax dollars that should be directed to funding priorities such as public education, health care and essential infrastructure – they should not be given away to benefit private schools.

Mentoring Grants Revived

Thanks to the hopeful support of Gordon Sen. Tom Brewer, LB241 likely has the five votes needed to advance from the Education Committee to the full Legislature.

Under the bill, solar and wind energy funds currently used for teacher evaluation systems (scheduled to sunset in 2020) would be used for teacher mentoring programs beginning with the 2020-21 school year.

The bill also requires the state to formulate teacher mentoring guidelines. NSEA supports LB241.

SRO, Mental Health Bills OK'd

Two bills that had NSEA's backing have been passed and signed into law by the governor.

LB390, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks will outline the duties regarding school resource officers and security guards, and requires a memorandum of understanding between school districts and law enforcement, with certain minimum requirements for training of law enforcement and school employees.

LB619, by Omaha Sen. Rick Kolowski, requires a health insurance plan to pay for mental health services provided in a school or educational setting.

OSERS Bill to the Governor

LB31, by Seward Sen. Mark Kolterman, will allow a study of the possible transfer of the management of Omaha School Employees Retirement System to the state retirement system. NSEA supports the study. It passed on final reading and is on the governor's desk, awaiting his signature.

On Final Reading

Needing one more approval vote is LB15, by Sen. Carol Blood, Bellevue. It requires that any individual or group health insurance policy issued or renewed in the state shall provide coverage for hearing aids and hearing aid related services for children.

50 Years of Bargaining Observed in April

Your right to bargaining a contract for your salary, health care benefits, extra duty pay and other aspects of your contract has just turned 50.

In honor of that anniversary, Omaha Sen. Mike McDonnell introduced Legislative Resolution 487, declaring Monday, April 29, as Public Employee Collective Bargaining Day in Nebraska. The resolution urged Nebraskans to “recognize, commemorate and celebrate the history and importance of collective bargaining in the State of Nebraska.”

Collective bargaining, for Nebraska teachers anyway, was nearly nipped in the bud. LB15 was introduced by legendary Scottsbluff Sen. Terry Carpenter and co-sponsored by four other senators, including Sen. Eugene Mahoney. It established the right of public employees to collectively bargain for wages, working conditions and benefits.

According to the *History of the Nebraska State Education Association: 1867-2017*, by former NSEA executive Director Craig R. Christiansen, LB15 placed school districts under the purview of the Commission of Industrial Relations. That gave the CIR the authority to make orders on salaries and conditions of employment.

The first few years were rocky, with 17 school districts going to the CIR, and a dozen of those to the Nebraska Supreme Court. That included Seward, where the school board said “The Board feels that salaries should not be open to negotiations this year.”

Christiansen wrote that “The CIR ordered bargaining, and after resolving every issue except salary, the parties were back before the CIR — which then ordered a base salary on a salary schedule.

“The Seward Board appealed to the Supreme Court, which was asked by the Seward Board to consider the constitutionality of LB15, which made school districts subject to the CIR. The Court upheld the CIR and its constitutionality.”

Still in Committee

North Platte Sen. Mike Groene's LB147, the Student Discipline Act, remains in committee. At press time, NSEA staff were working with education stakeholders to hammer out a compromise on LB147 that might allow the bill to move forward.

NSEA's goal is to strengthen student discipline rules from a practitioner's point of view.

Broadly, LB147 would allow school personnel to use physical intervention to safely manage the dangerous behavior of a student until he or she is no longer a danger to himself or herself, the teacher or administrator, and others. It would also require school districts to have a publicly available policy on how and when a student can be removed from class and how and when a student returns to class using a clear and consistent discipline process.

Write a Letter, Make a Difference

Reaching out to lawmakers makes a huge difference. The more letters and calls received, the more likely that minds are changed. NSEA asks members to write, call or email their senators on these topics:

■ **OPPOSE** LB670, which would cut state tax revenues by giving dollar-for-dollar tax credits to donors who give to private schools.

■ **SUPPORT** LB241, which would use proceeds from solar and wind leases on state-owned school properties to fund teacher mentoring programs.

■ **SUPPORT** LB147, which would enhance the Student Discipline Act by authorizing and defining the physical contact needed to restrain a student who threatens to harm himself or others. It would also give more authority to teachers to have a disruptive student removed from the classroom.

