

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ September 2017



FINDING A PATH TO SUCCESS

NSEA Helps Novice Teacher Overcome First Year Challenges

Benson takes the Lead for NSEA • LEARN Through New NSEA Project

Interim Studies: Good, Bad, Otherwise

NSEA Keeps Close Tabs on Legislature's Work

From reviewing mental health education provided students to examining the use of substitute teachers, state lawmakers are spending this fall studying issues and conducting public hearings on items deemed important by policymakers.

Reports on each study will be complete by the time the 2018 Legislative session opens for business on Jan. 3, and could lead to the introduction of legislation good, bad or otherwise.

Many of the 2017 studies focus on education issues and policy. Of the 125 interim studies scheduled by the 2017 Legislature, more than two dozen relate to education. NSEA will watch each study closely, will submit written testimony for some and will appear and testify at others.

Here is a list of some of the most important of education-related interim study hearings, including topic, study sponsor and, if available, the time/date/location of the hearing:

■ **LR60 (Urban Affairs Committee):** To examine issues related to the use

of tax-increment financing. Friday, Sept. 29, Hall County Extension Office, Grand Island, 1:30 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 6, Room 1510, State Capitol.

■ **LR91 (Sen. Mark Kolterman, Seward):** To examine the public employees' retirement systems administered by the Public Employees Retirement Board.

■ **LR92 (Sen. Mark Kolterman, Seward):** To examine the requirement that the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature monitor underfunded defined benefit plans administered by political subdivisions.

■ **LR130 (Sen. Mike Groene, North Platte):** To examine issues related to the use of substitute teachers. Thursday, Sept. 14, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 1525.

■ **LR141 (Sen. Kate Bolz, Lincoln):** To examine best practices for promoting career education and training that can lead to job readiness for middle-skill positions.

■ **LR148 (Sen. Lynne Walz, Fremont):** To examine school meal programs in Nebraska.

■ **LR149 (Sen. LouAnn Linehan, Elkhorn):** To examine the administrative structure and organization of school districts across the state.

■ **LR150 (Sen. Dan Hughes, Venango):** Interim study to examine the ratio of administration, faculty, and support staff to student enrollment within secondary education in Nebraska.

■ **LR166 (Sen. Adam Morfeld, Lin-**

coln): To examine mental health education provided in Nebraska schools.

■ **LR200 (Sen. LouAnn Linehan, Elkhorn):** To examine issues related to dual enrollment and other courses that allow a student to obtain both high school and postsecondary education credit for such course.

■ **LR202 (Sen. Mark Kolterman, Seward):** To examine bona fide severance of employment compliance requirements under the Internal Revenue Code as related to maintaining section 401 (a) qualified defined benefit retirement plans.

■ **LR212 (Sen. Adam Morfeld, Lincoln):** To identify K-12 and postsecondary education resources to meet industry needs in preparing students for employment in careers requiring knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and math with an emphasis on jobs in the biosciences sector.

■ **LR217 (Sen. Merv Riepe, Ralston):** To examine the programs and majors offered by the University of Nebraska at the Lincoln, Omaha, and Kearney campuses.

■ **LR218 (Sen. Merv Riepe, Ralston):** To examine the feasibility of consolidating the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the University of Nebraska at Omaha to create a single University of Nebraska institution in Omaha.

■ **LR222 (Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks, Lincoln):** Interim study to examine dyslexia and reading literacy in Nebraska.



Nebraska Legislature

NSEA Ends Contract with Access

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

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

Access services ceased on Aug. 31. For future savings, turn to NEA Member Benefits!

Cover: First-year teacher Shylo Harkness drew a tough teaching assignment last fall. She struggled, and nearly walked out in December. She stuck with it, and found help and cooperation between NSEA and the Omaha Public Schools Human Resources Department. Harkness is teaching again this fall, with a new outlook. For the full story turn to

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A Lesson from Bee



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

We — and
that includes
policymakers —
must always give
our children our
best.”

After teaching special education for 30 years, I moved on Aug. 1 into a new role — a different kind of classroom experience, if you will — as president of your NSEA.

This year reminds me of my first year in the classroom. There is excitement and anxiety. There is an understanding that there is a steep learning curve and much work ahead for this teacher.

