

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ♦ March 2018



HIGHER ED BUDGET CUTS:

ENOUGH
IS ENOUGH!

Also:

- Teacher Burnout: Causes & Cures
- Delegate Assembly Adds Professional Development

Royers: LB804 Would Codify State's Defeat

Bill 'Concedes State Lacks Resources' to Fund Public Schools

With every session of the Nebraska Legislature come proposals that are sometimes frivolous, sometimes outlandish, and sometimes downright detrimental.

LB804 falls into the latter category.

The proposal would essentially allow money put into a 529 plan to be used for K-12 expenses in private and parochial schools. Money put into a 529 plan has traditionally been used strictly for post-secondary education.

Millard teacher Tim Royers opposed LB804 during a hearing in front of the Legislature's Revenue Committee. Royers, a social studies teacher and 2016 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, said LB804 would offer little actual benefit to most Nebraska families. It would also defeat the primary purpose of having a 529 plan in the first place.

"The primary reason to have a 529 is because you can spend nearly two decades slowly growing funds – and interest on those funds – for post-secondary education," said Royers. "Allowing 529s to be used for K-12 education defeats the purpose – the fund doesn't have the time to build. That would

mean that the tax reduction for your contributions are the only potential benefit."

Royers said that to see even \$500 in tax relief a family would need to save more than \$9,000 a year in a 529, which means that really the only people that would benefit from this the most are the wealthiest Nebraskans – those who have the lowest need for the bill.



Royers

Royers said not only does LB804 offer little individual benefit, the false premise of benefit that it offers would drive participation and drain the state of needed resources. Even with the negligible individual impact, taken in aggregate, LB804 would cost the state millions of dollars in revenue at a time when the state is desperately short on funds. The LB804 fiscal note indicates that the revenue the state loses will grow with each passing year.

"This is a core economic concept known as the 'fallacy of composition,'" he said. "What may seem beneficial on an individual level may actually be harmful if done by many."

That leads to the most important reason for opposing LB804, he said – a reason that has little to do with dollars and cents and a whole lot to do with the principles upon

which this state stands.

"The budgets you pass and the laws you approve are moral documents, and they reflect the priorities and beliefs you want to enshrine in this state," said Royers.

"Public education is a pillar of our nation that predates the Constitution. It was vigorously supported by our Founding Fathers. It is an obligation under our state's Constitution.

"Yet this bill quite literally concedes that the state lacks the adequate resources for the 'continued operation and maintenance of the state's public institutions of ... elementary and secondary education,'" he said.

"Think about that. We know times are tough for funding. Teachers across the state have been living that reality this entire decade. But this bill literally codifies into a law text that admits defeat in our quest to provide children with access to the great equalizer – an outstanding public education – something our constitution says we must provide."

Royers said LB804 offers the false promise of tax relief that will drive participation in a way that will actually harm the education of far more children across the state than it will ever benefit as it denies our children millions of desperately needed dollars.

He told senators that "a vote for this bill would be an admission on your part that we have given up on adequately supporting our public schools. I urge you to vote no."

LB804 remains in committee and NSEA continues to monitor the bill's standing.

Omaha Retirement Plan Bill Would Ease OPS Payments

With a proposal before the Nebraska Legislature to withhold state aid to the Omaha Public Schools and divert that aid to the school district's retirement plan, NSEA testified in February on amendments that would make LB548 more palatable.

The OSERS plan is underfunded, and OPS has been grappling with a path to improvement of the plan's financial standing.

LB548, by Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom, would divert a portion of state aid to OPS to the Nebraska Investment Council for deposit in the Omaha School Employees Retirement System (OSERS) account.

An option to allow OPS to sell bonds to cover the retirement plan costs received NSEA support, said Public Policy and Legislative Research Director Jason Hays.

He said bonds would allow the district to spread the cost over a longer period of time, and would have less classroom impact.

"We believe there needs to be some provision in law to ease the burden on OPS in paying its annual actuarial required contribution amount," he said.

LB548 has been prioritized by the Retirement Committee.

Cover:

NSEA spoke in defense of higher education funding in February. From left are University of Nebraska at Kearney Prof Dr. Will Aviles, NSEA President Jenni Benson; University of Nebraska-Lincoln senior Evann Vrana. Learn more on

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THE
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Leadership Paves Way to Future



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

**Under NSEA’s
Mission
Statement,
we continue to
advocate for all
education
professionals,
empowering
them to provide
an excellent
public education
for every
student.**

”

When I started my leadership journey many years ago, I relied on other, more experienced leaders who had paved the way ahead of me. They shared their expertise and knowledge, and I grew by watching and learning from their experience.

I have always believed that it is important to share my gratitude for those who taught me, those who fostered my leadership abilities. I also believe it is important for you, as an NSEA member, to understand the work being done each day on your behalf by your leadership teams at the local, district and state levels.

Today, I extend heartfelt thanks to my presidential predecessor, Nancy Fulton. Three years ago she decided it was time for Association leaders to conduct an in-depth review of NSEA’s Strategic Plan. The plan was written in 1993 and had not been updated since. Think about it: when the plan was written, cell phones were essentially nonexistent. Self-driving cars were science fiction. Taylor Swift was 4; Bruno Mars was 7!

The strategic plan, 20 years old when Nancy acted, was in dire need of revision.

Huge Undertaking

Nancy assigned Paul Schulte, then a member of the NEA Board of Directors and today your Association’s vice president, and myself – then NSEA vice president – as co-chairs of the committee appointed to review and update the plan.

To be honest, I questioned why Nancy would want to update a plan she would not be present to implement. It was a huge undertaking, and took much time and work. Today, as NSEA’s president, I can say Nancy was a visionary in her thinking. She wanted to leave NSEA with a very specific direction for the Association’s future, and we now have that road map. I am grateful every

day for the work she led.

To start that process, Paul and I, along with the NSEA Board of Directors, received training. We then spent two years collecting data, surveying, listening and visiting with members across the state. Last year members at the 2017 Delegate Assembly voted unanimously to accept the NSEA Strategic Plan’s goals and outcomes with the understanding we would develop our budget to meet the plan. We did not change our mission, vision or core values. Under NSEA’s Mis-

sion Statement, we continue to advocate for all education professionals, empowering them to provide an excellent public education for every student.

Wise Use of Dues

Since Delegate Assembly, the NSEA Board of Directors and NSEA staff has worked to add activities to the goals. NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell has led staff through hours reviewing the work they do for members and how that work fits into each goal. The board added input to revise and enhance the process. The staff and board eventually met and worked together to finalize the activities and to

add descriptions to each.

This year at Delegate Assembly the NSEA’s budget will be presented as goals based on the updated Strategic Plan. Under each goal will be activities, reflected as a cost item in the budget. NSEA Comptroller Sheri Jablonski has had the Herculean task of formulating the 2018-19 budget to reflect the Strategic Plan’s goals. This format reflects our strong respect for the wise use of your dues dollars.

Today, NSEA has a fresh and comprehensive Strategic Plan. It guides our work and advocacy each day. I hope you will join us at the 2018 Delegate Assembly to learn and grow on your journey to leadership.

GOALS

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

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

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

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

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

The Goals: NSEA’s newly revised Strategic Plan resulted in five goals. The goals support the overall mission of the Association, and future budgets will be based on these goals. To learn more about the Strategic Plan, go to the website at: bit.ly/NSEAPlan

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Grant Dollars Help Get Educators Past Praxis

NSEA Study, Resource Seminar a Crucial Aid

Elyssia Finch hopes someday to teach Spanish or theater – or, in a perfect world – both.

Regina Jeanpierre-Bryant is student teaching social studies at Omaha North High School, and would also like someday to teach ethnic studies.

Despite those diverse teaching goals, they have one thing in common: they must pass the Praxis Subject Assessment test to earn teacher certification from the Nebraska Department of Education.