To email your senator, go to NSEA's website, click on the 'What We Do' link on the home page, and then find the 'Email Your Senator' link. NSEA is at:

www.nsea.org

Inaugural NSEA UNIVERSITY Sets High Standards

Top Professional Development On Tap for First-Ever NSEA U

The calendar is rapidly closing in on the final day of school, and educators are busy solidifying plans for the summer.

If you haven't yet taken time to check out the schedule for NSEA University, do so soon: you *will* find professional development of interest, and space is limited.

NSEA University is the Association's first full summer conference since 1999. It combines the fall Advocacy Conference, August membership meetings and new professional development together in one location — the University of Nebraska Lincoln's sparkling new Innovation Campus — over three days: July 16-18.

Also happening at the same time: NSEA's Leadership Institute, an Association fixture for 30-plus years.

Attendees may select from a long menu of professional development, will get a taste of NSEA services and enjoy a dash of membership details. They'll also get nationally known speakers in Principal Gerry Brooks and educator/author Dr. Tina Boogren (see related story).

'A Better Product'

"With these events rolled into a three-day conference, we can offer prime professional development in a more efficient manner," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "We believe NSEA University will only grow from here."

Members will find the best of the Advocacy Conference on the agenda, as well as Leadership Institute, featuring skills and knowledge development for up-and-coming leaders; and membership meetings, allowing local leaders and members to collect membership materials and speak with their NSEA organizational specialist

about plans for the upcoming school year.

Many of the professional development session topics will fall under the five provisions of NSEA's strategic plan: bargaining and member advocacy, membership, political action, governance and social justice, with wellness sessions sprinkled in.

A training for local association presidents will take place on the Monday preceding the conference kickoff.

Registration is Open

Here are some key points you need to know:

- Registration has been open since mid-April, and space is limited to 300 attendees per day. If interested, register now.

- Check the NSEA website for updates; some sessions are not finalized and will be added later.

- Up to three hours of college credit is available. One hour of credit is available for the Tuesday, July 16, all-morning session on True Colors. Jacob Berry, Rachel Scheet and Leah Boer will present that session. One credit hour is also available at the Wednesday session entitled How to Build a No Place for Hate School, offered by the Anti-Defamation League. One hour of credit is also available by attending two days of NSEA U (additional activities outside the sessions may be required). Advanced registration is required.

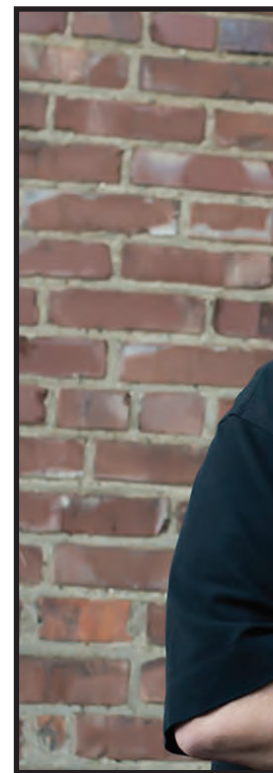
- Take advantage of two local association-specific comp study training sessions at NSEA U. These all-day trainings will focus on cash-in-lieu/flat salary schools

on Tuesday, July 16, and regular full-insurance schools on Thursday, July 18. With a day of bargaining content on Wednesday, July 17, your team can head into fall negotiations armed with the information and data you need. Contact Randy Gordon or Natalie Thomason 1-800-742-0047 with questions and to learn what data will be needed prior to the training.

- NSEA will reimburse \$62.45 per night for shared rooms at approved hotels (with hotel receipt), if eligible. Those driving more than 100 miles will receive \$25 per 100 miles driven (attendees are encouraged to carpool). Reimbursement details are on the website.

A partial listing of sessions is found elsewhere on these pages. For a full listing, and to register, go to:

nsea.org/nseau



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Keynote

Brooks, Boogren

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Tina H. Boogren will ke...
agenda.

Nationally noted humo...
Brooks, who also works...
as an elementary school...
in Lexington, KY, will h...
Wednesday, July 17, prog...

Lincoln State Sen. A...
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"Their appearances ma...
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The quick-talking B...
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drawing on his experienc...
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years as an intervention sp...

More than a half-milli...
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he released a book, *Go S...
from the School Trenches.*

Brooks will keynote sp...
will also offer two breako...

Boogren is a former ch...
partment chair, teacher me...