Yet unlike a new teacher, I have the luxury of experience and many good memories to help me along. My teaching career started at Dobie Middle School in Austin, TX, and I recall my first day quite vividly. I started at the semester break, without the comfort of in-service or training for new teachers.

But I had Bee.

Bee was Beetrece Jewel Stewart, my assigned classroom assistant. She had lived all over the world with her Army husband and they had retired in Austin. Bee dressed up every day. She stood well over six feet. She wore heels every day. She was a force to be reckoned with. I was fortunate to have such an able assistant in my room.

We worked together in a self-contained classroom for students with severe behavioral concerns. We had 14 boys and one girl, and I was the fourth teacher to work with that group of kids since the beginning of the school year. I dove in, and Bee guided and assisted, leading me to become the best teacher I could be. We overcame challenges, and we had bumps and bounces along the way. In the end, we had many, many successes. Together, we had a great semester. More importantly, so did my students. We were a very good team.

I remember to this day what Bee told me early on.

“Listen. Go to the lounge, listen,” she said.

“Listen to your colleagues. Listen to the students. Hear what they say, but more importantly, listen to what they don’t say. After you listen you can make a plan.”

Spread Across Nebraska

I have spent the past 10 weeks traveling around the country and around Nebraska doing the work of NSEA. I’ve traveled more than 14,000 miles so far. And I am still following Bee’s advice. I am listening.

In fact, all members of the NSEA executive team spread across the state this summer to visit with local leaders and members at area and local new teacher meetings. Vice President Paul Schulte of Millard; NEA Board members Tracy Hartman-Bradley of Omaha and Linda Freye of Lincoln; and Executive Director Maddie Fennell; all drove or rode hundreds of thousands of miles as they traversed the state to listen to you and other members.

A key element of NSEA’s newly adopted Strategic Plan includes member engagement. Your executive team wants to know what you want and need. Your concerns will guide our work.

Eager to Share

What did we hear? What did we learn?

We found — as expected — that Nebraska teachers and support staff are eager to share the wonderful successes of public schools.

Whether I was in Hartington or Hastings, McCook or Millard, Auburn or Alliance, Norfolk or my hometown North Platte, the stories consistently spoke about a passion for quality teaching and learning for all students.

We learned that the concerns of members in Alliance are no different than the concerns of members in Ashland. They are worried about funding, resources, classroom needs and teacher autonomy. We heard a great deal about how bad policy affects students. We heard about the need to talk to policymakers and education stakeholders about what will and what won’t help students and their families.

Indeed, our state’s future depends on our children. I once heard it said that our children are a small percentage of our population, but it is no doubt that our children are 100 percent of our future. We — and that ‘we’ includes policymakers — must always give our children our best.

A Constant Flow

Speaking of successes, we must constantly remind the public of the successes of Nebraska’s public schools. That is why Maddie Fennell and I have engaged in more than 40 interviews with newspapers, radio and television stations across the state over these past few weeks.

I would urge all educators to share their stories of success. We all have a local radio station, newspaper or television station that is looking to fill pages or airtime. When you have a success, call and ask for coverage. A constant flow of good news from public schools will assist us all as we work to thwart the anti-public school agenda in Nebraska.

The anti-public school groups promote a national narrative of problems in public schools across the U.S. That narrative is largely false, and is surely not the Nebraska narrative. While there is always room for improvement, we know Nebraska has one of the best public school systems in the country. The public must be given a clear picture of our successes.

As you begin a new school year, whether it is your first or your 30th, tell your story to all who will listen, whether it is the local editor or a neighbor.

Similarly, do not hesitate to contact any members of NSEA’s executive team. Beetrece Jewel Stewart was there for me. We are here to listen to and assist you. Email Paul, Maddie and I at:

firstname.lastname@nsea.org

Reach NEA Directors Tracy Hartman-Bradley and Linda Freye at:

trhb1000@gmail.com

lfreye62@gmail.com

Like Bee and I, we’ll all make a great team together!



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Turn Your Idea to Reality Through LEARN

Using Teach to Lead, NSEA Seeks Ideas to Improve Teaching

Have you or a colleague come up with the kernel of an idea that might transform your classroom, school or community?

