

THE

VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ November 2015



EXTENDED FORECAST

*The Future Supply of Teachers
in Nebraska is Threatened.*

- **EHA Sets 2016-17 Rates**
- **An Open Letter to Teachers**

Upcoming Assignments

Contract Bargaining Begins Nov. 1, Statewide

■ **What:** Per a schedule set by the Legislature, school districts and local associations begin bargaining for the 2017-18 year on Nov. 1.

■ **Details:** Your local president or chief negotiator has details, or contact your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

SEAN's Outreach to Teach Nov. 13-14, Omaha

■ **What:** Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Matt Blomstedt will keynote on Nov. 13 as the Student Education Association of Nebraska hits 60. Saturday, 100 teachers-in-training will spruce up Ralston's Mockingbird Elementary.

■ **Details:** To register, go to: www.nsea.org/SEAN

American Education Week Nov. 16-20

■ **What:** American Education Week honors teaching & learning. Celebrate in your classroom!

■ **Details:** Each day celebrates a different aspect of education. Learn more and find resources at:

www.nea.org/grants/19823

Nebraska Legislature Jan. 6

■ **What:** We are 60 days from a 60-day session sure to be filled with education-related bills. To sign up for NSEA's Legislative updates, go to:

nsea.org/nsea-text-messaging

Celebrate Public Education!

American Education Week is Nov. 16-20

American Education Week — Nov. 16-20, 2015 — presents all Americans with a great opportunity to celebrate public education and to honor individuals who make a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.

The National Education Association was a founder and sponsoring organization of American Education Week. With NEA's assistance, you can observe the week of celebration in your school and classroom.

The NEA website provides members a wide variety of promotional items to boost visibility and participation in American Education Week. A sample Parents Day letter, a letter to the media, sample radio public service announcements and sample newsletter announcements — and more — are available on the website at:

www.nea.org/grants/47604.htm

NSEA President Nancy Fulton urged members to consider taking time to observe the importance of education in the American democracy.

"The NEA has long been instrumental in

the recognition, through American Education Week, of the importance of education to our free and democratic society," she said. "Education has never been more important, and we dare not forget that link between public education and democracy."

The seeds for American Education Week were planted shortly after World War I. Distressed that 25 percent of the country's

World War I draftees were illiterate and 9 percent were physically unfit, representatives of the NEA and the American Legion met to seek ways to generate public support for education.

The conventions of both groups adopted resolutions for a national effort to raise awareness of the importance of education. In 1921, the NEA Representative Assembly in Des Moines called for designation of one week each year to fete education.

The first observance of American Education Week occurred in 1921, with the NEA and

American Legion as the sponsors. A year later, the U.S. Office of Education joined as a sponsor, and the PTA followed in 1938.



Each Day a Celebration!

American Education Week gives Americans the chance to celebrate public education and honor individuals who make a difference in the life of a child. This year's theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." That theme will be reflected in observances each day of the celebration:

- Monday, Nov. 16: Kickoff Day
- Tuesday, Nov. 17: Parents Day
- Wednesday, Nov. 18: Education Support Professionals Day
- Thursday, Nov. 19: Educator for a Day
- Friday, Nov. 20: Substitute Educators Day

Cover Story:

Lincoln Northstar High School teacher Tony LeGrand began teaching in August after a very short job hunt. LeGrand's expertise is in high demand — he's a science teacher — as shortages hit multiple teaching disciplines. For more details, turn to

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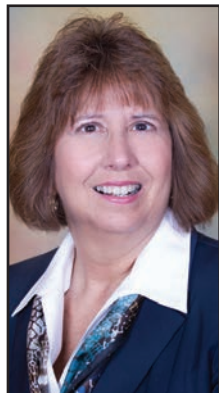
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Turn Back the Crazyies



**NSEA President
Nancy Fulton**

“
There are
indeed some
wacky ideas
proposed, even
on our nation’s
grandest stage.
”

In his famous book, *The Lorax*, Dr. Seuss wrote “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot. Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

With those words, one of my favorite children’s authors encourages us to give voice to those things about which we care deeply. The future of public school education is one of those things.

This past month, my thoughts turned back to the remarks made by NEA Executive Committee member Earl Wiman at Delegate Assembly this past April. Wiman repeatedly applauded delegates for their caring work on behalf of members, the Association and public education.

In his lovely Tennessee drawl, Wiman’s message was essentially this: it is up to educators to defend against the never-ending flow of “stupid and crazy” education reform ideas.

“Our work,” Wiman said, “has become about standing up to the stupid and the crazy and their so-called reforms and their beliefs.”

Among the “stupid and crazy” reforms cited by Wiman were corporate schools; linking student test scores to teacher evaluations; and elimination of payroll dues deductions.

“The stupid and crazy would silence the voice of those of us who work in schools, the voice of all of us engaged in public education,” said Wiman.

Such interests seek to silence educators for one reason: they seek access to the \$635 billion spent on public education in this country every year. “Public education is the last pot of taxpayer money that has not been privatized,” he said.

‘Whatever it Takes’

Think about what that pot of money includes, said Wiman: the dollars that go into your bank account and retirement plan.

If your voice – and your Association’s voice – is silenced, it is easier to access and control those dollars.

“They see your pension and they see your salary as a burden,” he said. “They are going to do whatever it takes and spend as much of their money as they can in order to make sure that you have no voice whatsoever in your working conditions and in the students’ learning conditions.”

It goes without saying that these interests seek to throttle your ability to bargain for your salary and benefits. Lower employee costs means lower tax burden for the interests that push “stupid and crazy.”

The End of the Teacher Lounge?

There are indeed some wacky ideas proposed, even on our nation’s grandest stage. One presiden-

tial candidate has gone so far as to say public school teachers should be paid minimum wage. Another has said he would ban teacher’s lounges.

Reforms and silly ideas are part of the web of constant assaults on our profession. Such attacks take a meaningful toll. For instance, fewer young people are interested in teaching as a career (see page 8). Consider these recent attacks on public education:

■ The so-called Arizona Freedom Alliance last month approved a resolution opposing all K-12 bond and override issues in that state, alleging that Arizona school districts are “intentionally lying to voters regarding revenues and expenditures.” Even though that state ranks 48th in per capita spending on education, this group condemns all school funding efforts, rather than judging each bond on its own merits.

■ In Jefferson County, CO, the school board’s majority has strong ties to the anti-public education Koch brothers and Americans for Prosperity. They have forced an agenda that would eliminate the local education association, alter curriculum, and institute voucher programs – give public tax dollars to private institutions. The rancor in that district is tangible.

■ Starting this school year, in the name of “school choice,” any parent in Nevada can transfer his or her child to a charter, parochial or home school, and the state’s tax dollars will follow. Not only does that diminish public school revenues, it puts public tax dollars directly into the hands of profiteers.

■ Backed by Americans for Prosperity, the Kansas legislature has eliminated due process rights for teachers. Kansas teachers can now be summarily fired, with no hearing rights or process.

‘Mythical’ Failure

Today’s teachers work harder than ever, do more good work than ever. Yet the mythical “failure” of public education has been created and perpetuated by these political and economic interests.

We know better. Public schools are not failing. Sure, there is much work to do. But public schools remain the *best* option for *all* students.

“We’ve got to make sure that the very schoolhouse that the crazy and stupid want to replace, tear down, or privatize, remains – so that all students can be educated,” said Wiman.

Here’s what you can do: tell the story of the great work in your classroom. Tell friends, tell neighbors and acquaintances.

As Martin Luther King said, “Our lives cease to matter the day that we become silent about the things that matter the most.”

We know the facts: public schools matter.

Finding Nebraska’s Great Public Schools (GPS)

NSEA locals from around the state appear or are mentioned in this issue. Look for:

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Math, Reading Scores Improve

Flawed Federal Law Has 675 Schools on Notice

Blomstedt: Schools Made Progress, Yet Were Unfairly Labeled by NCLB

A report released last month showed that more Nebraska public school students from racial and ethnic groups, as well as students from low-income families are, overall, meeting or exceeding state reading and mathematics standards.

Highlights of the 2015 State of the Schools Report include performance for groups of students, as well as federal accountability decisions under No Child Left Behind. The Nebraska Department of Education released the report on Oct. 16.

“While we still have work to do to improve the performance of all students and to close the achievement gap that persists among groups of students, it is important today to recognize and acknowledge, first, the accomplishments of our students as well as their teachers and administrators who work hard to improve the performance of every student every day,” said Commissioner of Education Matt Blomstedt.

In reading, trend data show a 16 percent increase in the number of English Language Learners meeting state reading standards when compared to 2011 results; a 14 percent improvement for Hispanic students; an 8 percent improvement for special education student performance; a 13 percent improvement for black/African American students; and, an 11 percent increase in the performance of students from low-income families.

In 2014-15, 8 of every 10 students were proficient in reading and nearly three of every 4 students met or exceeded state math standards.

Considering that student performance has improved, parents and others are likely questioning how 675 of 932 Nebraska public schools that administered state tests have been named low performing under No Child Left Behind, the federal accountability law. The answer is: The federal accountability system is flawed. The state Department of Education does not agree with the federal policy, said Blomstedt.

“The federal expectation of 100 percent of our students scoring proficient in reading and mathematics is unrealistic,” he said. “I do not believe that all of our schools are low performing. Common sense tells us that one child in one grade in one subject area scoring just below a ‘proficiency cut score’ should not brand an entire school as failing.



Blomstedt

“As a result of this faulty logic, a number of Nebraska schools have been unfairly labeled as ‘Not Met’ or ‘In Need of Improvement,’” Blomstedt said.

With a designation of ‘in need of improvement,’ NCLB requires districts to set aside funds, offer school choice or tutoring, or to restructure. Congress was scheduled to reauthorize NCLB.