Kentucky high school principal Gerry Brooks has become nationally known for humor displayed through a series of online videos.

es Bring Humor, Expertise

Boogren, Morfeld Scheduled for Luncheon Talks

speakers will be on hand to University in July. instructional coach and author Dr. keynote the Tuesday, July 16,

rist Gerry s full-time l principal eadline the ram. dam Mor- ncheon on

ake our al- professional es better,” i Benson. rooks has us videos status by es in edu- rs in the classroom and two pialist.

ion people follow Brooks on ing to his thoughts on Flair me and more. Just this month See the Principal: True Tales

peaker at noon Wednesday. He ut sessions on that day. lassroom teacher, English de- entor, instructional coach, pro-

essional developer and building-level leader. She has presented at the school, district, state, and national levels and has been a featured speaker at the International Literacy Association Annual Conference and Barnes and Noble Educators' Nights.

She was a 2007 finalist for Colorado Teacher of the Year and received the Douglas County (CO) School District Outstanding Teacher Award eight years in a row. In addition to writing articles for the National Writing Project's The Voice and The Quarterly, she is the author of several books about teaching.

Boogren's Tuesday luncheon talk will focus on Educator Wellness and Self-Care. She will also assist NSEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich with a mentoring workshop that afternoon for those who will participate in the

program for the 2019-20 school year.

Morfeld, first elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 2014, was re-elected in 2018. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2009, and a law degree from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 2012. He is founder and executive director of Civic Nebraska, which works to build informed community leaders, and to ensure that democratic institutions are nonpartisan, accessible and modern.

Register now at:

nsea.org/nseau

NSEA U Professional Development Topics Wide, Varied

Nearly 180 sessions of professional development for educators has been arranged over the three days of the first-ever NSEA University.

All sessions will be held Tuesday through Thursday, July 16-18, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Innovation Campus.

For those staying overnight, there will be the option of an Association-led dining excursion on Tuesday night. Wednesday night's plans include optional tours of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Memorial Stadium, followed by a reception at the Champions Club, directly west of the stadium.

Below is a sampling of the sessions scheduled for NSEA University. For a full list of sessions, go to:

nsea.org/nseau

Tuesday, July 16

■ **Compassion Fatigue:** Ree Reimers, Project Harmony.

■ **Safety in Nebraska Schools:** Dr. Jolene Palmer, Nebraska State School Security director, Nebraska Department of Education.

■ **Social Media Privacy Settings:** Kristi Capek, NSEA webmaster and graphic designer.

■ **Disability Rights, K-12 and Higher Education:** Dr. Neena Nizar, executive director, The Jansen's Foundation.

■ **Know Your Parliamentary Procedure:** John Heineman, 2000 Nebraska Teacher of the Year.

■ **Institutional Racism:** Mako Jacobs, Vincent Gregorio, Katrina Jacobberger, Omaha Public Schools.

Wednesday, July 17

■ **Crafting Effective and Measurable Student Learning Objectives:** Rich Middlestedt, South Dakota Education Association.

■ **And Still They Persist - Native American Mascots:** Jose Soto, vice president for Access/Equity/Diversity at Southeast Community College.

■ **Dyslexia — What & Why:** Dr. Eileen Vautrav-ers.

■ **Bargaining Timeline Strategies:** NSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Randy Gordon.

■ **Nebraska Coaches Association and NSEA Mentoring for New Coaches, Teachers:** NCA Executive Director Darin Boysen and NSEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich.

Thursday, July 18

■ **Relationships Drive Student Attendance:** Lisa Utterback, Omaha Public Schools.

■ **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Dr. Abby Burke, Millard Public Schools.

■ **Strategies for Understanding Student Behaviors for K-12 Early Educators:** Brandy Rose, ESU No. 7.

■ **Teacher Evaluation with Network for Educator Effectiveness — Hands on Practice:** Marc Doss, University of Missouri.



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Delegate Assembly Smiles: NSEA members from across the state were all smiles after 2010 National Teacher of the Year Sarah Brown Wessling spoke on ‘Elevating Everyone to the Status of Learner’ during one of the professional development sessions at NSEA’s Delegate Assembly in April. From left are Megan Pitrat, Syracuse Dunbar Avoca; Rae Carbaugh, Niobrara; Brown Wessling; Fran Martin, Beatrice; and Rachel Jacobsen, Ralston.