Through your Association, you now have the chance to plant and grow that kernel, and put it into action.

NSEA has formed a new 501(c)3 organization called LEARN, for Leading Excellence and Robust Networks. Through LEARN, your NSEA will sponsor a one-day Powered by Teach to Lead Teacher Leadership Conference in Kearney on Saturday, Dec. 2.

It is through the Teach to Lead process that your idea might soon become a reality.

Nationally, Teach to Lead has pushed a discussion on teacher leadership while helping educators turn ideas into reality. Under the Teach to Lead umbrella, the National Board for Professional Teaching



Standards, ASCD and the U.S. Department of Education have been joined by more than 100 supporting organizations. This mission: to expand opportunities for teacher leadership by providing resources and encouraging collaborations to develop the work and ideas of teachers.

To start, all you need is an idea that might strengthen or improve your classroom, school building, school district – or even public education on a statewide basis.

Submit that idea to NSEA no later than Sunday, Oct 15, at this website:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/9JH3GP9

A team of working educators will review all submitted proposals. Those ideas that they believe will have the greatest

impact or the best chance for success will be paired with a “critical friend” – someone with expertise in strategic planning or with expertise in the area of your proposal. The friend will help you and a team from your school or community further develop the idea.

A webinar to prepare you for the final step will follow, and on Saturday, Dec. 2, your team will attend a one-day conference in Kearney.

There, a national trainer will help your team develop a strategic approach to implementing your plan. That plan, or roadmap, will get your plan to reality.

There is no registration fee for the Kearney conference. Meals will be provided and most travel costs will be covered. Funding is courtesy of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, which has generously allowed funding for the former Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska scholarships to be diverted to this purpose.

For more details, turn to Executive Director Maddie Fennell’s column on page 21.

NSEA Earns \$300k Grant to ‘Grow’ Teachers

Focus Group Discussion Led to Grant Application

NSEA has been awarded a two-year, \$335,120 grant from NEA Great Public Schools Fund to recruit minority students to a teaching career pathway.

The grant will allow NSEA to build on successes that began with a \$109,800 grant from the GPS Fund during the 2016-17 school year.

The grant allows NSEA staff to work with local association members to develop and grow new Educators Rising – formerly Future Educators – chapters at high schools across the state, as well as to bolster existing Ed Rising chapters.

Further, grant monies will be used to assist post-secondary students interested in teaching in their efforts to pass the PRAXIS test required to enter colleges of education in Nebraska.

NSEA’s grant application stemmed in part from a focus group discussion with ethnic and minority NSEA members in 2015. There, NSEA staff and leaders learned that a significant stumbling block for ethnic and minority students seeking to become teachers is the lack of adequate preparation and tutoring for the PRAXIS test.

“Encouraging students of color to consider teaching as a profession must begin in high school,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “Thus, we are engaging active NSEA members to reach those students through establishment and support of Educators Rising clubs in high schools with high-minority populations.”

In the first year of the grant, the number of Educators Rising chapters in Nebraska high schools grew from 15 mostly metro-area schools to nearly 25. New chapters will start this year in Kearney, Scottsbluff, Madison, Lincoln North Star, Norfolk, Ralston, Columbus and elsewhere.



The grant application also stemmed from the alarming overall drop in potential teachers in Nebraska colleges of education over the past 15 years. Between 2003-04 and 2013-14, the number of teacher education candidates in Nebraska colleges and universities plummeted from 7,576 to 3,528, a drop of more than 53 percent.

At the post-secondary level, the grant allows NSEA to continue to develop a prep course and tutoring program designed to help college-level students pass the PRAXIS test.

The plan calls for building a statewide cadre of tutors for the Praxis Tutoring Program; to further develop the prep and tutoring programs; to recruit students to the program; to secure needed materials and facilities for the activity; and to provide a stipend to the tutors for their time and expertise.

The long-term goal is to maintain the program with assistance from Nebraska’s 16 colleges of education and to develop an online tutorial and follow-up Webinars. In addition to the 16 colleges of education in Nebraska, NSEA is partnering with Higher Ed, Student, Retired, and local association affiliates and members.