An in-depth look at those 675 Nebraska school buildings named in need of improvement showed that 119 were considered low-performing even though 90 percent or more of their students were proficient in reading. And, 75 were low-performing in math despite 90 percent or more of students scoring proficient.

In early December, the Nebraska Department of Education will issue its first report based on the state’s new accountability system, Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow or AQuESTT. This system is different from past accountability systems in that it focuses on supporting and rewarding continuous school improvement for every child, school and educator.

The State of the Schools Report can be found at:

www.education.ne.gov

By the Numbers

Math and reading proficiency rates, by student groups from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

| READING | 10-11 | 14-15 |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|
| All students..... | 72%..... | 80% |
| Hispanic..... | 54%..... | 68% |
| Am. Indian/..... | 43%..... | 53% |
| Alaska Native | | |
| Asian..... | 73%..... | 77% |
| Black/..... | 47%..... | 60% |
| African American | | |
| Native Hawaiian/..... | 64%..... | 72% |
| Other Pacific Islander | | |
| White..... | 79%..... | 85% |
| Two/More Races..... | 69%..... | 78% |
| Free/Reduced Lunch..... | 58%..... | 69% |
| Special Ed Students..... | 42%..... | 50% |
| Eng. Language Learners.... | 43%..... | 59% |

MATHEMATICS

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------|-----|
| All students..... | 63%..... | 72% |
| Hispanic..... | 44%..... | 58% |
| American Indian/..... | 32%..... | 43% |
| Alaska Native | | |
| Asian..... | 71%..... | 74% |
| Black/..... | 30%..... | 44% |
| African American | | |
| Native Hawaiian/..... | 53%..... | 61% |
| Other Pacific Islander | | |
| White..... | 71%..... | 79% |
| Two/More Races..... | 57%..... | 68% |
| Free/Reduced Lunch..... | 48%..... | 59% |
| Special Ed Students..... | 35%..... | 42% |
| Eng. Language Learners.... | 37%..... | 49% |

Nebraska Loves Public Schools Offers New Film

Children in Poverty Focus of Film by Koch Johns

The latest story in a film series from Nebraska Loves Public Schools features Cierra Austin, a talented high school musician with dreams of being an orchestra teacher.

Austin is one of several students featured in *Poverty: Not a Choice*, now available.

Amid the national student debt crisis, the dream to attend college – especially for first-generation students – is becoming more difficult to achieve. With scholarships, proficient financial literacy and opportunities through a connected network, there are ways to make that dream more

approachable for students from families with resources.

However, for students in poverty, those opportunities are harder to access.

In the *Diminishing Dream* segment, Austin shares how she’s navigated the road and setbacks to higher education.

“I have learned that the spirit of resilience and strength is in all of us,” the Southeast Community College freshman said.

Austin is working toward attending a four-year university and in *Diminishing Dream* she shares the struggles she has met in taking the next step for her future.

The film is directed by NSEA member and 2006 Nebraska Teacher of the Year,

Patsy Koch Johns. It is inspired by the stories of real Nebraska students, with each segment exploring day-to-day realities faced by public school kids who are living in poverty.

From food and housing insecurity to opportunity gaps in school and extracurricular activities, the *Poverty: Not a Choice* series is a deep and honest collection of monologues and slam poetry pieces, all written and performed by real Nebraska students.

You can watch the series and all other films on the Nebraska Loves Public Schools website or YouTube channel. The site is at:

<http://nelovesps.org/>

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An Open Letter to Teachers

Those in the Education Family Must 'Stop Being Punching Bags'

Do teachers understand that there is a war going on in education and they are the targets of this war and their students are the innocent victims?

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was enacted in 1965. Its goal was to eliminate the gap in educational achievement between white and children of color. Its latest re-authorization was called No Child Left Behind. For 50 years there has been virtually no change in that gap in educational achievement – between white and children of color or between poor and affluent children. A half century of failure.

Teachers have been blamed for this failure. That blame has included severe punishment since No Child Left Behind. The reasons for the continuation of this blame game are rather easy to account for:

- Politicians on the right want to weaken the teacher voting block and the power of their unions.
- Politicians on the left are supporting civil rights groups that want to blame teachers and administrators for their own failure to reduce poverty among their members.
- Corporations want a share of the \$1 trillion that funds education in this country.

This is an unlikely but massively powerful coalition of so called reformers, and illustrates why this blame game and its utter failure have been allowed to continue for a half century and why for a half century so many of our children have been simply sacrificed to political and financial objectives.

All during this last half century of failure, teachers and administrators have been the ones held responsible for closing this gap in achievement by our governments. This is in spite of masses of research that has clearly documented the bulk of the cause of this gap in achievement being due to Out-Of-School-Factors that teachers and principals have no control over. It is important to understand that adverse Out-Of-School-Factors impact high poverty students much more than their affluent counterparts. This research has been supplemented recently with medical research that shows significant brain damage to children due to the stresses of living in poverty. The research is clear, yet we continue to “hold accountable” teachers for fixing things outside of their control.

The most puzzling part of this is the complicity of the education community with the reformers – the very people that want to subjugate them. Do teachers understand the preponderance of the evidence is on their side? We are not talking about raising your average NeSA test scores by 5 points. You are being held responsible for producing average NeSA test scores for children

living in poverty that are comparable to the highest affluent students. That would mean a 40 or more point increase for your high poverty students. If you understand the research you know this can't be done without intervention at the high poverty child's home and intervention that starts before that child is even delivered. Clearly that intervention is outside of what teachers are trained for or have time to accomplish.

A research paper published on July 20 in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Pediatrics entitled *Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement*, by Nicole L. Hair, PhD, and others, showed clearly the brain damage and the resulting lack of educational achievement of many children living in poverty. In an accompanying editorial by Dr. Joan Luby, a psychiatrist at Washington University School of Medicine, we hear:

“...we have a rare roadmap to preserving and supporting our society's most important legacy, the developing brain. This unassailable body of evidence taken as a whole is now actionable for public policy ... early childhood interventions to support a nurturing environment for these children must now become our top public health priority for the good of all.”

Notice that this is suggested as a *public health* priority, not a *teacher* priority.

Robert Bligh, a retired attorney who has worked in education in Nebraska his entire career, has said: “The academically failing children do not need better schools. They need better childhoods.” Research has proved the incredible insight of that statement.

It is time for educators to stand up for themselves and for the children they serve and to stop being punching bags for the reformers. The same is required of each organization that supports them, including the NSEA in Nebraska. In addition, the faculty of our colleges and universities that train our teachers and administrators have even more responsibility to teach and to publish facts about the body of research supporting out-of-school-factors as the primary cause of failure to close the achievement gap, and to defend our outstanding teachers and administrators in Nebraska.

Once the problem is properly defined, solutions are not too difficult to find.

This item first appeared in the Grand Island Independent. For more by Bert Peterson, go to: theindependent.com



Bert Peterson

Bert Peterson...

...grew up in high poverty schools. Because of very fortunate circumstances, he was able to get a college education. He is a retired actuary by trade and a teacher by training.

He graduated from an Illinois high school in 1958. He says he had an aptitude for math and science and was a fair wrestler; the wrestling earned him an athletic scholarship to UNL and the math and science kept him there. His degree path at Teachers College (today it's called the College of Education and Human Sciences) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was in secondary education and included strong majors in

math and physics. During his final years at UNL, he worked as an officer for the Lincoln Police Department. Because of required court time in his final semester, it was impossible to commit to student teaching, and he was not certified to teach.

Peterson and his wife had a new baby when he graduated. Rather than teach, he chose to follow a more lucrative actuarial career, with most of it spent in the southeastern U.S. as a consulting actuary with a large firm. After retirement they returned to Nebraska.

Peterson claims no relationship with any organization, political, educational or otherwise. He writes as a very concerned grandfather who is grateful for the public education he received, his children received and now his grandchildren are receiving in Nebraska and in Georgia.



Fortunate One: First-year teacher and Lincoln Education Association Member Tony DeGrand found himself in a fortunate position earlier this year: armed with a master of arts degree and ready to teach science.

Shrinking Numbers Forecast

Dwindling Numbers in Teacher Ed Programs has Some Concerned

There is one pipeline that all Nebraskans agree needs to flow freely across the state: the pipeline supplying new teachers into our classrooms.

Unfortunately, the once-steady stream of potential educators into teacher training programs has dwindled considerably. The reduced flow has those who hire teachers wary. Of particular concern are those hard-to-fill disciplines such as science, math, agriculture education and family and consumer sciences, among others.

The trend line for candidates admitted to teacher education programs in Nebraska has plummeted 53 percent since 2003-04, and has fallen 56 percent since hitting a high water mark in 2007-08 (see chart on page 9).

“We are putting fewer people into the pipeline. It’s only a matter of time before it affects the number of people we are putting into the classroom,” said Sharon Katt, an administrator with the Nebraska Department of Education.

Adding to the strain on the teacher-to-classroom pipeline is an 8.2 percent growth in student population. Nebraska K-12 schools added more than 23,200 students between 2003 and 2013 – the

equivalent of 1,289 classrooms, at 18 students per room.

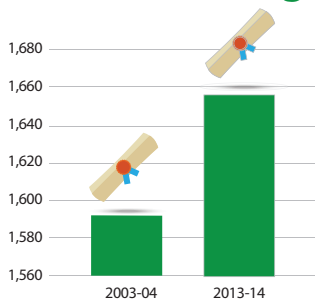
The student population in the Lincoln Public Schools alone has grown by 4,000 in the past five years, a more than 10 percent rate of growth over that time.

Even considering replacement of retiring teachers, Nebraska teacher ed programs have kept pace with that demand up to now. The state’s K-12 schools added about 1,900 certificated teaching positions from 2003-04 to 2013-14, according to the NDE. That’s a 7.7 percent growth rate.

That indicates that higher ed institutions may be doing a better job of keeping those who are serious about the profession enrolled and through to program completion, said Katt.