Rising to Leadership

Minority Members Gain Leadership Posts; Delegates Act on Safety, Trauma, More

As recently as four years ago, the 32 elected members of the NSEA Board of Directors included just one minority representative among their number. That lone member, representing the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee, held ex officio status and could offer input, but along with higher education, retired and student representatives, had no voting rights.

What a difference time and effort can make. That became evident at the conclusion of NSEA’s annual Delegate Assembly in Lincoln in April.

It was not until the 2017 Delegate Assembly that members said ‘yes’ to a Bylaws measure that granted voting status to representatives of those four membership categories. As proscribed in the Bylaws, it was in 2018 that Lincoln’s Isau Metes was elected to serve before an elected minority vote became a reality on the board.

Now, when the NSEA Board of Directors convenes at the start of the 2019-20 fiscal year, there will be five minority members voting. As part of the effort to allow a representative of EMAC to serve in a voting capacity, delegates also gave a voting seat to a representative of higher education and to Education Support Professionals (ESPs). As it happened this year, both of those new electees are minorities.

Luis Olivas, diversity recruitment and leadership coordinator at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, was elected to represent higher education. Travis Vo, a technology specialist for Westside

District 66, was elected to represent ESPs. In addition, Omaha teacher Tracy Hartman-Bradley was elected to a second term as an NSEA representative on the National Education Association’s Board of Directors, and Omaha educator Eddie Ventura Jr. was elected to serve as the EMAC rep. Already on the board is Omaha teacher Sasha Cervantes.

“We’ve made tremendous strides in this regard, and our board is now far more representative of our student population than is our statewide teaching force,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “This diversity will serve us well moving forward.”

Also gaining voting rights with the new Association year will be NSEA-Retired President De Tonack and Student Education Association of Nebraska President Alicia Laufenberg, University of Nebraska at Omaha.



Hartman-Bradley



Ventura



Olivas



Vo

Student Stress, Trauma Addressed

Students will once again reap the benefits of work by NSEA members at Delegate Assembly.

Action by the nearly 300 members on Saturday, April 27, moved the Association forward on school safety, social justice, language learners, student stress and anger, complex trauma and more topics.

Educators themselves came way from the preceding evening of professional development with additional teaching tools. They learned about Motivation with Complex Text, Surviving a Con-

cussion in the School Setting, Compassion Fatigue, and Child Trauma. The Delegate Assembly was the Association's second successful attempt at merging professional development with the annual meeting, and there will be a third.

"Members like the opportunity to learn and improve their knowledge and skills at Delegate Assembly. We'll do it again – and better – next year," said Benson.

Members were also treated to Friday evening remarks from Iowa educator Sarah Brown Wessling, the 2010 National Teacher of the Year. Brown Wessling told educators that "our teaching is grounded in the stories that we tell about our students, about ourselves."

Delegates also applauded Tom Black, a former NSEA vice president and Nebraska NEA director. The 2018 Assembly was the 57th annual meeting for the retired West Point social studies teacher – and 61st Assembly when counting the four special Delegate Assemblies held since 1978.

From Magical to Rough

Brown Wessling said that while her first year in the classroom was magical, the second was rough. It was so rough, she said, that at winter break she told her father she thought perhaps she was in the wrong profession. Her father told her that "Well, you've got a contract, so you'll have to finish the year and then we'll see what you think."

Brown Wessling later asked students to tell her in writing what they thought of her and of her teaching. As she read them, she cried.

"I crawled under my desk so another teacher would not walk in and see me crying," she said. She called her mother, who said "So, honey, are you going to get out from under the desk?"

That, said Brown Wessling, is the story of teaching. "We get out from under the desk day after day after day," she said. "You have all given so much to so many people. Thank you so much for all you do for everyone every day."

Brown Wessling also presented twice on Friday evening, first on Mindsets for Learning: Elevating Everyone to the Status of Learner, and later on Talking Their Way to Knowing: Creating Discussions that Teach Thinking.

'It Boggles the Mind...'

The William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation received NSEA's highest honor, the Friend of Education, for 2019.

Benson presented the honor to John Scott, executive director of the foundation. A generous gift from the foundation will fund the Teachers Scholars Academy, providing full-tuition scholarships, plus \$8,000 annually, to 104 students who



A Little Help from Our Friends: Omaha Education Association negotiator Molly Davies and President Bobby Miller hold some of the several hundred postcards delegates wrote urging the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education to settle contract negotiations with OEA. The OPS-OEA contract talks moved to the resolution officer stage in March.

want to become teachers and who attend one of three campuses of the University of Nebraska system. Benson said the Scott family has close ties to education, including Ruth Scott, who at one time was a kindergarten teacher.