Ethnic minorities make up approximately 47 percent of students in Nebraska yet only 4 percent of teachers are ethnic minorities.

“We need more teachers of color who can serve as role models for students,” said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell. “The lack of available resources in Nebraska is preventing many students of color from becoming teachers. Early intervention by NSEA members in assisting these potential teachers will promote student success as well as develop and strengthen association membership now and into the future.”

If you are interested in starting an Educators Rising program in your school, or are interested in tutoring college-level students in preparation for PRAXIS testing, contact your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.

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Her Story: Omaha Education Association member Shylo Harkness nearly left the profession last year after a rough start to her career. Working with school district administrators, NSEA helped Harkness find a path to success.

‘I Almost Quit’ Teaching

NSEA Helps Novice Teacher Cope with Tough Teaching Assignment, Move to New School

A wise man once said it is more prudent to polish what you have than to toss it aside in favor of something new.

NSEA believes that axiom applies to those in the teaching profession. Omaha Education Association member Shylo Harkness agrees.

Harkness was nearly cast aside last year after she was assigned to an ill-fitting classroom and struggled through an extremely difficult school year.

“I really wanted to leave teaching,” said Harkness. “I cried every night from October to December.”

Fortunately, Harkness had made the decision early in the school year to join NSEA.

A brief encounter between Harkness and an NSEA organizational specialist at a February seminar for Peru State College student teachers was the first step in a positive collaboration between Harkness and NSEA, and between NSEA and OPS

Chief Human Resource Officer Charles Wakefield. That collaboration turned things around for Harkness, and saved her job.

“I almost quit in December,” said Harkness.

“By the end of the school year, there was a complete turnaround.”

Another Profession?

A few months ago, Harkness wasn’t the only one thinking she might be better off in another profession or school. Midway through the 2016-17 school year, an administrator advised that Harkness might resort to a more traditional student teaching program, or at least transferring to another school building.

Harkness had signed a contract with OPS in August 2016, and was working under a provisional teaching certificate. The plan was to wrap up her classes at Peru State College during the first semester and officially complete her student teaching requirements during the second semester. She would earn her degree and teaching certificate in May 2017.

Somehow, this first-year, yet-to-be-certified teacher drew a most difficult teaching assignment: a self-contained upper elementary behavior disorder classroom in central Omaha. Nine students, a parapro-

“I really wanted to leave teaching. I cried every night from October to December.”

— Shylo Harkness,
Omaha Education Association Member

fessional and the untested, inexperienced, rookie provisional teacher occupied the classroom.

It was, in the words of NSEA Organizational Specialist Marlene Wehrbein, “a tough job.” Once Wehrbein was involved, she asked one question of every OPS administrator she encountered while working with Harkness.

“I asked whether this was arguably one of the most difficult teaching assignments in the entire State of Nebraska,” said Wehrbein. “They all said ‘yes.’”

Nightly Crying

In the first semester, the district had assigned two coaches to work with Harkness. But almost without fail, as the two coaches would arrive at her classroom, one of her students would act out.

At that point, all others in the classroom – including students, paras and coaches – were directed by district policy to leave the classroom to allow the teacher to work with the troubled student.

“That literally happened every time coaches visited,” said Harkness, “so I didn’t get a lot of assistance in that regard. I just tried to figure it out on my own.”

By October, Harkness was informed that her skills were not improving and that she was in danger of being placed on informal

“I thought about not joining OEA that first year, but I’m glad that I did. It saved my career.”

— Shylo Harkness,
Omaha Education Association Member

observation status, the first step toward possible non-renewal of her contract with OPS.

That’s when the nightly crying began.

“They said I wasn’t doing a good job, wasn’t progressing,” she said. “Then, in March, they told me I was where I should have been in August.”

‘This Will Not Happen’

After Wehrbein spoke at a February seminar for student teachers at Peru State College, Harkness approached Wehrbein and told her story.

“Marlene told me ‘this will not happen, you will not be fired’ and urged me to call her the next time I was to meet with administrators,” said Harkness.