“But we don’t know if that trend will continue,” she said.

Graduates Recommended for Teaching Certificates



'03-'04: 1,592

'13-'14: 1,656

+64



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

'Eyes Light Up'

Tony DeGrand is a first-year science teacher who moved into the profession at an opportune moment. He knew there was a shortage in his area of interest, and his years as a television meteorologist had piqued his interest in teaching. During a television career that began

in northern Wisconsin, his home state, he did scores of talks with schoolchildren.

“Their eyes would light up and they had thousands of questions,” he said. “They all seemed to be interested in the weather, and I was interested in sharing what I knew.

“I always thought that if I were to take the next career step, I would go into teaching,” he said.

DeGrand moved to Lincoln in 2011 to work for KOLN-KGIN television, and at the same time began working toward a teaching career. He embarked on an accelerated program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that resulted in a master’s degree and teaching certificate. He was aware that his status as a science teacher was an asset.

“Me being a meteorologist – I had that interest in science. I just needed the tools to teach it,” he said.

With a certificate that allows him to teach any of the sciences, and a math minor to boot, he applied only to the Lincoln Public Schools. He was offered a job in May, finished classes at UNL in July, and received his master’s degree in August. He began teaching that same month – in the Lincoln Northstar High School classroom where he did his student teaching.

His two biology classes and three geoscience courses reach more than 140 students. His geoscience classes include 30 students each.

Knowledge Not Enough

It may be more difficult to keep up with K-12 student population growth in the future, as the prospect of a career in a more lucrative profession lures many of the best and brightest students away from the rewards of the teaching profession.

Yet even after those who earn teaching certificates, are prospects to be pulled from the teaching profession.

Nationally, estimates are that about 50 percent of teachers depart the profession in the first five years. The NDE reports Nebraska’s teacher retention over the past 15 years at a much higher rate, about 70 percent of first-year teachers are still in the classroom after those critical first five. Even so, every teacher knows of a former colleague who has been plucked out of the classroom by the offer of a job with better pay and/or less stress.

Factors that dampen enthusiasm for a

career in teaching include low or stagnant pay; lack of respect; continued efforts to strip educators of bargaining rights; and continual teacher bashing by demagogues, profiteers and political partisans.

“Young people are not seeing the good things about teaching as a career,” said Katt.

Katt’s NDE colleague, Karen Buller, agreed, and said teaching is a tough career.

“The content is the easy piece in teaching,” said Buller. “It’s all the other pieces that make it challenging.”

DeGrand, the meteorologist-turned-teacher, had much of the content before he sought to teach. Knowledge alone is not enough, he said.

“Without those tools I learned, there is no way I would survive the classroom. There is no way I would be as effective a teacher as I am,” he said.

Dr. Carolyn Winchester is a former science teacher and is now superintendent for the Chadron Public Schools. Unfavorable views of public education in the media

and public officials who fail to support public schools make teaching a tough sell, she said.

“If I’m a young person, they’d kind of scare me off,” she said.

In many cases, even those in the profession can’t bring themselves to recommend teaching as a career.

“If teachers share their enthusiasm for teaching as a great career, perhaps our youth will be more likely to consider the teaching profession,” said Katt.

NSEA President Nancy Fulton encourages educators to sell the profession.

“True, teaching is a tough job,” said Fulton. “But few professions rival teaching for satisfaction, for rewards of the heart.”

Far Worse Shape

NSEA’s Jay Sears works closely with the Nebraska Department of Education and the State Board of Education.

“Nebraska schools may graduate 20 science teachers, but how many of those actually take a teaching job in Nebraska?” said Sears.

Indeed, the pipelines in other states are in far worse shape – and those states are not shy about recruiting Nebraska grads.

The California Teachers Association estimates 100,000 educator retirements in that state in the next five years. Meanwhile, according to EdSource, enrollment in California teacher education programs fell 74 percent from 2002 to 2013.

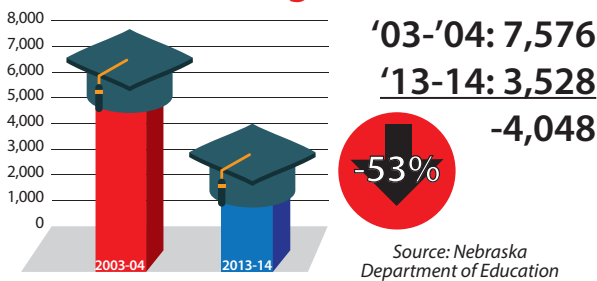
Nebraska Shortage Areas Defined

Each October, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) conducts a Teacher Vacancy Survey to determine shortage areas. The survey is shared with the U.S. Department of Education.

Shortage areas are then set by the USDE for the following academic year. These areas, below, were collected in 2014, and are designated as shortage areas for Nebraska Department of Education purposes in 2015-16, and for the U.S. Department of Education in 2016-17.

- Agriculture Education
- Art
- Bilingual
- Business, Marketing or Information Technology (BMIT)
- Early Childhood Education
- English as Second Language/ English Language Learners
- Family & Consumer Science
- Health and/or Physical Education
- Industrial Tech/Skilled and Technical Science
- Language Arts (English, Journalism, Language Arts, Reading & Writing, Speech/Theatre)
- Mathematics
- Middle Grades
- Music: Instrumental/Vocal
- School Counselor
- School Library
- School Psychologist
- Science (Biology, Chemistry, Earth & Space Science, Physics)
- Special Education — all areas
- Speech-Language Pathology
- World Language

Education Candidates Enrolled at Nebraska Colleges, Universities



three educators applied.

“We were fortunate to get two quality people,” she said.

But the hiring process, she said, is not only about qualifications. A “good fit” is important.

“In order to find the best fit, it’s good to have a large group to draw from,” she said.

Surplus in Some Areas

Fifteen years ago, Nebraska’s 17 accredited teacher education programs admitted 7,258 students. In 2013-14, the latest year for which Nebraska Department of Education numbers are available, that number had fallen to 3,528 candidates.

Fortunately, the number students who complete teacher education programs and are recommended for a teaching certificate has remained virtually unchanged. In 2003-04, there were 1,592 students recommended for certificates. In 2013-14, that number was 1,656, an uptick of 64, or about 4 percent.

And, of course, not all graduates will teach in shortage areas.

“We still have people coming into programs with a surplus,” said Sears. “We need people in math, science and the career education areas.”

Katt concurred.

“We produce a lot of elementary education teachers, like we do nationally – more than are able to be employed,” she said.

If Nebraska teacher preparation programs produce an adequate number of teachers, but they are not appropriately endorsed for available positions, there is still a shortage.

“Institutions make efforts to counsel teacher education candidates to consider completing endorsement programs in shortage/high demand areas,” said Katt. “But it is difficult to convince someone who sees themselves as an elementary education teacher to see themselves teaching high school math. If they do make that switch and are unhappy with the choice, and leave the profession, what have you gained?”

There are also geographic implications, said Katt. Supplying teachers in more the more sparsely populated areas of Nebraska, for instance, is more difficult than attracting applicants in the metro Omaha area.

“It is far more complex to attract a math or even an elementary education teacher to remote areas,” said Katt.

Winchester said the shortage is a topic in general among superintendents and is not limited to rural Nebraska.

Geography does play a role in the issue, she said, but admits she is fortunate to work across the street from Chadron State College.

“This is a very professional, education-minded community, very supportive, with a lot of opportunity for our kids,” she said. “It’s a real blessing to be a part of the education world in Chadron.”

That said, there may soon be a shortage in certified early childhood educators, said Sears. A push is under way for more early childhood programs in Nebraska, which is expected to create a shortage in that area.

Grow-Your-Own Effort

Kevin Johnson is a former Omaha Benson High math teacher, and is in his second year as human resources administrator for the Omaha Public Schools.

Johnson said OPS hired about 400 new teachers each of the past two years, and encountered shortage areas consistent with the NDE list. He said the dwindling number of students entering teacher education programs has been a discussion topic for metro area human resources directors.

“We’re trying to address it through our recruiting efforts and grow-your-own programs,” said Johnson.

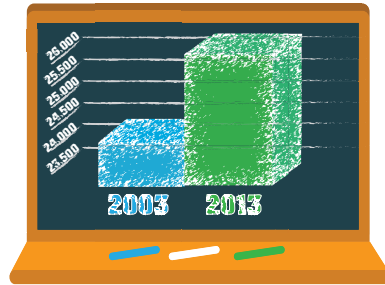
OPS has had success with a strong paraprofessional-to-educator program, and is also in conversations with Educators Rising, formerly Future Teachers of America.

“We’re looking at our own student population and how we foster those students who might be interested in teaching, and getting them to come back and teach where they went to school,” he said.

Keeping the teacher pipeline flowing is of such importance that the NSEA Board of Directors has approved a \$5,000 sponsorship of Educators Rising for each of the past two years.

“Board members believe this is a worthy investment in our future, and I agree,” said NSEA’s Fulton.

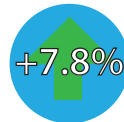
Number of Instructors, Nebraska K-12 Public Schools



2003: 24,567

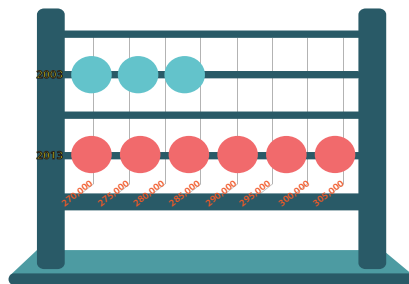
2013: 26,478

+1,911



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

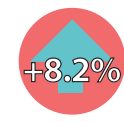
Enrollment in Nebraska K-12 Public Schools



2003: 284,169

2013: 307,398

+23,229



Source: NEA Rankings & Estimates

Maintain Integrity

What will Nebraska do to stem the decline in teacher ed program applicants?