"They have a very good connection to education," said Benson. Those ties to education will grow stronger through the Scholars Academy.

"It boggles the mind to think how much of a difference this will make for recipients of these scholarships," said Benson.

Lincoln special education teacher Christine Martin received the NSEA

Teaching Excellence Award, and West-side District 66 Family and Consumer Sciences teacher Beth Cosentino received the Rookie of the Year for her work in the 2017-18 school year.

School Safety, Trauma

Delegates also strengthened several of the Association's existing Resolutions relating to school safety, the result of work from a committee approved at the 2018 Delegate Assembly.

Among the changes are these additions to Resolution language:

- "...all staff should be provided with appropriate training on strategies for establishing and maintaining a safe school climate."

- "The Association also believes that individuals who bring unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons should be excluded from school and school grounds until undergoing mandatory prescribed intervention."

- "The Association also believes the prevention of firearm violence should include providing families with information regarding the prevention of unauthorized access to firearms."

Other amendments to existing Resolutions urged the preservation of Native languages of indigenous people of Nebraska, and that professional development for Nebraska teachers should "provide initial and ongoing training and support the use of trauma-sensitive practices."

New Resolutions added to the Association's tenets include:

- A Resolution supporting "fair and equal access to broadband technology."

- A Resolution urging that "students be taught in language acquisition and development programs designed to meet their specific needs."



Winner! Winner! Crete's Linsay Wach won one of four \$25 gift cards given away through social media contests during Delegate Assembly. Her immediate response? "I can get more books for my students!"



‘And Still They Persist: Native American Indian Mascots...A Nebraska Tradition’ was the title of a professional development session offered on the first night of NSEA’s 2019 Delegate Assembly. Presenting was Jose J. Soto, center, adjunct instructor of sociology at Nebraska Wesleyan University and vice president for Access/Equity/Diversity for Southeast Community College.

- A Resolution addressing student stress and anger that urges schools to work collaboratively with the community, local, state and national agencies to ensure that these children and young adults receive comprehensive interventions and services that support their physical and psychological well-being.

- A Resolution addressing Complex Trauma, stating that “NSEA believes that school districts should provide complex trauma training for education employees, and programs to address the effects of trauma.”

A Resounding ‘Yes’

Finally, delegates approved eight New Business Items, each of which calls for NSEA to action during the 2019-20 Association year. The action items approved requested NSEA:

- To investigate implementation of an Administrator of Excellence Award.
- To continue the work of the ad hoc School Safety Committee for another year.
- To form an ESP Task Force to study ESP membership and Bylaws, among other items.
- To create a permanent Social Justice Committee to coordinate trainings across the state.
- To investigate offering free child care at some NSEA functions.
- To assist more prospective teachers in passing the Praxis Core tests for entrance into college education programs.
- To identify with and partner with statewide stakeholders to push broadband equity in public education.
- To create an ad hoc committee to review Delegate Assembly award nomination forms.

Delegates also approved, on voice vote, a \$6 increase in dues for the 2019-20 Association year. That is an increase of 1.45 percent.



Friend of Ed: NSEA President Jenni Benson gave NSEA’s Friend of Education Award to John Scott, executive director of the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation. A foundation gift will fund the Teachers Scholars Academy, giving full-tuition scholarships, plus \$8,000 annually, to 104 teacher candidates who attend the University of Nebraska system.



Top Teacher: Lincoln teacher Christine Martin received NSEA’s 2019 award for Teaching Excellence.



Tops: Metro District President Bob Miller holds the William Gallagher Award as the district with the largest percentage of eligible members.

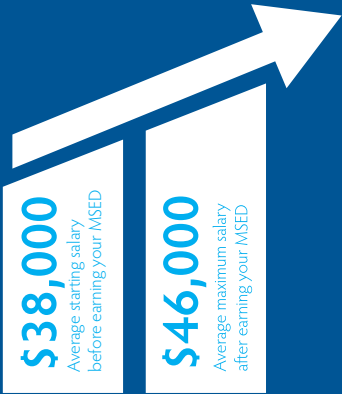


Children’s Fund: Lisa Hanson, on behalf of Umo^{ho} Nation, and Lynne Henkel, Bellevue, with the award for most money per member, and most money per local, respectively, raised for the NSEA’s Children’s Fund in 2017-18.