That happened in March, when Harkness was called in to talk not about her skills, but about a particular student. In addition to administrators, the two coaches were on hand. Ideas and suggestions for improving

her teaching began to fly. Wehrbein was in the room and saw what was happening. She urged a slowdown and a focus that would give Harkness a chance to improve her skills in one area at a time.

“Marlene calmed the water between me and my supervisors and the administration,” said Harkness.

“That eased tensions and made it easier for me to do my job,” said Harkness.

Further, OPS Human Resources administrators agreed immediately that the placement in that classroom put Harkness in an extremely difficult situation.

Harkness was given more support, as well as a transfer to a new school for the 17-18 school year. Today, Harkness is a grades 4-6 resource teacher at Walnut Hill Elementary School.

Wehrbein praised the willingness of administrators in the OPS human resources division to work with and keep a brand-new teacher in the system.

Harkness, meanwhile, said she had been ready to “throw her building keys and walk” in December. Now she’s optimistic, in a new school and a new year, and with renewed appreciation for her Association.

“I thought about not joining OEA that first year, but I’m very glad that I did. It saved my career.”

The Nebraska State ‘How to Write a TDA Seminar’

Who should attend? Teachers (2-8), Special Education Teachers, Title I Teachers, Literacy Coaches, Assistant Principals, Principals, Superintendents, ESL Teachers, ESU Staff, Paraprofessionals

Space is limited, register today! With at least one staff member, administrators attend for free!

The Nebraska State “How to Write a TDA Seminar” is a training designed to empower 2nd through 8th grade educators with the ability to teach their students how to recognize a Text Dependent Analysis question and to be able to answer it effectively and concisely.

Leading the seminar will be Ron Coniglio, a celebrated and much sought after “teacher of teachers” specializing in writing. The 37-year classroom teacher has taught elementary school, middle school and high school, as well as university level courses.

Join Ron for an action-packed day of practical, applicable and exciting strategies that will help you teach your students how to infer information from written text; revise inferential answers into a Text Dependant Analysis; formulate an answer in Bloom’s Analysis and Synthesis levels; and extrapolate the information into a multi-paragraph TDA essay.



SEMINAR LOCATIONS:

Norfolk: Monday, Oct. 2

Beatrice: Tuesday, Oct. 10

Fremont: Friday, Oct. 20

Trenton: Tuesday, Oct. 24

Grand Island: Friday, Oct. 27

Columbus: Tuesday, Nov. 7

North Platte: Tuesday, Nov. 14

Auburn: Friday, Nov. 17

York: Tuesday, Nov. 28

Holdrege: Thursday, Nov. 30

For registration information, call 402-476-6678, or email:
wizardscastlepublishing@hotmail.com



On the Job: Longtime Lincoln Education Association member and leader Jenni Benson began her three-year term as NSEA president on Aug. 1.

Benson: My Pleasure to Serve

From Server to Head Table, NSEA's New President Took Traditional Route

Nearly 25 years ago, not long after Jenni Benson began the Lincoln phase of her teaching career, she helped her family make financial ends meet through a second job — by waitressing at a Lincoln eatery.

On occasion, she would serve meals to Association members at Lincoln meetings of NSEA's Capitol District Board of Directors.

For the next three years, Benson will be seated at the head of the Association table serving members in a far different capacity. She began a three-year term as NSEA's 119th president on Aug. 1.

From that humble start, Benson has taken what she calls a "very traditional route" through the Association's leadership ranks. After teaching in Texas for several years, she returned to Nebraska and joined the staff at Lincoln's Hunting-

ton Elementary School. She became a building rep, soon advanced to the Lincoln Education Association Board of Directors, then became LEA vice president and president.

As LEA president, she won a seat on the NSEA Board of Directors, and in 2014 became NSEA vice president. That route to the top gave her a solid understanding of Association operations.

"I'm not saying you have to take that route, but if you do you learn everything there is to learn about the Association," she said.

"Working with past presidents was my way of learning, as well," she said. "I worked with some very good role models who helped me along the way."

The Paper Contract Trail

As a child growing up in Sutherland and North Platte, Benson never dreamed of a teaching career. Outside of school, those role models did not exist in her world. Her father managed a Sutherland grain elevator for more than 40 years, and

after high school Benson earned an associate of arts degree at Mid-Plains Community College.