Katt said educators must “continue to be in the struggle.”

That includes, she said, making changes to the certification process to give the Department of Education more flexibility to consider applicants from other states. That might include applicants who have completed alternative certification programs elsewhere.

Katt said such flexibility puts teachers into classrooms who have not necessarily “lock-stepped into achieving teaching certifications.”

“We have to be appropriately responsive, but must maintain respect and integrity for the process of preparing quality educators.

“We do not lower the standards to work with kids.”

‘This is Why...’

Winchester said it is vital to let students know of the great opportunities provided by a career in teaching. It is also important to tout the excellent work of public school teachers.

“We can’t get that word out enough about how good we are,” she said. “Teaching is the absolute best profession in the world.”

Johnson, the former math teacher, agrees that teaching is a hard profession.

“It is incredibly rewarding, but it is a calling, and I wonder how many feel that calling,” he said. “You’ve got to want to make a difference, and have a love for the content.”

Teachers, and those in the education family, Johnson said, should not be afraid to sell the profession.

“We all go into this because we love kids and the idea of public education. That should be a pretty easy sell, the rewards of education.”

DeGrand, with three months under his belt, understands. He is happy, he said, even when overwhelmed.

“It’s very rewarding, even on days when I’m frustrated. The little victories, the little ‘ah-ha’ moments – this is why I did it. This is why I became a teacher.”

EHA Sets '16-'17 Rates

NSEA-Led Board Renews BCBS Plan; Makes Minor Adjustments

Premium rates for the health insurance plan used by nearly every Nebraska school district will rise by just 4.9 percent next year, following action by the Educators Health Alliance, a consortium of three statewide public school education groups, including NSEA, that manages the plan.

When the 2016-17 plan year opens Sept. 1, 2016, it will mark the 14th consecutive rate increase of less than 10 percent, said NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn, chair of the EHA Board of Directors. In six of the past seven years, the rate adjustment has been less than 5 percent.

The EHA rates are favorable when compared to projected increases of 12 to 31 percent for individual health care policies in Nebraska in 2016, as reported by the Omaha World-Herald in September.

The rates set by EHA are for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) health care plan used by more than 400 public school district and affiliate groups in the state. The plan is governed by the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and NSEA. More than 80,000 Nebraskans are covered by the plan, including NSEA members, early retirees and their dependents. The EHA health care plan is the largest in the state.

The 4.9 percent increase is for all plan options. Rate increases in the previous five years were 1.91 percent; 2.30 percent; 6.40 percent; 2.99 percent; and zero percent.

Dental plan rates will not change, with the exception of rates in Dental Option 2, which will increase by 4.9 percent.

The 2016-17 plan includes modest raises to deductibles, drug copays and out-of-pocket limits to keep up with medical costs, said Clayburn. Current deductibles have been in place since 2013, and current brand name drug copays have been in place since 2009. Generic drug copays have been in effect since 2005, and will not change for most members. Clayburn said the board was pleased with the rate in the face of ever-growing costs.

"Our board's strong management of the plan, and judicious use of health care benefits by plan members, have worked to keep plan costs stable," said Clayburn. "All involved have worked hard to help our plan avoid the huge spikes in premium costs that other plans have experienced."

Growing use of an EHA wellness program has also been instrumental in keeping costs reined in, said Clayburn.

The statewide plan was formed 45 years ago. A 12-member board representing NSEA, the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators governs the plan. As the founding organization, NSEA maintains 6 votes on the board.

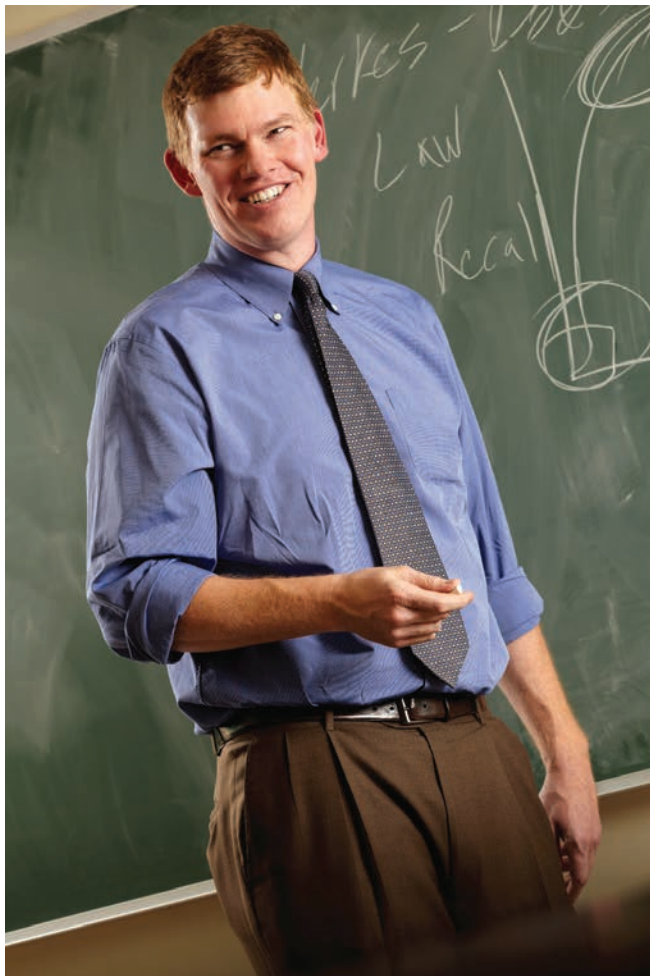
For details about the EHA rates and plan, go to the website at:

www.ehaplan.org

EHA Rate Increases

A history of rates for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan, managed by the EHA Board of Directors, shows rate increases have been well below the national average:

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| 2006-07:..... | 8.84% |
| 2007-08:..... | 7.80% |
| 2008-09:..... | 4.80% |
| 2009-10:..... | 7.70% |
| 2010-11:..... | 4.56% |
| 2011-12:..... | 0.00% |
| 2012-13:..... | 2.99% |
| 2013-14:..... | 6.40% |
| 2014-15:..... | 2.30% |
| 2015-16:..... | 1.90% |
| 2016-17..... | 4.90% |



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NSEA Teacher Salary Update

Nebraska Salaries Inch Upward; Numbers Aid Policymakers, Negotiators

Nebraska teachers continue to make modest – very modest – gains in the national salary rankings.

The average salary for a Nebraska teacher in 2013-14 was \$49,539, which moved the Cornhusker state up one spot in the national rankings to 32nd. Those numbers come from the annual NEA Rankings and Estimates report, and are the latest figures available.

Nebraska's \$542 average increase in salary in 2013-14 – a 1.1 percent increase – came as researchers saw wild swings in average salaries in adjacent states. Those swings ranged from increases of more than \$1,000 in South Dakota and Iowa to cuts in average salaries in Wyoming, Colorado and Missouri.

Nebraska's 1.1 percent increase lagged behind the Consumer Price Index for the Midwest Region, which reported inflation at 1.4 percent for calendar year 2013 and 1.5 percent for 2015.

The \$542 average increase meant a raise of a little more than \$10 per week for Nebraska teachers. But that was better than the averages in Wyoming, Colorado and Missouri, where salaries fell from 2012-13 to 2013-14. In Wyoming, the average fell \$192; in Colorado the average dropped \$229; and in Missouri, the average dropped a whopping \$767.

Those figures don't mean less effective bargaining went on in those states in the past few years; they are likely caused by a growing number of retirements in the Baby Boomer ranks. When experienced teachers high on the salary schedule retire and are replaced by brand new or less-experienced teachers, the average across the state will fall.

Nebraska's \$542 gain did eclipse the U.S. average during 2013-14. The U.S. average of \$56,610 was \$507 more than the previous year, according to NEA research. The U.S. average still remains a solid \$7,071 ahead of Nebraska.

Kansas Gains Ground

Nebraska's average salary has bypassed those in Kansas and Missouri in recent years. Missouri teachers lost one step in the rankings, but Kansas reversed a slide of several years and rebounded from 42nd to 38th.

NSEA President Nancy Fulton credited local association negotiators, and the support they get from NSEA field staff and the Association's Advocacy team, for pushing the state's salaries in the right direction.

"Negotiating a contract is always challenging and intensive, but is also rewarding," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "Those who engage in and lead the process deserve a pat on the back from their fellow members."

Contract talks – these for the 2016-17 school year – begin on Nov. 1.

Dual Purpose

Details and figures on the charts on these two pages comes from NSEA's Advocacy and Research Departments, and are for the current school year.

The charts serve two purposes: they provide factual, current information to NSEA members and negotiators; and they allow negotiators and individuals to make fact-based decisions as they begin negotiations in November under the bargaining schedule outlined in LB397.

The numbers are also useful to members searching for new employment, although those in the job search mode would be wise to ask questions about health care and other benefits provided by each school district's negotiated agreement.