They were among nearly two dozen Omaha-area students who took advantage of the first of a series of seminars on the Praxis tests hosted by NSEA across the state. The NSEA-sponsored seminars are funded by a \$115,000, two-year grant from the National Education Association's Great Public Schools Fund. NSEA is using the grant dollars to reimburse instructors and tutors for their Praxis Core Project work.

The need for the grant was sparked by declining enrollment in colleges of education, and a desire to encourage more ethnic minorities to enter the teaching profession. More than 30 percent of Nebraska's K-12 students are minority, while only about four percent of K-12 teachers are minority.

The seminars also assist those college students who have not yet taken the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators test, which is required for entrance into every college of education in Nebraska.

Finch said she was going to take the Praxis and gain certification yet this spring.

"We're taking the Praxis soon, so we hope to get some tips," she said. A Concordia University graduate, she has a bachelor of arts degree in Spanish and theater and a bachelor of science degree in education.

Jeanpierre-Bryant – the social studies teacher – will graduate in May from Grace University. She was looking for help with the mathematics side of the Praxis.

"I am thrilled that they offer these kinds of programs to help make teachers success-



Progress on Praxis: Elyssia Finch, left, and Regina Jeanpierre-Bryant were optimistic about their Praxis Subject Assessment test this spring. They attended an NSEA seminar in Omaha aimed at easing the path toward certification.

Praxis Study Dates Set for Three More Sites

NSEA has already hosted six Praxis seminars at five sites across the state. Planners hope yet to schedule events at Northeast Community College in Norfolk. Dates for high school students in the Omaha metro area are pending.

Hastings
Crete
Fremont

Hastings College
Doane University
Midland University

Monday, March 5, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Tuesday, March 6, 6-9 p.m.
Thursday, March 15, 6-9 p.m.

ful," she said. "It is very important to me to be a certified educator."

In addition to the three-hour seminars, participants who belong to the Student Education Association of Nebraska could request up to five hours of individual tutoring. The grant allows NSEA to cover the cost of educators to teach the seminars, and to provide the tutoring opportunities, among other expenses.

NSEA Organizational Specialists Matt Pittman and Carol Hicks were charged with organizing the seminars. Pittman said instructors Julie Lassley and Rebecca Bryan got the program off to a great start in

Omaha. With the exception of Wayne State College, Pittman was unaware of such study seminars elsewhere in Nebraska.

"What we're doing is important, and those who went through the first two sessions were grateful that we are doing this," he said.

Hicks said content review is important.

"Just as important are details on how to prepare for the Praxis, what to expect, and the resources needed to study and review for the test," she said.

Those interested in the seminars can register at:

nsea.org/praxis

Young Adults Spur Union Membership Growth

Overall Membership Grew in 2017

Union membership is surging, with young adults leading the growth. New data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that union membership grew by 262,000 in 2017, and that three-quarters of new members fell in the Under 35 age group.

The Economic Policy Institute reported that, historically, younger workers have been less likely to be a member of a union than were

their older co-workers. The EPI said several reasons likely led to the large increase in union membership among young people. Those reasons included increasing work insecurity, the rise in part-time work and unpaid internships, to the increased number of contract workers.

The EPI said "the freedom to join together in unions and negotiate with employers (collective bargaining) is widely recognized as a fundamental human right across the globe." In the U.S., the right is protected by the constitution, case law and most Americans.

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Ready to Lobby: Nearly 50 members of NSEA-Retired hit the halls of the State Capitol in February to talk to state senators about bills related to education. At a briefing ahead of their lobbying efforts, these six took a moment for a photo. From left are Cyndee Shellhaas, Grand Island; Ruby Davis, Omaha; Joe Shandera, Lincoln; Jan Rowe, Lincoln; Lynne Elwood, Omaha; and Maurie Shellhaas, Grand Island (see more photos of their work on page 22).

‘Enough is Enough’

NSEA, Members Decry Higher Ed Budget Cuts

Public higher education in Nebraska is at substantial risk with the governor’s budget proposal to further cut funding for the university system, community colleges and state colleges.

That was the message NSEA – and a stream of other higher education supporters – delivered to state senators during legislative committee hearings in February.

NSEA was at the Appropriations Committee hearing to oppose the cuts, which would mean a loss of more than 12 percent in state funding for state colleges and community colleges. The University of Nebraska system’s cut of \$34 million over two years would represent nearly 45 percent of all state budget cuts proposed by the governor.

“Now is the time for the leadership in the Legislature to say ‘enough is enough,’” NSEA’s Director of Research Larry Scherer told the Appropriations Committee.

“It is time to look for reasonable and temporary revenue enhancements to avoid deeper, irreparable damage to public higher education,”

he said. “NSEA will stand in support of a reasonable package of combined reduc-

tions, use of cash reserves and enhanced revenues. We will continue to oppose irresponsible, one-sided budget reductions that inflict damage on public higher education and Nebraska’s bright future.”

Dr. Will Aviles, a professor of political science and president of the University of Nebraska at Kearney Education Association, told senators the proposed cuts would further spike tuition at UNK, which has increased 40 percent over the past 10 years.

He said students who attend UNK are disproportionately first-generation students from middle and working-class families.

“They often choose UNK because of its combination of quality instruction and affordability. Past cuts have made this goal increasingly more difficult for UNK to achieve – and the currently proposed cuts to higher education will make it even less likely that tomorrow’s students will be able to afford and obtain a degree at UNK,” he said.

NSEA President Jenni Benson asked senators to consider the economic development side of the budget cuts, and take a Chamber of Commerce perspective. She said state college officials have indicated up to 80 jobs could be lost with these cuts, while UNK has said nearly 40 faculty positions could be lost.

“If a company with 100 or more jobs hinted at pulling up stakes and heading to another state, or shuttering factory doors altogether, would not everyone from the chamber to city and state officials pull out all stops in an effort to save those jobs?” she said.

“We ask you to do the same. Pull out all the stops. These jobs are about more than producing widgets – these jobs contribute directly to the economic stability and fu-

ture – the innovation, entrepreneurship and prosperity – of our Nebraska economy,” said Benson.

Evann Vrana, a UNL senior and representative of NSEA’s Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN), attended the hearing and submitted testimony opposing the budget cuts and expressing concern that future students will face higher tuition as well as fewer opportunities for the “phenomenal education and faculty” from which she has benefitted.

Senators were considering hundreds of bills, but with the legislative session nearing the halfway point by March 1, it was clear that few would find a way to passage. Among those NSEA is watching are these:

Elimination of State Board – Oppose

Benson spoke forcefully against a proposed constitutional amendment to eliminate the Nebraska State Board of Education. Sen. John Murante’s plan would also make the commissioner of education a political appointee of the governor. Benson said Nebraskans have a voice in public education through the election of eight state board members from across the state.

LR285CA “would erase the right of Nebraska’s citizens to have a direct link to education policy development by moving education policy directly into the hands of one person: the governor,” said Benson. “Nebraskans do not want less direct citizen-based control of education policy – yet that would be the effect of this proposal.”

Accountability Bureaucracy – Oppose

NSEA’s Jay Sears offered staunch opposition to LB1116 (Sen. Lou Ann Linehan), a bill to create an additional state bureau-



Nebraska Legislature

cracy for accountability and reporting of public schools, school districts and learning communities. He pointed out that the State Board of Education already fills that role.

“Nebraskans do not want, nor do they need, an unelected bureaucratic commission duplicating the work already being done by their elected Board of Education,” he said.

Tax Fairness, Part I – Support

NSEA supports Sen. Justin Wayne’s LB728, which favors tax fairness and raises significant revenue.

Benson said Nebraska Department of Revenue data shows the effective state income tax rate for taxpayers with Federal Adjusted Gross Income of over \$1 million is less than four-tenths of one percent.