"I still didn't know what I was going to do when I grew up," she said.

She worked at an insurance company and then, in a fateful turn, took a job as a paraprofessional at an early childhood center. That experience combined with seven summers working at a camp for children with disabilities to turn her thoughts to teaching.

"I found I liked working with special needs kids," she said.

After a bachelor's degree in elementary education and special education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, along with a wedding ring, a job opportunity for her husband landed Benson and her family in southern Texas. There, she taught in Austin, then Harlingen and Edinburg.

During her second year at Harlingen, Benson was asked and joined the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). That was B.C. — before computerization — and she signed a paper contract that clearly

stated her annual salary.

Halfway through the school year, she was called into the superintendent's office and told that she had been placed on the wrong step and was being paid too much. She would have to repay \$200 per month until the error was corrected.

Benson's first call was to TSTA. In short order, the superintendent reached out to Benson and said he had been in contact with TSTA. She would not have to make up the overpayment, but would be placed on the correct step for the following year.

"I was OK with that compromise," said Benson. "That was my first real interaction with the Association, and it was a powerful experience."

'A Much Better Teacher'

Benson's first teaching job at Austin had been in a self-contained middle school classroom working with children with disabilities. The classroom had 16 students and just one female. She said they were tough kids in a tough neighborhood. Her schools at Harlingen and Edinburg were high-poverty along the southern border of Texas.

"My teaching experience in Texas made me a much better teacher," she said.

After seven years and three children, the family returned to Nebraska. They landed at Lincoln in 1994 and Benson joined the Huntington team. At LPS, in addition to Huntington, Benson has taught at Hawthorne and Maxey elementary schools and, most recently, served as a resource teacher at the LPS Career Academy.

Benson has also worked hard outside the classroom. She has served as a member of the LPS Strategic Planning, Facilities Advisory, and School Bond, and Curriculum committees.

A Fast Start

During her two terms as president of the Lincoln Education Association, she collaborated with LPS, the Malone Community Center, Community Learning Centers and the United Way on an initiative to engage a broad cross-section of the public in a discussion about how all students can succeed in school.

The goals included exploring how the community can work together more effectively on behalf of all students. The project was funded by a National Education Association grant.

Benson has gotten off to a fast start in her first few weeks, meeting with newspaper, radio and television outlets and getting to know members across Nebraska. She will soon settle down to the focused work of serving members.

"I am truly looking forward to the next three years. Serving members will be my pleasure."



Welcome Teachers! New NSEA Vice President and Millard Education Association President Paul Schulte, right, welcomed new teachers to Millard in August, including Karrie Kelly and Rachel Johnson.

Schulte: 'Great opportunity' Led to Millard, Leadership Role

New NSEA Vice President Thankful for Opportunity to Represent Educators

As the eldest of five children, and with a mother who taught elementary school, Paul Schulte has always had a connection with kids. But it wasn't until college that his career path became certain.

Eight years as a kindergarten teacher, followed by five years as a teacher librarian — all with the Millard Public Schools — have been capped by the past five years by Schulte's service as full-time release president for the Millard Education Association. Schulte begins his sixth year as the MEA president and has now added even more to his workload: he is one month into a three-year term as NSEA vice president.

An exceptional high school mathematics teacher fostered Schulte's early interest in teaching secondary math, but his career course veered to elementary education while in college. The Pleasanton native earned a degree in elementary education with a minor in speech and the-

ater from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. After graduation and a move to the Omaha area, he worked as a substitute across the metro area — with one memorable stint as a high school physical education substitute that confirmed his career choice.

"After that I knew that I definitely did not want to teach at the high school level," he said with a laugh.