These numbers also provide benchmarks, and allow negotiators, in particular, to set goals based on competitive — and not just comparable or average — measurements. Questions? Reach NSEA's Larry Scherer or Al Koontz at:

larry.scherer@nsea.org
al.koontz@nsea.org



| U.S. AVERAGE | | \$56,610 |
|--------------|--------------|----------|
| 16 | WYOMING | \$56,583 |
| 25 | IOWA | \$52,032 |
| 31 | COLORADO | \$49,615 |
| 32 | NEBRASKA | \$49,539 |
| 38 | KANSAS | \$48,221 |
| 42 | MISSOURI | \$46,750 |
| 51 | SOUTH DAKOTA | \$40,023 |



NEA Rankings & Estimates, March 2015

| TOP 25 | | |
|---|----------|--|
| LINCOLN | \$41,731 | |
| OMAHA | \$38,849 | |
| WALTHILL | \$37,605 | |
| WINNEBAGO | \$37,058 | |
| MILLARD | \$36,795 | |
| ESU 02 – FREMONT | \$36,409 | |
| HOMER | \$36,400 | |
| UMO ^N HO ^N NATION | \$36,350 | |
| WESTSIDE | \$36,000 | |
| ELKHORN VALLEY | \$35,910 | |
| BLAIR | \$35,883 | |
| BENNINGTON | \$35,802 | |
| HARVARD | \$35,748 | |
| ESU 06 – MILFORD | \$35,655 | |
| ESU 05 – BEATRICE | \$35,649 | |
| ASHLAND-GREENWOOD | \$35,559 | |
| BATTLE CREEK | \$35,532 | |
| HOWELLS – DODGE | \$35,500 | |
| ELKHORN | \$35,467 | |
| COLUMBUS | \$35,440 | |
| RAYMOND CENTRAL | \$35,375 | |
| NORTH BEND CENTRAL | \$35,370 | |
| HEARTLAND | \$35,333 | |
| ARLINGTON | \$35,325 | |
| ESU 10 – KEARNEY | \$35,301 | |

| TOP 25 | | |
|-----------------------|----------|--|
| LINCOLN | \$76,639 | |
| PAPILLION – LAVISTA | \$65,100 | |
| TEKAMAH – HERMAN | \$65,062 | |
| ESU 13 – SCOTTSBLUFF | \$64,856 | |
| ESU 11 – HOLDREGE | \$63,994 | |
| HOWELLS – DODGE | \$62,480 | |
| BAYARD | \$61,750 | |
| ESU 10 – KEARNEY | \$61,250 | |
| OMAHA NATION (MACY) | \$61,068 | |
| MALCOLM | \$60,632 | |
| FREMONT | \$60,520 | |
| WISNER-PILGER | \$60,495 | |
| MILLARD | \$60,425 | |
| RALSTON | \$60,210 | |
| SYRACUSE-DUNBAR-AVOCA | \$60,113 | |
| NORTH BEND CENTRAL | \$59,933 | |
| LAKEVIEW | \$59,730 | |
| WEST POINT | \$59,730 | |
| LOGAN VIEW | \$59,722 | |
| LYONS – DECATUR | \$59,616 | |
| HEMINGFORD | \$59,549 | |
| SHELBY | \$59,428 | |
| WINNEBAGO | \$59,293 | |
| BANNER COUNTY | \$59,187 | |
| COLUMBUS | \$59,185 | |

| TOP 25 | | |
|------------------------|----------|--|
| LINCOLN | \$81,076 | |
| SYRACUSE-DUNBAR-AVOCA | \$75,570 | |
| FREMONT | \$75,402 | |
| PAPILLION – LAVISTA | \$74,375 | |
| ESU 09 – HASTINGS | \$74,124 | |
| NORTH PLATTE | \$73,745 | |
| COLUMBUS | \$73,372 | |
| ESU 11 – HOLDREGE | \$73,136 | |
| ESU 06 – MILFORD | \$73,093 | |
| ESU 04 – AUBURN | \$72,761 | |
| NORFOLK | \$72,686 | |
| ESU 15 – TRENTON | \$72,207 | |
| MILLARD | \$71,018 | |
| NORRIS | \$70,873 | |
| ESU 13 – SCOTTSBLUFF | \$70,682 | |
| GERING | \$70,550 | |
| LEXINGTON | \$70,452 | |
| BELLEVUE | \$70,384 | |
| RALSTON | \$70,245 | |
| ELKHORN | \$69,949 | |
| SCOTTSBLUFF | \$69,930 | |
| SPRINGFIELD PLATTEVIEW | \$69,907 | |
| HOMER | \$69,888 | |
| SOUTH SIOUX CITY | \$69,797 | |
| ESU 16 – OCALLALA | \$69,630 | |

STARTING SALARIES



| BOTTOM 25 | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| AMHERST | \$31,900 | |
| MORRILL | \$31,900 | |
| PAXTON | \$31,900 | |
| SARGENT | \$31,800 | |
| CRAWFORD | \$31,788 | |
| CALLAWAY | \$31,750 | |
| ANSLEY | \$31,700 | |
| MAYWOOD | \$31,700 | |
| O'NEILL | \$31,700 | |
| LOUP COUNTY | \$31,675 | |
| ELBA | \$31,668 | |
| MULLEN | \$31,600 | |
| ST. EDWARD | \$31,600 | |
| HYANNIS | \$31,500 | |
| ESU 07 – COLUMBUS | \$31,410 | |
| SHELTON | \$31,250 | |
| CODY – KILGORE | \$31,200 | |
| SANDHILLS-DUNNING | \$31,116 | |
| ARCADIA | \$31,054 | |
| EWING | \$31,050 | |
| MINATARE | \$30,700 | |
| ARNOLD | \$30,650 | |
| ESU 17 – AINSWORTH | \$30,180 | |
| SUTHERLAND | \$30,100 | |
| ALLIANCE | \$30,050 | |
| WHEELER CENTRAL | \$30,050 | |

MASTER'S DEGREE – MAX



| BOTTOM 25 | | |
|----------------|----------|--|
| WAUSA | \$52,080 | |
| SIOUX COUNTY | \$52,026 | |
| PLEASANTON | \$51,840 | |
| RIVERSIDE | \$51,840 | |
| CENTRAL VALLEY | \$51,680 | |
| AMHERST | \$51,678 | |
| LYNCH | \$51,528 | |
| LITCHFIELD | \$51,520 | |
| KEYA PAHA | \$51,519 | |
| SUTHERLAND | \$51,471 | |
| OVERTON | \$51,320 | |
| LOUP COUNTY | \$51,314 | |
| NIORARA | \$51,246 | |
| HAYES CENTER | \$51,113 | |
| ARCADIA | \$50,928 | |
| MULLEN | \$50,560 | |
| RED CLOUD | \$50,466 | |
| PAXTON | \$50,402 | |
| HARVARD | \$50,312 | |
| EWING | \$50,068 | |
| ST. EDWARD | \$49,928 | |
| ELBA | \$49,402 | |
| MINATARE | \$49,120 | |
| CODY – KILGORE | \$48,672 | |
| ALLIANCE | \$48,230 | |

SALARY SCHEDULE – MAX



| BOTTOM 25 | | |
|-------------------------|----------|--|
| CRAWFORD | \$56,106 | |
| STUART | \$56,100 | |
| WAUSA | \$55,986 | |
| LOUP COUNTY | \$55,748 | |
| ELGIN | \$55,738 | |
| WAUNETA – PALISADE | \$55,706 | |
| SUMNER-EDDYVILLE-MILLER | \$55,642 | |
| RED CLOUD | \$55,642 | |
| GILTNER | \$55,608 | |
| McPHERSON COUNTY | \$55,533 | |
| KENESAW | \$55,440 | |
| STERLING | \$55,440 | |
| EWING | \$55,191 | |
| NIORARA | \$55,188 | |
| WYNOT | \$55,020 | |
| WEST BOYD | \$55,006 | |
| ARTHUR COUNTY | \$54,936 | |
| WHEELER CENTRAL | \$54,391 | |
| CODY – KILGORE | \$54,288 | |
| LYNCH | \$54,240 | |
| ELBA | \$53,836 | |
| SANDHILLS – DUNNING | \$53,831 | |
| ARCADIA | \$53,723 | |
| ST. EDWARD | \$52,614 | |
| MINATARE | \$51,883 | |

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- > December 8

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Formal Document: NSEA-Retired Past President Joe Higgins displays the proclamation signed by the governor declaring Oct. 27, 2015, as NSEA-Retired Day. At the signing were, from left, NSEA organizational specialist and staff liaison Duane Obermier; Tom Black, West Point; NSEA organizational specialist and former staff liaison Maureen Nickels; Higgins, Omaha; Arlene Rea and Lorene Behrends, Lincoln; Guy Roggenkamp, Grand Island; Pat Etherton, Lincoln; Jan Barnason, Hastings; and De Tonack, Lincoln.

Celebrating 30 Years!

NSEA-Retired Celebrates Three Decades

An ancient adage says that “good things take time and effort.”

More than 30 years ago, a handful of retired NSEA members put forth the effort to create the NSEA-Retired affiliate. Now, with the passage of time, the organization has blossomed to 5,855 members and celebrated 30 years of growth and success.

The anniversary was celebrated once at NSEA-Retired’s Fall Conference late in the month, and once at the State Capitol, where Gov. Pete Ricketts signed a proclamation declaring Tuesday, Oct. 27, as “NSEA-Retired Day.” Joe Higgins, a past president of both NSEA and NSEA-Retired president, spoke at the signing ceremony.

“We take pride in our life title, ‘educator,’ and remain committed to advancing educational achievement for all Nebraska children,” said Higgins. He said NSEA-Retired members continue to support improved salaries and working conditions for the tens of thousands of active public school employees in Nebraska.

Current NSEA-Retired President Roger Rea, Omaha, was unable to attend, but said NSEA-Retired has the advantage of a large pool of talented and experienced members who are available to meet with policymakers during business hours.

“Retired members have experience in dealing with legislators, and

often have former students among the decision-makers in the legislature,” he said. “NSEA-Retired is the ‘daytime face’ of NSEA, since retired members can meet with policymakers during the day, while active teachers are busy in their classrooms.”

NSEA President Nancy Fulton commended the organization for their continued and effective service.

“There is no doubt that if the Association has a cause or has a need, our retired members will answer the call,” she said.

Rea said the NSEA-Retired’s founders created a culture of cooperation between the retired and active members that strengthened the total NSEA organization and completed the field of membership.

“It is still true that organizations with the largest membership have the greatest political power,” said Rea.

Higgins thanked longtime member Tom Black, West Point, for years of service, and Lorene Behrends, Lincoln, for her support – most importantly through the donation of many handmade quilts raffled to benefit the NSEA Children’s Fund.