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EDUC 605	Cognition and Learning	Sept 7 - Oct 4, 2019	3
EDUC 553	Using the Internet	Oct 5 - Nov 1, 2019	3
EDUC 540	The Master Teacher	Nov 2 - Nov 29, 2019	3
EDUC 600	Sociology of Education	Jan 18 - Feb 14, 2020	3
SPED 500	Inclusionary Practices	Feb 15 - March 13, 2020	3
EDUC 552	Introduction to Multimedia Authoring	March 14 - April 10, 2020	3
EDUC 621	Curriculum Development	June 8 - July 31, 2020	3
EDUC 602	Statistical Methods and Data Analysis	June 8 - July 31, 2020	3
EDUC 569	Teachers as Collaborative Leaders	Sept 5 - Oct 2, 2020	3
EDUC 623	Assessment of Instruction (8-week capstone)	Oct 3 - Nov 27, 2020	3

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EDUC 601	Study Design and Data Collection	June 3 - July 26, 2019	3

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If travel is in your plans this summer, now is the time to turn to NEA Member Benefits, where you'll find deals like these:

■ **Save with Hertz:** Find savings of up to 25 percent on car rental base rates all year at participating locations (terms apply). Also discover bonus offers and sign up for free travel perks with Hertz Gold Plus Rewards. For details, go to:

neamb.com/products/hertz-car-rental

■ **Get a Free Double Upgrade with Enterprise Rent-A-Car:** Receive a free double upgrade when you rent a car with Enterprise through July 15! Go to:

neamb.com/products/enterprise

■ **Red Roof Inn is where you're going:** Receive 20 percent off a stay at any Red Roof Inn. Reserve a room at:

neamb.com/products/red-roof

■ **Guided Tour Discounts:** There is a limited time 15 percent off offer on guided tours with Trafalgar that also earns a \$3000 off per couple discount on airfare to Europe booked by May 16 for travel through March 31, 2020. Use the promo code 19EURO150 and go to this site for details:

neamb.com/products/trafalgar-worldwide-guided-vacations

Great Deals on New, Used Cars at NEAMB

If you're in the market for a new or used car, the NEA Auto Buying Program through TrueCar is the place to look! NEA members and their families enjoy preferred pricing year-round, save an average of \$3,000 off MSRP on new cars, plus get these benefits:

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

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

■ **Upfront pricing:** See the pricing, price rankings, and lock in.

■ **Guaranteed savings on the car you want before you even leave home.**

■ **Hassle-free:** Bring in your Price Certificate to a certified dealer or show it on your mobile phone.

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

Visit the NEA Auto Buying Program at:

neamb.com/buyacar

Seven Spring Car Tips Most People Ignore

Make Sure your Ride is Ready for the Rigors of the Road

Warmer weather might have you ready for a driving adventure. Before you load up the car or truck and head out on the highway, you should make sure your ride is ready for the rigors of the road.

While most of us know to check the battery, oil, cooling system and tire tread, there are some hidden maintenance issues many people miss. Here are seven springtime car prep tips to consider:

Tire Rotation

While the tread may look fine, rotating tires helps prevent uneven wear, prolonging their life. It's recommended you rotate them every six months or 6,000 to 8,000 miles. After a long winter of rough roads and potholes, you might also have them checked for bulges and to make sure they are balanced and aligned to prevent pulling and vibration while driving.

Tire Pressure

Underinflated or overinflated tires wear quicker and can result in blowouts, reduced gas mileage, and quicker wear. Most tire experts recommend you test tire inflation monthly, keeping them inflated to the manufacturer's recommended PSI – between 30 and 35 PSI for most tires (found on a door sticker or owner's manual).

Spare Tire

When's the last time you checked to see if the spare was properly inflated, and that you have a working jack and tire tools? Failing to do so could leave you stuck on a busy highway with a flat tire and a worthless spare or jack.

Cabin Air Filter

Many people don't know there is a filter for the air that flows into your car. If you notice a reduction of airflow when

you turn on the air conditioner or heater, or persistent bad odors, odds are your cabin filter needs replacing. This filter captures leaves, insects, pollen, dust, soot and other debris, and it should be replaced every year or year-and-a-half.