“While the top bracket tax rate is 6.84 percent, the myriad of deductions and credits mean the actual effective rate is by far the lowest of all the lower income groups,” said Benson. For example, the effective tax rate of taxpayers with Federal AGI of between \$15,000 and \$20,000 is 1.94 percent – nearly four times the rate of those earning more than a \$1 million per year.

Tax Fairness, Part II – Support

Benson voiced support for LB1074, which would increase the state income tax rate for taxpayers above \$100,000, or \$200,000 joint, to 7.84 percent. The bill adds a surtax of 1 percent to incomes over \$1 million and 2 percent above \$2 million. The bill would help the state address the current \$180 million budget shortfall.

“We urge the Revenue Committee to be a part of the solution and move toward creation of a fair and sustainable tax structure that can provide adequate revenues for our schools and colleges, rather than looking solely to cuts in the state and local budgets,” she said.

A Well-Trained Workforce – Support

Sen. Burke Harr’s LB1108 would offer tax credits and a ½ cent sales tax for school foundation aid and invests in job training. Internships, child care and child care employees among other things. It would also increase state aid to K-12 schools by about \$71 million each year.

Early Childhood Education – Support

Sears told the Education Committee that quality early childhood education programs pay dividends that may reach \$13 for each \$1 invested. LB877 incentivizes school districts to provide quality early childhood education by increasing the state aid reimbursement from 60 percent to 100 percent.

“Early childhood students deserve to be supported and weighted for state aid just as much as are their older, full-time fellow students,” said Sears.

Dyslexia Resources – Support

Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks’ LB1052

Nebraskans Rally Behind Brieese’s LB1084 Tax Plan

Albion Sen. Tom Brieese’s LB1084 has emerged as a favorite among competing plans seeking to provide property tax relief. NSEA President Jenni Benson said that LB1084 represented the “only comprehensive, realistic legislation for reducing the state’s overreliance on property tax for the funding of our public schools.”

Among other items, LB1084 offers a menu of revenue options, as well as a plan to update the state’s state aid funding system within two years. Brieese has prioritized LB1084.

Other Nebraskans also see LB1084 as likely to emerge as a leader in the property tax relief discussion, and could be merged with LB947. These organizations, along with NSEA, have joined the Nebraskans for Property Tax Reform and Education in support of LB1084:

- Nebraska Farm Bureau
- Nebraska Grange
- Nebraska Council of School Admin.
- Nebraska Corn Growers Assn.
- Reform for Nebraska’s Future
- Nebraska Rural Community Schools
- Nebraska Farmers Union
- Women Involved in Farm Economics
- Nebraska Soybean Association
- Nebraska Pork Producers
- Nebraska Wheat Growers
- Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska
- Greater Nebraska Schools Assn.

would require students identified as dyslexic to be provided with an evidence-based approach for reading and writing instruction. NSEA worked with Pansing Brooks on development of the bill.

NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell told the Education Committee LB1052 had much input from classroom teachers. She also said NSEA supports mandating dyslexia training in teacher education programs. NSEA, she said, plans to build training on dyslexia into the Association’s state-wide professional development program.

“Every teacher will likely have a student with dyslexia in their career and teachers need to know how to help those students,” she said.

Suspension Resources – Support

Fennell also testified in support of Sen. Tony Vargas’ LB999, which seeks to minimize the effect of school suspension on a student’s academic needs by clearly stating that a student must have an opportunity to make up missed class work and homework.

“It is important that we have multiple avenues of response to student behaviors, and we must ensure that those consequences still allow a student a path towards academic success,” she said.

State Aid Study – Support

NSEA Director of Research Larry

Scherer called LB1001 ‘forward-thinking’ legislation. It provides for a study of school finance in Nebraska. The last such study took place in 1989, and culminated in the current state aid formula.

Sen. Tom Brieese’s LB1084 (see sidebar) also proposes a study of Nebraska’s system of providing state dollars to K-12 schools.

Financial Literacy – Oppose

Sears testified against LB1094, which would provide for financial literacy and entrepreneurship standards. Sears said it would largely duplicate work already in place through the Nebraska Department of Education’s Rule 10.

Overreach on Americanism – Oppose

Sears told the Education Committee that NSEA opposed LB1069 for two reasons. First, the bill requires a school district’s Americanism Committee to hold at least three meetings each year, one with public testimony. “At a time when government regulations for private enterprise are being cut, abandoned and discarded, it seems that mandating a minimum number of meetings for local school board committees is an extreme overreach,” he said.

Second, the bill required each student to take the 100-question U.S. Immigration test in eighth and 11th grades. “If we want students to become civically engaged and knowledgeable, schools must provide well-developed curriculum that engages students in learning and that does not hinge on a culminating test. Students will memorize the one hundred questions and answers, take the test and ignore the learning and engaging piece of instruction,” he said.

A mid-February vote in the Education Committee, however, failed to advance the bill. Only three of eight committee members favored the bill; five votes are required to advance. LB1069 sponsor Sen. Lydia Brasch prioritized the bill and said she would seek 25 votes to pull the bill out of committee.

Special Education Funding – Support

Benson, a 30-year special education teacher, said that with fewer available resources, special education teachers are expected to be experts in a much wider service area, increasing the difficulty of meeting the needs of all students.

LB876 would reimburse school districts for at least 80 percent of the excess costs of special education services, compared to the current state reimbursement 51-percent rate.

“Not only does it solidify funding for special education, it provides an untold amount of property tax relief,” she said.

Teaching Certificates – Support

Fennell told the Education Committee that NSEA supports LB1135, which allows a teacher with a valid teaching certificate from another state to begin teach-

ing in Nebraska. Fennell said NSEA also supports an amendment to require those teachers to eventually meet Nebraska certification standards.

'Empowerment Savings' – Oppose

NSEA opposed Kearney Sen. John Lowe's LB828, which requires that an amount equal to three percent of the state average per pupil cost be deposited into an account for qualifying students at low-performing schools, who are also on free or reduced lunch. Qualified expenses could be withdrawn from each account and used for tutoring and other school costs.

In a letter to the Education Committee, Benson said LB828 would pull needed funding from academic programs. "Diverting funding from a school for the needs of a select few students would have a significant impact on the school's overall ability to meet the needs of all students," wrote Benson.

Workplace Leave Benefits – Support

LB844, by Bellevue Sen. Sue Crawford, would adopt the Healthy and Safe Families Workplaces Act and would provide expanded leave opportunities for employees when they need time to care for ill family members, or are ill themselves.

Mental Health Aid, I – Support

Benson spoke eloquently in support of LB998 (Fremont Sen. Lynne Walz), which will put a mental health social worker in each of Nebraska's 19 educational Service Units. That worker would be a contact point for teachers and school officials in search of mental health services for students.

"As a special education teacher

Just Say 'No' to Property Tax Petition Proposal

NSEA is asking educators and all Nebraskans to consider the long-term consequences before signing a petition that claims it will lead to property tax relief.

While there is no argument that Nebraskans need property tax relief, the plan supported by petitioners is very similar to LB829, which has essentially died in committee due to lack of support.

Crafted around LB829, the petition drive calls for a refundable state income tax credit equal to 50 percent of property taxes paid to schools. While that sounds attractive, such a refund would require the state to come up with more than \$1 billion in cash for the refunds — one quarter of the entire state budget.

Meanwhile, the petition drive language offers no revenue sources to support those refunds.

If the petition drive is successful, the plan would be placed on the November ballot. If voters approve the ballot issue, the language would become permanently enshrined in the Nebraska constitution.

Thus, the state would be required to pay the \$1 billion in refunds before funding vital services like home health care for the elderly, schools, roads, bridges and other basic services.

NSEA's advice: don't sign the petition being circulated by a group called Reform for Nebraska's Future.

ers and may seek mental health help when suggested by a teacher or school counselor."