An Early Timeline for NSEA-Retired

1983: National Education Association forms NEA-Retired.

1984-85: Former NSEA President Val Pullen, McCook, serves on the National Education Association-Retired Advisory Council.

1985: A steering council meets three times to organize a retired affiliate for NSEA. The June meeting results in a draft of objectives and Bylaws.

September 1985: The NSEA Board of Directors approves Bylaws and grants affiliation of the NSEA-Retired organization. Nebraska becomes one of the first states to create a statewide retired group. Within weeks, membership has grown to 88, including five lifetime members.

October 1985: NSEA-R Organizing Committee meets to set the organization’s first annual meeting for the Spring of 1986.

March 21-22, 1986: NSEA-Retired’s first annual meeting is held at the Villager Motor Inn and Convention Center, Lincoln. Officers elected include Val Pullen, McCook, president; Helen Krause, Lincoln, vice president; Eleanor Fuhrman, Norfolk, secretary; George Wildrick, Omaha, treasurer.

Elected to the NSEA-R Board of Directors are Helen Weber, Lincoln, Capitol District; Marcella Hildebrand, Fremont, Metro District; Lottie Faith, Creighton, Elkhorn District; Rolland Essman, Scotia, Sandhills District; Helen Boysen, Grand Island, Tri Valley District; and Laura Nelson, Potter, Panhandle District.



Working on Your Behalf!

Bargaining Season is Now Under Way; Thank Your Negotiators

Nebraska state statute now dictates that the bargaining of contracts between your local association and your school district must begin no later than Nov. 1 for the following school year.

So while you are just a few short months into your 2015-16 contract, your Association colleagues who volunteer to serve on your negotiations team have been busy preparing for negotiations that will result in a contract for the 2016-17 school year.

Many locals sent representatives to meet with NSEA staff over the past few months to learn more about the NSEA-owned Navigator software, which produces sophisticated salary comparisons between like-sized regional school districts. That detailed information gives negotiators a clear view of each school district's total compensation compared to peer districts. That information is a keen asset when it comes to the nitty gritty details of contract negotiations. NSEA members have a clear advantage in that respect.

The negotiators shown here, and others, took much of their own personal time over the past year to learn how to use NSEA's Navigator software, to brush up on bargaining table skills, and to keep abreast of the latest developments in bargaining skills and news.

The bottom line: NSEA — and your local negotiating team — works for you!



All Smiles: The Harvard Education Association's team had plenty to smile about during comp study training. From left are Brooke Steinhauer, Lynn DeVries, Jami Long and Jodi Bahr.



Hard at Work: The team from the Lexington Education Association, above, working to get all salary comparison numbers correct, included Kristie Shay, left, and Jeannie Homan.



A Moment's Break: NSEA Organizational Specialist Kristen Sedlacek, standing, pauses with Grand Island Northwest Education Association's Ashley Dvorak and Kelly Olesen, foreground; and Doniphan-Trumbull Education Association's Virginia Rainforth and Tammy Halloran, background.



Columbus Discovers! Members of the Columbus Education Association are intent as they review comp study figures. From left are Katie Robertson, Joni Ebel and Jason Schapmann.



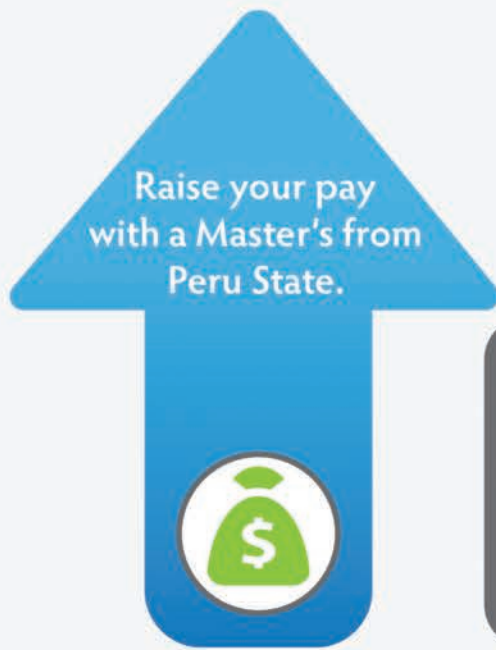
Pointed Facts: Now-retired NSEA staffer Kathy Hutchinson, center, works with Shylynne Morris and Bobbi Keene of the Conestoga Education Association.



Minden Represented: Taking a lesson in salary comparison studies were Dawn Gokie, left, and Julie Ratka, of the Minden Education Association.



Tri County Trio: Three members of the Tri County Education Association dive into figures while reviewing their association's salary numbers. From left are Bryce Simpson, Jennifer Borer and Cindy Nord-Reedy.



*Average salary for an educator in Nebraska before and after earning an MSED.



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The NEA Cash Rewards MasterCard allows you to shop and earn cash back on every dollar you spend on purchases. Earn 1 percent back on every day purchases; 2 percent back on groceries; and three percent back on gasoline purchases.

The card has no annual fee, the cash rewards do not expire and redeeming those rewards is easy and fast. In addition, new enrollees will earn a \$100 cash rewards bonus by making purchases of \$500 or more in the first 90 days.

The NEA Accelerated Rewards American Express Card gives 1.25 reward points for each single dollar spent, with rewards redemptions starting at 2,500 points. Rewards can be used for cash, gift cards, travel rewards and more, and there are no blackout dates on rewards travel.

Finally, the NEA RateSmart Card offers no annual fee, and an annual percentage rate of 9.99 percent.

Check them all out at NEAMB.com!

Enjoy an NEA Car Rental

If traveling away from home is in your plans this fall, consider renting a car, van or SUV through the NEA Car Rental Program!

A choice of car rental partners, including Alamo, Dollar, Enterprise, National, and Hertz, ensures a selection of benefits to meet your needs, such as:

- NEA member discount;
- No daily mileage limits;
- No charge for a second driver;
- Rent from local or airport locations;
- 24-hour emergency roadside assistance;
- Coupons for additional savings.

To find out about these special program benefits, go to the NEA Member Benefits website, look under the Discounts tab, and then click on "Car Rental."

Learn more NEA Member Benefits car rentals, and all the other great NEA Member Benefits programs at:

neamb.com

*David Glenn is Nebraska's
NEA Member Benefits representative*



Glenn

3 Things Car Dealers Don't Want to Hear

Remember These Words Next Time You Haggle at the Dealership

By David Muhlbaum

Most of us know that there are certain things you're supposed to do and not do when buying a car, but it can still be a struggle to put those principles into words. For the most part, car-buying remains a tough negotiation. And you're at a disadvantage: The sales representative does deals every day, and you don't. He knows what to say; you don't.

Here are three situations you're likely to face in your next car-buying adventure -- and our suggested responses, which will keep the conversation going the way you want and lead to the best price you can get:

'Thanks, I may consider your trade-in offer':

Dealerships like trade-ins. It gets them inventory for their used car lot on the cheap. So don't be surprised if you get offered money for whatever you drove to the dealership. The offer might even sound surprisingly good.

But don't bite quite yet. Your answer? "Thanks, I may consider your trade-in offer. But that's separate from how we're going to price the new car." The point is this: It's hard enough to keep track of one price as you're negotiating. Once you've gotten close to final on the new buy, you can entertain the trade-in bid. If you've done your research, you know what your car is worth and can take it or leave it.

'Let me see the invoice, please': It's

hard to buy a car without a lot of extra fees. But not all fees are created equal. When you last bought a shirt, did the store charge you to take it off the hanger? So, don't pay money for silly things like vehicle prep fees for pulling shipping plastic off your new ride and making sure it has oil in it. When the dealer tells you "everyone pays these", your line is, "Let me see the invoice, please." Legitimate fees are listed there.

'No, thank you': Finally, you can expect to be offered all kinds of stuff once you hit the dealership's Finance and Insurance office, from window etching to protection plans for your key fobs. The line you're going to need to use here the most is simply, "No, thank you." Mud flaps, rust-proofing

and paint sealants make the dealer a lot of money, but you can often get these for less elsewhere — assuming you want them in the first place. Look at a catalog such as AutoSport for accessories, or check your local detailing shop for paint sealant or fabric treatments. If you later decide you just really have to have those chrome running boards, you can always come back to the dealer.

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Kiplinger

NEA Auto Buying Program: Get Great Deals on Used Cars!

If you're in the market for a used car, the NEA Auto Buying Program provides great savings and a no-hassle car buying experience!

Get member pricing year-round, and save even MORE with used car discounts of up to \$1,000 off the list price on select vehicles. Search through dealer inventory on any make or model to get pricing, price rankings and additional discounts on the car you want before you even leave home. Just bring in your Price Certificate to your personal contact at a Certified Dealer. And, as an added Buyers Bonus, get up to \$2,000+ in additional coverage that includes Repair and Deductible expense reimbursements at no cost.

You've got an advantage—now take it! To learn more, visit:

www.neamb.com/buyacar

Assist EMAC and Update Your ‘Selfie!’

Self-Identification of Ethnicity Would Boost EMAC Numbers

By Edward Ventura Jr., Chair
Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee

There are many NSEA members of minority status who have not self-identified their ethnic status through their Association membership enrollment. According to NSEA membership data, 1,043 Association members have not self-identified — or ‘selfied!’ — their ethnicity. With an important goal of the EMAC to increase membership, it is vital that all members self-identify on the Association’s membership rolls.

Updating your membership status is quite easy. Contact either your Organizational Specialist or call the NSEA membership department at 1-800-742- 0047 to update your records.

Or, you can update through the NSEA website by clicking on the gold Member Info link on the NSEA homepage. Then click on the ‘For Members’ link, and finally, on the ‘Member Update’ link. To update information, you’ll need your 10-digit NSEA identification number, which can be found above your name on the mailing label of each edition of The Voice. The NSEA website is at:

www.nsea.org

Culturally Competent Educators

Here is a question for our culturally competent educators: Why do Muslim women wear head scarves? Is it a) to be modest; b) as a part of her faith; or c) because she is cold?