Windshield Wipers

Are you tired of streaking or incomplete cleaning of water, snow or ice? Summer heat and winter cold crack, rip and tear the rubber on the blades, creating an uneven surface. You can extend their life by cleaning

them monthly with denatured alcohol, but for most of us, a yearly wiper blade replacement makes sense.

Gas Cap

Yes, over time the gas cap can lose its seal, causing fuel to evaporate and trigger the "check engine light" to come on.

Headlights, Taillights, Turn Indicators

Road grime and pitting can yellow and turn headlight casings cloudy. They need to be cleaned for maximum illumination so you can better see obstacles, animals or other dangers on the road ahead, and help others to see you. You'll also want to walk around your vehicle (or have someone help you) to check that all the turn indicators and lights are working properly.

You also need the proper insurance to protect your vehicle and those riding with you. Just as your vehicle needs a tune up every now and then, so does your auto insurance.

Contact an advisor from your NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program provider, California Casualty, for a policy review at 1-800-800-9410, or at:

www.neamb.com/autohome

Be Prepared for Emergencies

Now that you have your car ready for the road, don't forget a basic safety kit that consists of:

- Cell phone & spare battery
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Warning light/reflective triangles
- Tire gauge
- Jumper cables
- Foam sealant for flat tires

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Early Retiree Health Care Detailed in Video

EHA, BCBS Collaborate on Video Explaining Special Services Offering

There's a new video available and it is directly targeted at those Association members between the ages 50 and 64 who have been on the Educators Health Alliance insurance plan for 5 years and are either retired or considering retirement.

"It would be beneficial for all educators in this category to watch this video," said NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn, who serves as chair of the EHA Board of Directors.

The video is brand new and covers all the details about the EHA Direct Bill Plan that is available to plan members through the Association's Special Services program for the school year 2019-20. The Special Services program allows purchase of coverage from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska program for educators up until age 65, or Medicare eligibility.

The only caveat is that purchasers must have been members of the EHA health care plan for the five years immediately preceding retirement.

Your EHA Advocate, Greg Long, along with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska representatives Cortney Ray and Jon Tidwell, were instrumental in developing and completing the video.

For details, go to the website at ehplan.org/retiree, or call Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Member Services at 1-888-592-8961, or Long at 402-440-9633.

Deadline Approaching for Membership Offer

You may be two, four or a dozen years or more away from retirement, or you may have been retired for years. But there is no time like the present to become a Pre-Retired or a Retired Lifetime member of both



Teaching Students to Become Teachers: NSEA-Retired members added their expertise to the curriculum at Wayne State College recently, sitting for a panel discussing issues and suggestions for beginning teachers at Wayne, sponsored by that school's Student Education Association of Nebraska chapter. From left are Brad Weber, Ellen Imdieke and Rae Brown. Not pictured is Lee Brogie. A similar panel was organized at Bellevue University, featuring NSEA-Retired members Bob Ingram, Susan Daughtery, Monica Evon and Terry Osborn.

NSEA-Retired and NEA Retired.

By joining before June 1, 2019, you will receive a \$100 rebate on your \$450 membership fee. You'll also beat the \$50 NEA-Retired dues increase, set to go into effect on Sept. 1! (Note that there is an additional \$100 dues cost for lifetime membership in Omaha Retired and Lincoln Retired organizations.)

Joining is as easy as going to nsea.org/retired and selecting the 'Join Now' link on the home page. Installments or credit card payments are available. You will continue to have access to all NEA Member Benefits programs; you will

continue to be an important member of the Association's educational team, will enjoy free conferences, and will continue to receive The Voice, the NSEA-Retired Advocate, and various NEA publications.

— De Tonack, President
NSEA-Retired



Naval Depot Expert: At a recent meeting of the Platte Valley Retired Education Association, retired architect Walt Miller told the story of the building of the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings during World War II and its effect on the region. It was the largest of the nation's inland munitions depots, occupying almost 49,000 acres. More than 100,000 people were employed by the NAD during the war.

New Location, Lineup For Literacy Meet

The Nebraska State Literacy Conference will feature a new location and another fabulous lineup of speakers in February 2020.

On the agenda are Colby Sharp, author of The Creativity Project; Rob Buyea, children's author and Golden Sower nominee; Lesa Cline-Ransome, award-winning children's author; and Jonathan Friesen, author, speaker and youth writing coach; among others.

The event is Thursday and Friday, Feb. 20-21, at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney. The 2020 theme is Literacy Brings Us Together.