Mental Health Aid, III – Support

Sen. John Stinner's LB801 would create the Panhandle Beginnings Act and offer a pilot program to serve students in need of mental health services. Sears said the pilot would be a template for developing best practices for serving a wide region.

Student Journalists – Support

Morfeld's LB886 would declare college and public school-sponsored media are public forums, subject to usual First Amendment liberties and limits. It also provides protections for faculty and staff advisers.

The journalistic rights of students must be protected, wrote Benson, and "faculty must be allowed to teach journalism as a respected and protected profession that is crucial to an enlightened and informed citizenry, as well as a healthy democracy."

of more than 30 years, I know my students with the most difficult behaviors were often dealing with mental health issues or with problems outside of school," said Benson. "I was often searching for support from others who could help me find better resources for my students and their families."

Mental Health Aid, II – Support

Sen. Adam Morfeld's LB982 would allow persons age 18 and older to consent to mental health services. Currently, young adults under age 19 need parental consent.

In a letter to the Judiciary Committee, Benson wrote that "Many times, our teachers are the first to notice that a student in their classroom needs mental health services. Students trust their teach-



Stack of Support: Thomas Arnsperger, administrative aid to Sen. Lynne Walz, delivered copies of more than 125 emails and letters Walz received from Nebraska teachers in a little over four days in February. Accepting the letters is NSEA associate staff member for Government Relations Cathy Schapmann.

Members Deliver for Mental Health

The plea from NSEA was simple and straightforward. The response from members was superb.

Fremont Sen. Lynne Walz was in search of support and anecdotes from classroom teachers. She would testify on her LB998 proposal, which would create the Collaborative School Behavioral and Mental Health Program, putting a social worker in every Educational Service Unit in the state. That social worker would act as a conduit for local school districts to services with regional mental and behavioral health providers.

NSEA sent the word out to members on a Friday asking educators to tell their stories, to outline the need for such services. The deadline for submissions was the following Monday morning, as a hearing on LB998 was set that afternoon.

One teacher from a self-described small rural school wrote that "we have a number of students that I feel are potentially dangerous to themselves, fellow classmates and staff. I have witnessed volatile behavior in students as young as kindergarten. We do not have the resources to provide the much needed mental health services these students need."

Another educator who had been head-butted in the face on one occasion and bitten in the face on another, more recently stopped an out-of-control student from crawling out a classroom window.

"Unless you are an educator, I don't think people fully understand the true need for better behavioral and mental health services," she wrote.

NSEA also testified in favor of LB998. The bill remains in committee.

BURNOUT

Endemic in the Teaching Profession, There are Tactics to Overcome the Malady of Burnout

Nebraskans Seem Better Equipped to Hold on to Ideals, Values, Careers

By David Bell, PhD

Think of four career teachers in your district. Odds are one of them suffers from a horrible, debilitating, silent, yet treatable disease.

In Nebraska, 24 percent of career teachers contacted in a recent study displayed a form of burnout.

Burnout is no longer a tagline. It is a real malady with similarities to post traumatic stress disorder. Its victims suffer, and do so mostly in silence. Sufferers believe something is wrong with them as a person instead of the situation. Those who venture forward and talk about it are sometimes shunned by their colleagues or actually spread the burnout.

Burnout is endemic in the education profession and is the most powerful, telling symptom of those teachers wishing to quit the profession. But for every five teachers who want to quit, only one actually leaves. Those four remain in education for a number of reasons and their students, staffs, and families suffer along with them. Burnout has aspects of anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem. Since teachers are dedicated to their profession at their own exclusion, burnout is called “the high cost of high achievement” or “an erosion of engagement.” One researcher asked, “When does a groove become a rut?”

Emotional exhaustion (EE) is the most commonly reported burnout characteristic. Nebraska teachers are no different. More than half of the burned-out respondents in the Nebraska study were emotionally exhausted. EE results in feelings of overex-

tension, fatigue, overwork and constrained by time. This type of burnout is more prevalent in females and Type A personalities.

Depersonalization (DP) is the attempt to distance oneself from students. These DP sufferers see their demands as more manageable if students are viewed as objects instead of people. They have lost their idealism. More men seem to adopt this cynical attitude than women. Ten percent of the burned-out Nebraska teachers demonstrated DP.

Many times EE and DP are linked. However, only two victims

in the Nebraska study demonstrated both. So, although Nebraska teachers may feel fatigue, they seem better equipped than most to hold on to their ideals and values about students as persons instead of dehumanizing them.

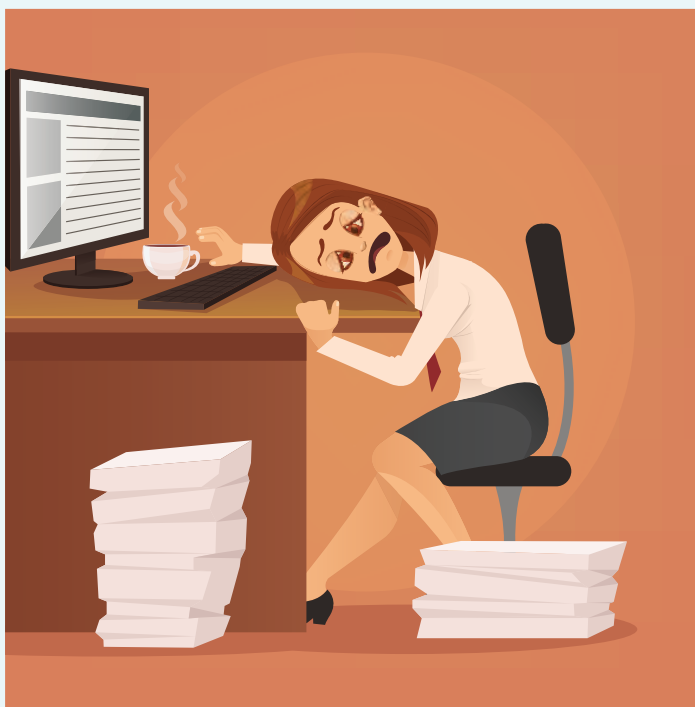
A third trait of burnout is reduced personal accomplishment (PA). Teachers with PA do not feel effective at their jobs. Symptoms include reduced productivity, low morale, withdrawal and an inability to cope. Twenty-two percent of those burned out teachers in the study had PA.

During a recent presentation of this study, two former school superintendents happily said they thought burnout would be more likely 50 percent of all career teachers instead of 24 percent (as if only a quarter of a staff suffering from burnout was a good thing). Sadly, they may be correct. New research suggests half of all career teachers

may exhibit burnout tendencies.

Individual, Organizational Factors

Burnout can be attributed to the interplay of individual and organizational factors. Every worker has a psychological contract, a long term relationship and trust with their profession. We all look for meaning through the work, autonomy, knowledge and outcomes of our careers. People need some sense of power, affili-



ation and achievement.

One individual burnout factor is emotionally taxing work. For educators, ideals are sometimes greater than accomplishments. Such educators may have trouble finding meaning in their work.

Teachers are also dedicated to their work at the exclusion of their own health, the same predisposition that leads a person into human service work. As one researcher noted, "You have to be on fire before you can burn out."

Many teachers may also feel trapped in their profession. They are limited by age, a professional mystique of fulfillment and gratification, and a lack of control. They become the victims of their own cognitive dissonance. We rationalize total years of teaching, tenure, major job title or duty, limited mobility in the system, salary, income independence, translatability of skills, and a specialized education to convince ourselves to remain in the profession. They have simply made too many investments to quit.

People also find meaning in teaching (autonomy, professional relationships, extra-curricular activities). Others note that family issues such as children, aging parents and finances keep them locked in the profession. Some stay because of the community culture and safety, comfort or location to spouse's work, or the school size. Some just consider their location to be their home.

The two most common and powerful organizational dysfunctions are role conflict and role ambiguity.