Both A and B are correct. Wearing the headscarf is part of the practice of hijab, which means to cover. This includes modesty in action and dress. Muslim women observe hijab as an act of obedience to God’s command as revealed in the Qur’an, the Muslim holy book. Muslim women don’t wear scarves around close male relatives, i.e. their father, brothers or husband. Culture and personal preference influence the style of the headscarf worn by a woman. You may see a woman wearing all black or a young fashionista rocking an array of colors!

Source: Thurayya Liwaru-Rab, a second grade teacher at Liberty Elementary School in Omaha, and a member of the Omaha Education Association.



At Work: Members of the NSEA Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC) met at the Omaha Education Association office recently, and will meet there again on Nov. 14.

‘Stella by Starlight’

Threatened by the rise of the Klan in her tiny rural Southern community during the Great Depression, Stella and her family join ranks with their fellow African American neighbors to fight hatred and bigotry and achieve a sense of hope for the future. Students who haven’t been exposed to stories about the Klan’s activities – and the horrors they inflicted – will be especially well served by reading this magnificent book by Sharon M. Draper. It is appropriate for grades 4-8.

Source: Lavonne Hanlon, Media Specialist at Lincoln’s Sheridan Elementary and a member of the Lincoln Education Association.

Great Plains Milestone

The EMAC is now taking nominations for the Great Plains Milestone Award, given each year to an individual or group that has promoted human and civil rights within their communities.

Details about the award, and how to nominate, can be found on the NSEA website. Who will you nominate?

See You in November?

EMAC will meet on Saturday, Nov. 14, at the Omaha Education Association office, 4202 S. 57th St. A caucus will open at 9:30 a.m., with the meeting at 10 a.m. Contact Tamra Mick at 1-800-742- 0047, if you plan to attend.

Question About Teaching Certificates? NSEA Can Assist

Organizational Specialists Give You an Edge

As a teacher, you never want to get caught in the no-man’s land that comes with an expired teaching certificate.

Yet it can happen. Consider these questions that came to NSEA from a teacher who found out after the fact that her certificate had expired:

“I am subbing this year and was just notified by the administration building that my teaching certificate is expired. I was under the impression I had until November to renew it, but was told it

was moved to August 31. I am wondering how I was to know this information? Also, I need to know how I can renew it.”

When it comes to questions about your teaching certificate, there is no out-of-state, storefront-based, quasi-professional membership group that will have a ready answer. Such organizations don’t have any of the staff expertise and knowledge of Nebraska Department of Education rules, regulations and requirements regarding teaching certificates.

NSEA staff, on the other hand, owns that expertise. From Jay Sears, who for 15 years has worked with the Department of Education, and the State

Board of Education – which sets certification regs and rules – to the 18 field staff, NSEA’s knowledge of Nebraska education rules is unmatched.

NSEA gets many such questions each week, via e-mail through the website, phone calls to one of the 18 organizational specialists, and via personal visits with NSEA staff.

Whatever your question about your employment issues, classroom issues, bargaining situations or more, know that you can contact your NSEA organizational specialist in complete confidentiality. Call your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047, or send your question through the ‘Contact Us’ feature of the NSEA website at:

www.nsea.org

You will draw you answer from years of experience and expertise that gives you “The NSEA Edge.”



Justice and Education

In 2007, the Nebraska State Supreme Court made a decision on a lawsuit challenging the adequacy of funding for a quality education for students in public schools. The Court determined that schools have a duty in “providing free instruction,” but rejected the idea that there is any judicially enforceable standard of quality education. Local critics protested the decision that education in Nebraska didn’t have to be good, it just had to be free. The court could require education to be free, but could not require it to be of high quality? Is that justice?

Peter Marcuse, editor and contributor to the book, “Searching for the Just City” (2009), proposes a simple definition of justice. The application of law requires “equality, equity, and fairness.” Justice is not only a product of the legal system. Justice is also dependent on our political system. Is it enough that students are guaranteed access to our schools by the law, or should there also be a positive recognition — as in a “Just City” — that access to a school is not enough for educational success? Consider an obvious example. In 1954, the US Supreme Court declared that segregated schools were unconstitutional. Nearly a decade later, a significant number of schools had not yet accepted black students. In fact, in 1963, nearly 99 percent of black students in southern states were still in segregated schools. Court decisions and law enforcement officers were not sufficient for desegregation. Social and political support — and change — were equally necessary.

Significant Dividing Point

The idea that there are other actions — political decisions — that really determine whether citizens in fact have access to the fair treatment promised under the law challenges us to think far beyond the legal system. In the example of education, equitable treatment includes more than establishing the legal right to access. The 1954 Supreme Court did its part. Are we doing ours? Some would argue that the legal right to attend

a public school is the great equalizing element for students. It is necessary, but not enough. Justice requires that students attending our schools have an equal opportunity for education. This concept may be the most significant dividing point between the elite 1 percent and the other 99 percent in America. Justice in public education means that every student needs a network

— a community — of services and opportunities to grow and develop as a student prepared to take full advantage of what schools offer. Do all students in our communities have the benefit of quality pre-schools, health providers, public transportation, safe communities, computers, libraries, museums and art galleries? Do their parents have access to good jobs and affordable housing? If justice is not found in the social, economic, and political struc-

tures of daily life for both adults and children, it has little chance anywhere else.

The Toughest Opponent

The metaphor of the Just City is not only about cities. It should challenge us to reflect on our own community schools. How would our schools be different if they were politically structured as sites of economic and social equity? The fact is that students in Nebraska do not have equity in resources or in educational opportunity. The structural system of funding schools is determined politically. The economic inequity for students across Nebraska — and the resulting educational disparity — is a result of political and social forces.

This is about fair and adequate distribution of public resources. Look carefully at your community schools. The hard fact is that being fair to all students — giving more resources to some students or some schools — takes tax money. Tax decisions are the toughest opponent of the aspirations of courts and the law. The politics of taxation and resource allocation are concrete examples of the opportunity for substantive justice for our children. Do the children in your community go to school in a ‘Just City’?



Justice depends on more than a legal system. NSEA Executive Director, Craig R. Christiansen, standing in front of the Nebraska Supreme Court Chamber.

“
The politics of taxation and resource allocation are concrete examples of the opportunity for substantive justice for our children.
”

Health Care Seminars to Look at Medicare

Sessions Aimed at Retirees, Those About to Retire

NSEA-Retired, along with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, will hold four seminars in November to provide members important information about Medicare, NSEA-Retired BlueSenior Classic (our Medicare supplement), and the options that retirees younger than 65 have for insurance through the Educator's Health Alliance (EHA).

Medicare seminars will go from 9:30 a.m. to noon and will cover:

- Medicare basics;
- Medicare updates;
- Details on NSEA-Retired BlueSenior Classic, the Medicare supplement endorsed by NSEA-Retired and underwritten by Blue Cross (with optional dental);
- Changes in Medicare Part D's prescription drug plan;
- Using the Medicare's website to find a Part D provider.

The second session at each site will run from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and cover differences between the four EHA options available to retirees younger than 65. They are:

- A \$750 deductible PPO;
- \$1,650 deductible PPO;
- A \$3,100 deductible, Health-Savings-Account (HSA) eligible High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP);
- A \$4,000 deductible, HSA-eligible HDHP.

Health Savings Accounts will be explained, as will HSA enrollment. Individuals enrolled in one of the EHA plans can change to a higher deductible to be effective on Jan. 1, 2016, if they have enrollment applications on file by Dec. 1, 2015. Comparisons of out-of-pocket costs of each plan design will be described, as well as what you need to do to switch to a different plan. The seminars will be:

- **Tuesday, Nov. 10**, at the Younes Conference Center, Kearney.
- **Wednesday, Nov. 11**, Lifelong Learning Center, Norfolk.
- **Thursday, Nov. 12**, Country Inn & Suites, 5353 N. 27th St., Lincoln.
- **Monday, Nov. 16**, Scott Center, 6450 Pine St., Omaha. No registration is required.

Final Affiliate Reports

Here are the final reports from retired associations across the state:

Lincoln Education Association-Retired

With 516 members, the \$70 annual dues enables LEA-R to offer monthly programs, four \$1,000 scholarships each year; and to involve members with legislative issues, lobbying and more. That dues figure includes dues for NEA-Retired, NSEA-Retired and LEA-R.

President is Arlene Rea (402-423-8694). Other officers are Diane Knapp, vice president (402-540-2434); Barb Hetcko, secretary (402-423-6866); and Billie Bussmann, treasurer (402-488-3231).

Meetings are at 9:30 a.m. at Sheridan Lutheran Church, unless noted. Dates and topics are:

- Nov. 18, *Helping Homeless Families in Poverty*.

- Dec. 9, 11:30 a.m., Ferguson House, 700 S. 16th, potluck.
- Jan. 20, *On the Road Again: Driving Well*.
- Feb. 17, for *Social Media and the Huskers*.
- March 16, *Using Yoga to Quiet the Minds and Behaviors of Students*.
- April 20, *Watch Your Step via the Right Exercise*.
- May 18, 11:30 a.m., scholarship lunch, site to be determined.
- June 1, location to be set, to welcome new retirees.

President Rea and Vice President Knapp may also be reached at:

arlenerea36@yahoo.com
dknapp@neb.rr.com

Bellevue Education Association Retired

The 50-member BEA-Retired meets the first Thursday each month, August through December, and February through May at 9:30 a.m. Meetings are at the Bellevue Administration building.

BEA-R contributes to local causes, and hosts an annual Christmas dinner. Members help with the fourth grade bus tours of the historical sites of Bellevue, where students from the entire district are taught history of the city. Dues are \$5.