Conference features will include exhibits, luncheons, an awards banquet and professional networking. Online registration will open in November. Conference proposal opportunities will open this summer. For details, go to:

www.nereads.org

Early Enrollment Now Underway

'We All Do Better Together'

NSEA's Early Enrollment period for 2019-20 opened April 1 and is an opportunity for local associations to re-engage potential members who filled out a new educator card at the beginning of this school year and have yet to join. It is also a chance to engage any student teacher who has already signed a contract for 2019-20, and to re-engage those potential members who may have previously been a member of SEAN.

Here is the key benefit for those early enrollees: they can join NSEA from April 1 to the start of the school year and not have to pay a dollar in dues until October.

The Early Enrollment period is also an opportunity for potential members who have *never* previously been a member to join NSEA and access many of the benefits of membership without payment until October 2019. One of those benefits is to attend the amazing professional development opportunities to be offered at the NSEA University conference July 16-18 in Lincoln.

Questions about early enrollment details or how to conduct an early enrollment campaign? Reach your local association's organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

Remember: we all do better together!

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

Found Treasures

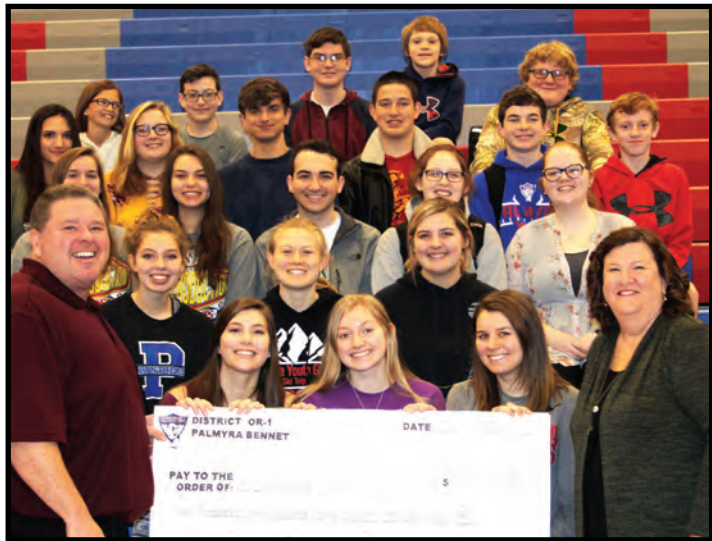
From Lupe Gallegos, a head custodian in California:

"I am a head custodian at a high school and collect lots of unwanted furniture from teachers. Most of the furniture is in good shape, but the teacher just doesn't have a use for it anymore. It was always difficult to find new owners for these items, and many times they would go to the dump.

"I decided to try something different. I bought a digital camera, took pictures of all the furniture I had and sent out a massive email to all the staff informing them of the items. I could not believe that all of the items were gone in just one day! I received emails from the staff telling me what a great idea it was! I hope that you will pass this tip on to the custodial staff at your sites."



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



Generosity: Palmyra District OR-I students gave \$5,967 to the Children's Fund for flood relief. Pictured at left, Palmyra Education Association President Burke Brown, with the Honor Society and Student Council, hands a check to NSEA President Jenni Benson. Above, Benson and Burke, right, accept the check from Bennet Elementary Principal Linde Walter, left, and the sixth grade flood relief team.

'Coin War' Delivers \$6,000 to Children's Fund

For at least a couple of weeks in March, there were very few pennies, nickels, dimes or quarters in the southeast Nebraska communities of Bennet and Palmyra.

That's what happens when the local elementary school engages the high school in a Change for Change "coin war" to benefit flood relief through the NSEA Children's Fund. At stake: a principal-sponsored ice cream party for the victor.

Students at Palmyra High School and the district's elementary school at Bennet engaged in battle and raised \$5,937.60 during the challenge. As it turned out, students in both buildings will celebrate with ice cream. The highest-earning class in each build-

ing earned a pizza party, also sponsored by the administration. First grade won at the elementary level, and seniors won at the high school, perhaps also encouraged by a "get out of school a day early" pass.

Burke Brown is the local association president.

"It was our caring project to help those in Nebraska that have suffered from recent flooding and other disasters," said Brown.

Local presidents across Nebraska are encouraged to talk with administrators about the Children's Fund and the possibility of fundraisers. For details about the fund, call NSEA at 1-800-742 and ask for Sally or Sheri.