Role conflict prevents a person from accomplishing their task. In other words, time, rules and resources impede accomplishing the task. Role ambiguity does not provide a clear goal so teachers have no recognition or support.

Organizational factors cited for leaving the profession include lack of preparation time, too heavy a teaching load, class size, salary and benefits, behavior problems, and a lack of influence. No wonder one-fifth of teachers leave the field within the first five years and that teachers are three times more likely to quit than similarly trained professions.

Burnout is Situational

You may have questions about the difference between burnout and depression. This may be the silver lining behind the syndrome. Depression is all encompassing; it never leaves. Burnout is situational. Simply remove or change the situation and burnout is eliminated. In fact, removing the impediments recreates the same inspired, engaged, productive teacher that used to be.

Creative tactics have included changing assignments, changing schools, job sharing or team teaching.

Luckily, we have many examples of non-burned out teachers to examine. As we age, people learn to resolve and avoid conflict. They also generate organizational support or avoid bureaucratic constraints. Non-burned out teachers have a problem-solving attitude and find intellectual stimulation, although not necessarily in the work. They may develop a parallel career beyond the scope of teaching. One teacher told me about overcoming burnout through his passion for the white bass run at Lake McConaughy. Another talked about her missionary work. Others found it in community involvement. They all shrunk burnout down to a manageable blip in their day through other endeavors and interests.

Administrative policies have been largely ignored until now. This is where the most hope for finding the cure to burnout lies. Originally, research thought the individual and the organization had equal responsibility in causing burnout. More recent research indicates that is not the case.

To prevent burnout, administrative policies must provide a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward – not always money – a supportive community, fairness and justice, and meaningful, valued work.

Creative tactics have included changing assignments, changing schools, job sharing or team teaching. Early retirement and buyout options for eligible teachers are humane resolutions.

The new burnout research trend is focusing on treatment and elimination. Hopefully, there will be better news and treatment breakthroughs in the near future.

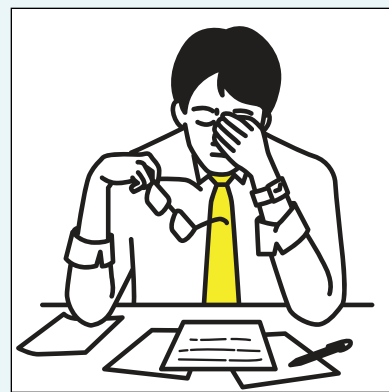
Until then, use this information to advocate for yourself and your colleagues. Elimination of burnout is a win-win-win for the individual, the school district and the student.

Dr. David Bell taught English, language arts, reading and career education for the Louisville Public Schools for 37



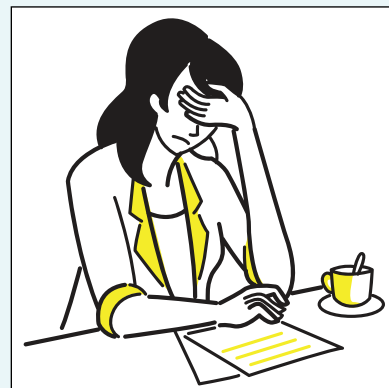
Bell

years. He also worked in curriculum development and helped lead the district's transition from a junior high to a middle school. His PhD is in the field of Human Resource Development. His research interests include career teachers and career development. The study mentioned is Bell's dissertation through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Why Do We Stay? Career Rural Teachers' Burnout Compared to Personal Motivational Sources and Demographics.



Burnout Behaviors

- Blame students (less empathy, view as adversaries).
- Physical withdrawal.
- Emotional withdrawal.
- Mental withdrawal.
- Physical symptoms (headache, fatigue, malaise).
- Absenteeism.
- Turnover.
- Subculture of antagonism to institutional goals.
- Lack of pride.
- Poor relations between teachers.
- Unfinished work.
- Procrastination.
- Poor quality of work.
- Low morale.
- Rustout (present but not engaged).
- Hopelessness.
- Lack of enthusiasm.
- Cynicism/disgust.
- Lack of support for school and policies.
- Resistance to change.





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A Twist from Tradition at Delegate Assembly

Professional Development Requested, to be Delivered to Delegates, Members

In a dramatic change from the past, NSEA members will be treated to an evening of professional development at the Association's annual meeting in April.

Answering the requests of members, nearly two dozen topics will be addressed over three rounds of breakout sessions during the Friday night opening of NSEA's 157th Delegate Assembly, set for April 27-28 in Lincoln.

During the opening session, members will choose from topics like Child Trauma and Toxic Stress; Social Media for Educators; Concussion Recognition and Management in the Classroom; and Degrees Not Debt: Teacher Loan Forgiveness.

Attendees will also hear a brief keynote address from Eric Brown, an Illinois biology teacher and one of nine teachers on the NEA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

NSEA's Delegate Assembly has been held once, and sometimes twice, every year since 1867 – with the exception of a cancelled event during the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 – and is the Association's annual business meeting.



Brown

Records are Uncertain

The business portion of the meeting this year will begin on Saturday morning, April 28. But first, delegates and non-delegates alike will have a chance for excellent professional development, said NSEA President Jenni Benson.

"Member evaluations from Delegate Assembly over the past few years have suggested and requested professional development opportunities," said Benson. "We take those evaluations seriously and think this programming will begin to satisfy member requests."

Records are uncertain, but it may be decades since professional development was on the agenda at the Association's annual meeting. In another twist from tradition, non-delegates are invited to attend the professional development sessions.

"Every educator thirsts for good professional development. If there are non-delegates who would like to attend, all they need to do is register for the professional development programming," said Benson.

Delegates are also encouraged to register their attendance at the professional development sessions. However, to be clear, registration for the professional development sessions will not serve as delegate registration for the Assembly. Duly elected delegates will receive separate instructions for registration as a delegate.

A Leader in Illinois

For his part, Brown was elected to a three-year term on the NEA Executive Committee in 2015. He has taught biology at Evanston Township High School for 16 years, is a teacher leader, former local association president, and former board member for the Illinois Education Association.

He has also represented educators on the Illinois State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy.

Saturday morning, delegates will discuss and debate changes to Bylaws, any proposed new Resolutions or New Business Items. Dues for 2018-19 will also be set by delegates on Saturday.

All Delegate Assembly sessions are scheduled for the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in downtown Lincoln.

To make your interest in serving as a delegate known, contact your local association president, your local association building representative, or your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

2018 Delegate Assembly Professional Development

Friday, April 27
Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

For the first time in memory, NSEA will offer professional development to educators at the Association's annual Delegate Assembly.

Any educator, whether a delegate or not, is invited to attend. The schedule includes three sessions of breakouts, plus a brief keynote by NEA Executive Committee member Eric Brown, a high school biology teacher from Evanston, IL.

To register, see the link at right. The tentative schedule includes breakouts listed below.

Registration Details

Registration for the professional development sessions does not count as registration as a delegate to Delegate Assembly. To register as a delegate, contact your local association leadership. To register for professional development, go to:

www.nsea/2018pd

Pre-Session 6-6:45 p.m.

- Child Trauma and Toxic Stress: What is it and How Does it Affect Students?
- Degrees Not Debt: Teacher Loan Forgiveness
- Higher Education Academy Organizing Session
- Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee
- Educational Support Personnel (ESP) Committee

Keynote 7 p.m.

Eric Brown, NEA Executive Committee member and a biology teacher from Evanston, IL.

General Breakouts, Round I 7:40 p.m.

- Organizing for Change
- Degrees Not Debt: Income Based Repayment
- Utilizing School Board Contact Teams
- Building Respect and Ending Bullying and Cruelty in Your School
- Health Care Considerations for those Nearing Retirement
- Dyslexia Technical Assistance Document: What You Need to Know
- How to Measure Child Trauma and What is the Prevalence in our Schools?
- Goaling the Distance: How to Stay Motivated
- Concussion Recognition and Management in the Classroom
- Social Justice Basics for Educators

General Breakouts, Round II 8:35 p.m.