President is Steven Lebedz (402-291-6056). He can also be reached at:

slebedz@yahoo.com

Platte Valley Retired Education Association

The 60 members of the Platte Valley Retired Education Association – celebrating a 10th year this year! – will meet three times.

Meetings are scheduled for Nov. 4 at 2 p.m. at First National Bank, Grand Island, for Veteran's Appreciation Day; Feb. 3 at 2 p.m. at the 16th Street YMCA in Hastings for an Outdoor Education program; and at 2 p.m. on May 4 at the Hastings YMCA for a program on climate change. Dues are \$10 annually.

Officers are Mary Ann Niemoth, president (402-463-7273); Yvette Engelhaupt, vice president (308-384-5398); LaVila VanBoening, secretary (402-463-0051); Christy Hewitt, treasurer (308-384-3389); and Marianne Fitzgibbon, card/courtesy program (402-746-2536). Niemoth and Engelhaupt can also be reached at:

mniemoth@gmail.com
yengelh@charter.net

Panhandle Education Association-Retired

Panhandle Education Association-Retired officers are president, Jodie W. Giorgis (308-235-4453); vice president, Joann Dietz (308-235-3028); secretary, Earladeen Walker (308-235-4795); and treasurer, Shirley Whartman (308-235-4573).

Update from Last Month

The October issue incorrectly listed the office Elkhorn Sandhills Education Association-Retired Secretary LaRene Konopasak. Also, the Feb. 22, 2016, lunch is at Mama's and Nana's in Neligh.

— Renae Kelly, Editor
renaekelly@gmail.com



Scholarships to Give: Again this year, NSEA-Retired will provide three Student Education Association of Nebraska members with a \$1,000 scholarship for their student teaching semester. In April, on behalf of NSEA-Retired, NSEA President Nancy Fulton presented 2015-16 scholarships to Peru State's Amanda Volksten, left; and Brittany Snider, right, a student at the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

An Historic Assembly

2016 Delegate Assembly will Kick Off Association's Sesquicentennial

Let the celebration begin!

NSEA will celebrate 150 years in 2017, and the Association's celebration will kick off at the April 15-16 Delegate Assembly — a perfect time and place for a colleague to be recognized for excellence!

Any NSEA member may nominate a member teacher, ESP or deserving group for the awards to be presented at Delegate Assembly. Mailed nominations must be postmarked by Sunday, Jan. 31, 2016, and should be sent to NSEA Awards, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Nominations may also be submitted online, with required supporting material mailed to the NSEA. Online nomination forms are found under the 'Call for Nominations' link at:

www.nsea.org

The 2016 Delegate Assembly, NSEA's 155th such convention, will be held at Embassy Suites in Lincoln. NSEA members are eligible for these awards:

■ **NSEA Rookie of the Year:** To honor a first-year teacher who sparkled in the 2014-15 school year.

■ **Award for Teaching Excellence:** To honor a teacher who has excelled in the classroom over a period of time.

■ **Education Support Professional of the Year:** To honor an ESP who has excelled in his or her job.

Finalists will be notified in March, with winners announced at the Delegate Assembly. Recipients receive a \$250 cash award. The Teaching Excellence recipient vies for the NEA Teaching Excellence Award.

NSEA members are also eligible for:

■ **The Great Plains Milestone Award:** Honors an individual/group for promoting human and civil rights.

■ **Community Service:** Honors individual NSEA members and/or local associations actively involved in volunteer work outside of classroom hours.

■ **Local Public Relations:** Honors local associations for outstanding communication within the association.

These awards will also be presented:

■ **Friend of Education:** Associations are encouraged to nominate an individual or organization that has made a statewide contribution to education.

■ **Media:** Recognizes a newspaper, television or radio station for coverage of education issues and promoting education.

For more details, go to:

www.nsea.org

Millard's Matulka Earns Milken Science Teacher Surprised with Award

Science teacher Courtney Matulka walked out of an all school assembly at Millard's Beadle Middle School late last month with a prestigious national educator award and \$25,000.

Matulka, an NSEA member since she began teaching, earned a 2015-16 Milken Educator Award.

The 8th grade science teacher was surrounded by Beadle Middle School students when Gov. Pete Ricketts, Nebraska Education Deputy Commissioner Dr. Deborah Frison and Milken Senior Vice President Jane Foley presented the national educator award to her.

Frison applauded Matulka's outstanding leadership and teaching skills.

"Courtney has demonstrated character, commitment and ethics as a Beadle Middle School teacher, providing a strong role model for her students while steadily increasing the number of her students exceeding state standards and steadily reducing the number below proficient," said Frison.

Foley said Matulka promotes active student participation and establishes a learning

environment to ensure that her students not only learn, but excel.

An example of Matulka's exemplary educational accomplishments includes her role in the Millard school district piloting, and then adopting, the Co-teaching in Student Teaching model. The pilot was so positive that the district uses only the co-teaching model with their student teachers.

Matulka has served on multiple building and district committees on science and instruction. She frequently is asked to lead district committees and is an active district leader and presenter.

Matulka has been teaching since 2009 at Millard and has served as Beadle Middle School Science Department Head since 2011. She graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Education and with a Master's in Secondary Education in 2010.

Milken Educator Award recipients are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish.



Matulka

Rohan Fills Panhandle Vacancy

Dashiell Rohan, president of the Sioux County Education Association, has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the NSEA Board of Directors created by a retirement.

Rohan is a 1999 graduate of Seward High School, and completed a double major in English and history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December 2004.

He has taught English at Sioux County since 2005, and completed the Transition to Teaching Program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2008. He has been an



Rohan

NSEA member since he started teaching, and has been Sioux County's lead negotiator and local president for the past eight years.

Rohan enjoys coin collecting, reading, hunting and the outdoors.

"I hope I can adequately bring the Panhandle perspective to the NSEA Board," he said. "I will do my best and hope to be a positive addition to our board. In my two meetings so far, I have been helped a lot by all the experienced board members, as well as the staff, who have been extremely helpful."

Pork, Soybean Producers Offer Free Tools

The Nebraska Pork Producers Association and the Nebraska Soybean Board offer new educational tools for Nebraska educators to use in teaching about agriculture.

■ **Pigmania**, a free six-lesson package that teaches fourth- through sixth-graders about pork. Lessons look at how pork gets from the farm to dinner tables; the nutritional value of pork; and the non-food uses of pig byproducts. The package also helps educators meet state Department of Education standards in several content areas.

■ A free **Bingo** game helps second-through fifth-graders understand animal agriculture. Pork Bingo and Soy Bingo pro-

vide fun facts that teach students about the products made from pigs and soybeans. The kit comes with double-faced cards, tokens, worksheets and a poster.

■ **Producers, Pigs & Pork** is a series of five lessons designed for third- through sixth-graders. Each lesson includes a DVD to enhance core learning objectives and covers where food comes from; how pigs are raised; how farmers work to protect the environment; and food safety.

Order the free games here:

nebraskapigmania.com
nebraskaporkbingo.com
nebraskaproducerspigspork.com

Elevating Teachers

Teachers of the Year Host ECET² Confab at Kearney

A daylong conference hosted by Nebraska's State Teachers of the Year and the National Network State Teachers of the Year will celebrate teacher-leaders and work to cultivate new teacher-leaders.

There is no fee to attend the Saturday, Nov. 14, conference at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney.

The agenda includes sessions with Katherine Bassett, CEO, National Network of State Teachers of the Year; Ruth and David Bernard-Stevens, Effective Change Consultants of Nairobi, Kenya; Dyane Smokowski, 2013 Kansas Teacher of the Year; and several Milken and Nebraska State Teachers of the Year awardees. David Bernard-Stevens is also a former Nebraska Teacher of the Year.

The conference opens with breakfast at 7:15 a.m. and concludes at 4:45 p.m., with lunch and breaks included.

Attendance is limited.

To register, e-mail Jessica Hansen at: jessica@nnstoy.org

Speaking of Teaching

"It is ... advisable that the teacher should understand, and even be able to criticize, the general principles upon which the whole educational system is formed and administered. He is not like a private soldier in any army, expected merely to obey, or like a cog in a wheel, expected merely to respond to and transmit external energy; he must be an intelligent medium of action."

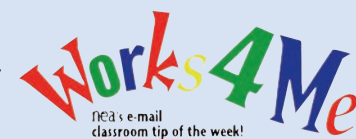
— *John Dewey (1859-1952), American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer*

Adopt an Acre of Rainforest

Submitted by an anonymous member.

"My class studied the rainforest and then decided to educate others about the effects of deforestation. I divided the class into groups, which researched various aspects of the rainforest, such as foods, plants, medicines and characteristics of the rainforest. All children were required to retell what they learned and put it in a newsletter format on the computer.

"We then decided to bake desserts with ingredients from the rain



forest, such as coconut, chocolate, vanilla, etc. We had a bake sale, with our huge rainforest mural as a backdrop, and made \$75.00. We used the money to adopt two acres of rain forest through the Nature Conservancy's "Adopt an Acre" program.

"We are also in the process of putting our research up on our own website, so we accomplished our goal — informing others of the importance of the rainforest — through our newsletter, website and bake sale. It was a very valuable project."

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

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



Outreach to Teach will Visit Ralston

This was the scene at Minden's C.L. Jones Middle School a year ago, with 100 members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska, members of NSEA-Retired and other volunteers, participating in SEAN's Outreach to Teach event. Here, the University of Nebraska-Kearney's Ashley Hansel, foreground, and Brittany Snider, rear, paint railings in the school gym.

The 2015 Outreach to Teach will kick off Nov. 14 at Ralston's Mockingbird Elementary School. SEAN members will again lead the general cleanup of the school grounds and perform various spruce-up projects.

If interested in participating, contact NSEA's Tamra Mick at 1-800-742-0047, or tamra.mick@nsea.org.