- Engaging the Next Generation in the Union
- 2018 Legislative Session Recap
- Presidential Parlor: A Chat with NSEA President Jenni Benson
- EHA and the EHA Wellness Program
- Collective Bargaining Overview
- Social Media for Educators
- Welcoming LGBTQ Students and Colleagues
- All Aboard! The New NEA 360 Member Portal!
- Educators Rising: How We Build our Profession



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NSEA Joins Others to Urge Safety, Support for Student Voice in Discussion on School Violence

State Education Groups Note Dates for Remembrance, Learning

NSEA was one of three statewide education groups — joining the Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) — to unite in an effort to support students as they engage in an important discussion about school safety.

The groups issued this joint statement: Nebraska students joined with students from across the nation in intense and vocal reactions to the tragedy at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. Social media is awash with students discussing their thoughts and concerns about mass shootings, bullying, mental health resources and what can be done to prevent another such tragedy.

Students in Nebraska are talking and we want them to know that teachers, administrators, and school boards are listening.

We are saddened by the senseless acts of gun violence that are occurring in our country and in our schools. Schools should be the safest place for our students and staffs.

Supporting Students

We are fortunate to have strong public schools in our state that focus on supporting students. We acknowledge and applaud the students of Nebraska for speaking up on this issue, and we know that we have administrators and teachers who are listening so that students feel heard.

Our primary concern is student safety and the safety of our

teachers, support staff and all personnel tasked with the important job of educating our students while supporting the expression of concerns and participation in civil discourse. This is about teaching and learning — and as statewide education organizations, we want to support the efforts of our students and their teachers in this very important discussion.

While responses to what is happening on the national scene will likely look different in each of the districts across the state, rest assured the NSEA, NCSA and NASB are available to help each of our state's school districts.

We want our members to know that there is the potential for student-led activity in response to the Parkland tragedy and we encourage the adults in their lives, both at school and at home, to assist students by overseeing student safety during these events.

Resources Collected

NSEA has collected resources for parents, students and educators to use in the follow-up and discussion of such school violence. Those resources can be found at:

www.nsea.org/school_safety

The NSEA, NCSA and NASB provide essential support and guidance for teachers, administrators and school boards. As we move through the days ahead with heightened focus on safety and security we will continue to provide such guidance and support to our school districts. Our goal is to encourage students to engage in productive, safe and civil discourse on this very urgent and important issue. We hope that all of Nebraska will stand with us

as we help our young people address their very real concerns and fears.



Nebraska Council
of School Administrators



Fulbright Cycle Begins Again

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and IREX are pleased to announce the launch of the 2018 application cycle for the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms (Fulbright TGC) Program.

The Fulbright TGC program is a year-long professional development fellowship for United States elementary, middle, and high school teachers to become leaders in global education. Global education is

integral to building 21st century skills, and teachers are the greatest resource to empower students as global citizens.

Applicants must have been a teacher for five or more years and demonstrate a commitment to continue teaching or working in K-12 education following the program. Applications are due Tuesday, March 13. For details, go to:

irex.org/project/teachers-global-classrooms-program-tgc

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■ **Bed Bath & Beyond:** Find the largest selection of products for the home at everyday low prices. Top brands include Wamsutta, Cuisinart, Oneida, and Mikasa. Great for setting up a wedding registry, too!

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The Painless Secret for Getting Out of Debt

Debt Reduction Plan Gives You Control

This article first appeared in **NE-Achieve!**, the NEA Member Benefits monthly e-newsletter. Sign up here to receive helpful tips and information:

<https://secure.neamb.com/mynewsletters.htm>

In this uncertain economy, making a resolution to get out of debt—or at least to reduce it—is very smart.

You likely have several credit cards, a car payment and maybe a home equity loan you haven't used in a while. You want to get rid of your debt, but you feel overwhelmed.

Fortunately, personal finance experts have developed helpful strategies.

The first thing you need to do is to avoid taking on new debt as much as possible. Use a debit card for purchases instead of a credit card so you're spending only the money you actually have. Be careful to avoid the risks of a debit card, such as overdrafting your account or greater liability if you lose the card.

Next, itemize your existing debt. What is the balance, interest rate and minimum payment due on each account? Don't include the primary mortgage on your home in this list unless you hope to pay it off early.

Add up your minimum payments that must be made each month, then figure out how much more you have available to pay on debt. The core strategy in paying off debt is to focus on one account at a time and apply all the money you have beyond the minimum payment obligations to that one debt.

Logic—and math—dictate that you focus on paying off the debt with the highest interest rate first. The sooner you get that paid, the less interest you'll pay—and the more cash you'll have to pay other debts.

Pay off Debt in Chunks

Financial guru Dave Ramsey recommends making a concession to human nature. People aren't always rational, and sometimes their motivation wanes. Think about when you try to break a bad habit or lose weight. Positive reinforcement goes a long way in fostering success.

The same principle applies to getting yourself out of debt and on the path to financial freedom. That's why Ramsey recom-

mends the "snowball" method: Pick your smallest debt and pay that down first. On all other accounts, make only the minimum payment so you can apply all extra funds to that smallest debt.

Why? Because you'll be able to pay off that small debt more quickly than the others. Not only will you feel a sense of accomplishment, you'll be able to apply the minimum payment you were making on that debt, plus all the extra available funds, to your next smallest debt.

By the time you get to the third debt, you have the payments from the first two, plus your extra monthly amount, to apply.

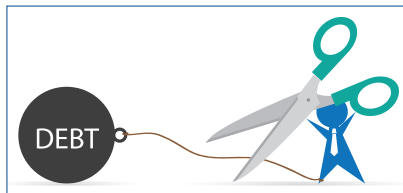
As your monthly payments grow larger, you'll whittle away debt faster—the way a snowball gets bigger as it rolls down a hill.

Ramsey says the positive reinforcement of seeing these debts disappear is worth

more than tackling a large higher-interest debt where your monthly payments don't feel like they're making a dent.

If you have two debts that are more or less equal, tackle the one with the higher interest rate first. But in general,

stick with the strategy of working your way from the smallest debt to the largest.



Increase Your Monthly Payments

One way to make that "snowball" grow even faster is to use the "snowflake" strategy. Sell things on eBay, have a yard sale, never pass an opportunity to earn extra money, limit Starbucks visits to once a week, etc.

Take this extra cash ("snowflakes") and apply it your top-priority debt. Make interim payments, if you can, to reduce principal as quickly as possible. An extra \$100 or \$200 a month can quickly make a difference.

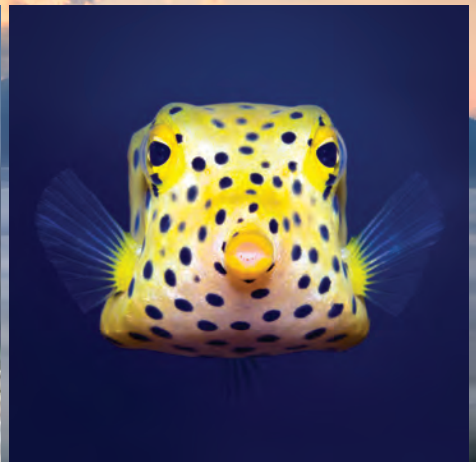
Financial advisers are split on whether it's prudent to boost debt payments by cutting back on retirement plan contributions. Some say you should never cut payments into your retirement plan because compounding tax-free is so advantageous. Others argue that accelerating debt payments to reduce high interest charges might justify suspending retirement payments for a while—no more than two years.

One compromise might be to consider cutting your contribution to the minimum level your employer matches so you'll continue to benefit from those matching funds.

Ultimately, you have to set your own priorities, depending how big your debts are and how long you have to save for retirement.

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**Executive Director
Maddie Fennell**

“

...if there is one
thing I've learned
as a teacher leader
it's this:
if you're not
at the table when
policy is being set,
then you're
on the menu!

”

I was recently reading a blog by Melissa Collins, a Top 50 Finalist for the 2018 Global Teacher Prize, titled *I Failed Many Times Along the Path to Teacher Leadership*.

Like Collins, I've experienced plenty of failure. I remember one particularly difficult time, lying awake, bargaining with and asking God to please show me the silver lining in the situation in my time frame and not His. He has the patience to build mountains while I think the microwave is too slow!

Teacher leadership isn't easy. There are folks who do NOT want teacher leaders; they feel threatened if your teaching voice isn't in harmony with their policy-making voice. They would prefer you stay in the classroom and teach, and leave decision making to others.

Well, if there's one thing I've learned as a teacher leader, it's this: if you're not at the table when policy is being set, then you're on the menu!

Lead, and Build Your Resume

We need teacher leadership in multiple areas: policy development, lobbying, instructional advocacy and in our own association. Preparing yourself for these positions can take many different routes but there are numerous teacher fellowships and experiences that you can utilize to build your skills and self-confidence.

Now some of you may look at these experiences and think “Wow that looks great but I'm sure there are so many people that apply I would never get it!” In many cases you'd be wrong. In fact, I have people from organizations calling and begging for applicants!

Make 2018 the year that you extend your learning – and your influence – outside of your classroom! Check out some of these amazing opportunities:

■ **Nebraska Teacher of the Year:** Each year the state of Nebraska chooses one Teacher of the Year and several Teaching Award of Excellence winners. The Teacher of the Year becomes an advocate for our profession while experiencing tremendous opportunities with colleagues around the country. Learn more at:

education.ne.gov/toy/

■ **NSEA's Leadership Institute** offers NSEA members three days of no-cost training in June to learn leadership skills, about our Association, and to connect with state leaders. For details, contact your NSEA organizational specialist or staff members Randy Gordon or Rich Wergin at:

randy.gordon@nsea.org

rich.wergin@nsea.org

■ **The NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship** offers educators 12 months of professional development. The NEA Foundation staff, partners, and field experts support Global Learning Fellows as they participate in online coursework, webinars, and peer

learning communities, including a two-day professional development workshop in Washington, D.C.:

neafoundation.org/for-educators/global-learning-fellowship/

■ **The Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship Program** offers a unique opportunity for accomplished K-12 educators in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to serve in the national education arena. Fellows spend 11 months working in federal agencies or in U.S. Congressional offices, applying their extensive knowledge and classroom experiences to national education program and/or education policy efforts. Learn more at:

science.energy.gov/wdts/einstein

■ **The Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program** provides opportunities for overseas experience. The program is geared towards those educators with little or no experience in the host country or countries who demonstrate the need to develop and enhance their curriculum through short-term study and travel abroad.

ed.gov/programs/iegpsap/sapfacts.html

■ **TNTP's Fishman Prize** honors amazing teachers with \$25,000 and a unique summer residency, exclusively for teachers in high-need schools. We need more public school teachers applying for this, so find more at:

tntp.org/fishman-prize

■ **The Teachers for Global Classrooms Program (TGC)** is a year-long, fully funded professional development opportunity for elementary, middle, and high school teachers to become leaders in global education.

irex.org/project/teachers-global-classrooms-program-tgc

■ **The Grosvenor Teacher Fellow (GTF) Program** is a professional development opportunity for Pre-K-12 educators made possible by a partnership between Lindblad Expeditions and the National Geographic Society. Educators are hosted aboard Lindblad Expeditions' voyages for a life-changing, field-based experience. A friend did this and had an amazing experience in the Galapagos Islands! Discover details at:

nationalgeographic.org/education/programs/grosvenor-teacher-fellows/about

■ **The U.S. Holocaust Museum** offers a Teacher Fellowship at their Museum in Washington, D.C. This five-day, all-expenses-paid institute is designed to immerse Fellows in advanced historical and pedagogical issues. Details are at:

ushmm.org/educators/professional-events-and-resources/museum-teacher-fellowship-program

These opportunities are outstanding – and other chances for leadership skill improvement can be found easily. For your benefit, for the benefit of your students, and the benefit of your Association, please lead!



Support for Education: Nearly 50 members of NSEA-Retired were in the rotunda of the Nebraska State Capitol on Feb. 13 to talk to state senators about important educational issues. At left, Dave and Colleen Richardson, Omaha, visit with Lincoln Sen. Sara Howard. At right, retired Omaha teachers Walta Sue Dodd and Carol Krejci visit with Omaha Sen. Tony Vargas.

Civic Engagement, Driving, Recycling on Tap

April Conference Agenda Loaded with New Topics

Another vibrant Spring Conference has been scheduled by NSEA-Retired, this one set for Thursday, April 26, at Mahoney State Park, just off Interstate 80 between Lincoln and Omaha.

The morning session will provide an opportunity to hear from Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld who will discuss his work with Civic Nebraska, a non-profit, non-partisan organization working to create a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans. Part of this effort involves a youth civic engagement program with after school programs spanning Lincoln and Omaha, working to cultivate student service learning.

The afternoon session will feature a viewing of "Seeds of Hope," a film by the I Love Nebraska Public Schools organization showing the challenges and successes of Nebraska educators working with immigrant and refugee children.

Also on the schedule are breakout sessions such as:

■ **Recycling: New Directions and Challenges**, with Karla Welding of the City of Lincoln Landfill.

■ **Martial Arts: Common Sense Self-Defense**, with retired teacher Mike Raasch.

■ **The Virtual Classroom: How Does Technology Connect the Student at Home with the School Classroom?**, featuring Linda Dickeson of the Lincoln Public Schools.

■ **Bridges to Better Living: Advice for Making Transitions as We Age**, with Bridges to Better Living founder Mary Ann Stallings.

■ **Driving Safety**, with Nebraska State Trooper Charlie Cook.

■ **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska** insurance information.

As usual, the day will conclude with desserts and prizes.

The conference will open at 8:30 a.m. and close by 3:30 p.m. Attendees without park permits will be provided with one-day park access.

The conference is free to all NSEA-Retired members, and will cost \$10 for non-members. For more details, contact Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or email her at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

To register for the conference by April 19, go to:

www.nsea.org/retired

Mentoring Volunteers Sought

Still needed at three sites: Volunteers for the NSEA-Retired program, Intergenerational Mentoring!

NSEA-Retired received a grant to take Intergenerational Mentoring to three sites in Nebraska on Saturday, April 7. The event will be held at the Lifelong Learning Center in Norfolk, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and at Hastings College. This is an opportunity for retired educators to work and form bonds with Student Education Association of Nebraska members as those college students prepare for teaching and through their beginning years of teaching.

An opportunity in the spring at Chadron State College may also provide a chance for retired members in that area to be involved. Please consider this role by registering at:

www.nsea.org/2018IGM

Registration deadline is March 10, but early registrations are helpful. For more, call Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

Looking for a Local Connection?

Many retired members are active in local associations of the NSEA and NEA Retired Associations. These locals stretch through retired associations, from the Scottsbluff area, to the Platte Valley Association in Grand Island and Hastings, to the Sandhills-Elkhorn Districts and also include the Lincoln, Omaha, Bellevue and Millard areas.

For more information, please contact NSEA-Retired President De Tonack at 402-525-4264 or at:

dtonack@neb.rr.com

A Bit of History and Perspective

"In 1867, Nebraska postsecondary education had only been available for one year, the Legislature had not yet enacted statewide school law, there were no provisions for compulsory education, and there were virtually no standards for teacher qualification."

Also "The 1924 Delegate Assembly, calling the property tax system unjust and discriminatory to both taxpayers and schools, passed a resolution calling for the state to provide not less than 50 percent of school revenues."

Those tidbits came from the NSEA History 1867-1997, by Dr. Craig R. Christiansen, a past NSEA president and former executive director.

— De Tonack
— President, NSEA-Retired

A Student in Need? Use the Children's Fund

NSEA Fund Aids Kids in Need of Assistance

The Children's Fund, NSEA's 24-year-old program that assists children in need, can be life changing for a child. The NSEA members who have used the fund can attest to the change the fund has delivered.

Last year, the fund received an unusual request, and the fund delivered for a child. This was the response from the teacher:

"Thank you so much for your donation of the payment for a visit to the ear, nose and throat specialist. Your help made it possible for a student to get hearing aids. Her smile said it all. Her educational experience will forever be changed. Her mother is so grateful! Thank you for all you do for children and their families."

Such testimonials are not uncommon, and explain how the Children's Fund can make a difference in a child's life.

Every NSEA member is aware of children who face such struggles. NSEA members see children who are under-dressed in cold weather; students who eat well only when school is in session; and students who can't see the front of the room clearly because they receive no regular vision care.

Teachers have frequently been known to spend their own hard-earned dollars to help these children. But a teacher can't assist every child encountered during the school day, much less during the school year. And that is why NSEA created the Children's Fund. Since 1994, donations to the Children's Fund have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to help children in need.

Contributions to the NSEA Children's Fund come from teachers and businesses across the state. Contributions are tax deductible — and it's important to note that every penny contributed goes to help children. NSEA picks up all the administrative expenses.

For teachers to receive funding to help a child, there is no red tape, no form to fill out. Simply contact the NSEA at 1-800-742-0047 and ask for Sally Bodtke. Or e-mail her at:

sally.bodtke@nsea.org



Teacher of the Year Process Under Way

2019 Honoree Will Become Leader in Teaching Profession

Are your teaching skills at their peak?
Do you seek excellence in every lesson?

Perhaps this is the point in your career to consider stepping to the fore as a recognized leader in the profession. That is the mantle of responsibility that rests on the shoulders of a Teacher of the Year.

Application forms for the 2019 Teacher of the Year are now available through your superintendent or principal, or by calling the coordinator at the number listed below. New this year, a nomination form is available for those individuals interested in nominating a teacher. The individual will complete and submit the form and the teacher will then receive the Teacher of the Year application to be completed and submitted. Candidates do not need to be nominated to complete the application.

Go to the 2019 Nebraska Teacher of the Year web page for the Application Form, Nomination Form, Program Flyer, and Program News Release:

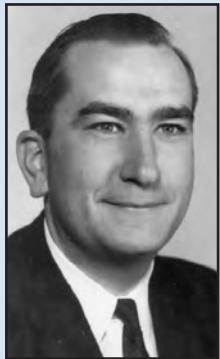
www.education.ne.gov/toy/2019-nebraska-teacher-of-the-year/

Applications must be submitted or postmarked by midnight (CST), Aug. 10, 2018. A selection panel will review applications, and up to five teachers will be selected for advancement. Finalists will be interviewed in September, and the 2019 Teacher of the Year will be selected from those finalists. An awards luncheon will be held in November.

Begun in 1972, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding Nebraska certified teachers who teach in a pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 classroom setting, and who plan to continue in an active teacher status in a state-approved or accredited school. Three letters of support and a YouTube classroom video presentation must accompany the application. The video need not be of professional quality, but it is vital that the Application Review Panel and the Interview Panel clearly see and hear the applicant, the students, and what is happening in the lesson. Questions on the application seek information on educational background and personal development; community involvement; philosophy of teaching and learning; and commentary on the teaching profession from the applicant.

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

lora.sypal@nebraska.gov



Elliott

Hanson 'Hans' Elliott

Retired Columbus educator and NSEA member Hanson "Hans" S. Elliott, 84, of Clarks died Jan. 29, 2018, in Aurora.

A Columbus native, he graduated from Doane College in 1955 and entered the military, spending 22 months in Germany and reaching the rank of sergeant. After the service, he returned to Columbus and began a 30-year teaching career.

He earned a master's degree in guidance from Wayne State College. He was president of the Columbus Education Association and secretary of NSEA's District II. On the state level, he served on NSEA's Welfare and Services Commission as well as on the nominating committee and as a delegate to four NEA Representative Assemblies. He was a three time Columbus library president and was a charter member of the Columbus

Library Foundation. He was an honorary life member of Nebraska Congress of Parents and Teachers, a life member of Platte County Historical Society. His wife, Irene Barnes, survives.

Have Your Contact Details Changed?

Have you moved? Have you changed your name by marriage?

If so, you can update your NSEA membership information online.

To do so, log on to the NSEA website and click on the 'Member Info' button on the left side of the screen. Then click on the 'For Members' link and look for the 'Member Update' icon in the center of the next screen, and follow directions. Keep your issue of *The Voice* near, as above your name on the mailing label is your 10-digit membership number, used to access your information. The NSEA website is at:

www.nsea.org

U.S. Census Offers Stats for Students

Statistics in Schools Aids in Grades K-12

The Statistics in Schools (SIS) program of the U.S. Census Bureau provides data, tools, and activities that educators can incorporate into their lessons to help teach statistics concepts and data analysis skills to students. The activities and resources are segmented by subject (geography, history and social studies, mathematics and statistics, and sociology) and grade (from kindergarten through high school) so statistics education can be brought to any classroom.

Here are the Top 10 reasons the SIS program is good for the classroom:

- The online resources are free! Educators can access, at no charge, more than 100 downloadable activities and resources. The activities are searchable by grade, school subject, topic and education standard.

- U.S. Census Bureau experts contributed to the program. Census Bureau statistical experts were involved in the creation of the program activities, making SIS uniquely qualified to support statistics education.

- SIS promotes cross-curricular education, using an array of Census Bureau data to provide activities and resources for courses in geography, history and social studies, mathematics and statistics, and sociology.

- SIS offers a number of resources and tools, including: maps, news articles, videos, infographics and data visualizations.

- SIS activities were developed by teachers. Educators and subject matter experts from across the country created and reviewed the activities for usefulness.

- SIS activities can supplement curriculum, and are designed to support, not replace, existing lesson plans.

- SIS helps teach skills students need to thrive in a data-driven world. Bureau of Labor Statistics research shows that the number of jobs related to statistics is expected to increase by more than 30 percent by 2024.

Finally, SIS reaches students by using technology tools to teach statistics, can be easily modified and matches activities with relevant education standards and guidelines.

To learn more, go to:

census.gov/schools/resources

Speaking of Education

"Wisdom is one treasure that no thief can touch."

— Japanese Proverb

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

Balanced Behavior

By Pam Carroll, a third-grade teacher in North Carolina:

"I use a balance scale, along with the small blocks that come with our math kit, to reinforce positive group behavior. When students receive a compliment from another teacher, or when I see them following directions, I give them a positive block on the left side of the balance scale. When students misbehave as a group, I drop a negative block on the right side of the balance scale. When the positive side touches the table, we have a Positive Party."

"Recently my students voted to have a Teddy Bear party. I was surprised that the boys voted for this type of party, but it was a hit! To make sure this party was not a distraction to the curriculum, I had the students read to their Teddy Bear during reading, make flash cards for their bear during math, and write a letter to their bear during writing."

"When the negative side hits the tabletop, we just empty the bucket and start again. It does not take the students long to see that when they misbehave, it takes longer to make the bucket drop the positive side all the way down to the tabletop."

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



Ready to Roll: Navigating the halls of the State Capitol is no easy task, but these three members of NSEA-Retired were up to it during the NSEA-Retired annual Lobby Day in February. More than 40 retired members talked to state senators about key education issues. From left are Mary Kay Gibson, Bellevue; Pat Etherton, Lincoln, and Mary Spurgeon, Bellevue.