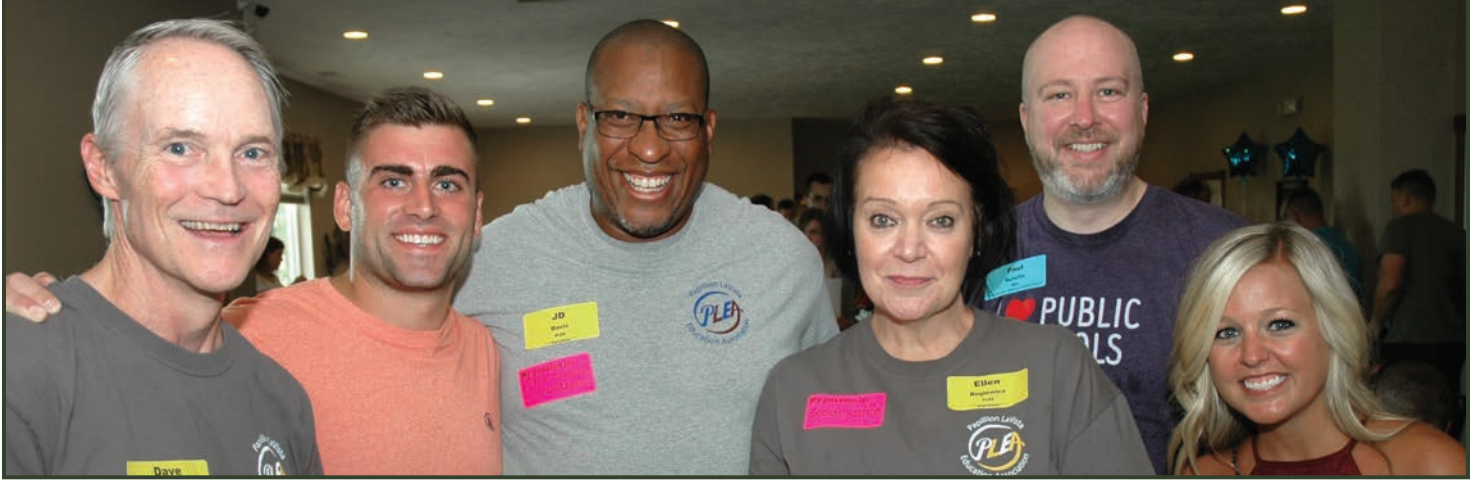
Fortunately, he found what he called a "great opportunity" at Disney Elementary School in Millard, where he became just the second male kindergarten teacher in the school district.

He was soon involved in association work. He attended NSEA's Leadership Institute, became a building representative, was elected to the MEA Board of Directors and served as MEA vice president before becoming president.

Schulte said he became involved because he wanted to be part of negotiations.

"I never thought I would become the MEA president, much less the NSEA vice president," said Schulte.

"I'm so thankful for the opportunity to be able to represent NSEA members across the state!"



Papillion-LaVista Crew: Members of the Papillion-LaVista Education Association were on hand for the event at Soaring Wings Winery near Springfield in late July. From left are Dave Herbener, guest Jordan Cook, J.D. Davis, Ellen Buglewicz, NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte of Millard, and Ashlee Vacek.

Summer Slows Down, Schoolwork Gears Up

If summer is winding down, it means educators are gearing up for the new school year by attending membership meetings and new teacher events. NSEA leaders and staff have fanned out across the state to visit members and to get the school year off to a good start. Pictured here are some of the smiling faces getting prepared for a new school year!



Northeast Nebraska: Pierce Education Association President Crya Bauermeister (seated) gets details about NSEA's new strategic plan from Organizational Specialist Carol Hicks, who is newly assigned to the Northeast Nebraska area.



Team Omaha: The Omaha Education Association was well-represented at a Soaring Wings Winery event near Springfield in July. At left are Octavia Butler and Ernestine Ortiz-Ventura. At right are Vince Gregorio and Amy Purdy.



At right are Vince Gregorio and Amy Purdy.

Supply Cake! New Lincoln sixth grade language arts teacher Chelsea Horner, right, won a cake of school supplies from Horace Mann Insurance at the Lincoln Education Association luncheon. At far right, LEA President Rita Bennett, right, gave a half-day of her time in a drawing won by fifth grade resource teacher Stefanie Kirkland.





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The Nebraska Delegation: Nearly 100 NSEA members from across the state served as delegates to the 2017 Representative Assembly of the National Education Association in Boston.

Challenges, Charters at RA

Omaha’s Latino Police Officers Recognized on National Stage

Vigorous debates and discussions over social justice, the dangers posed by the DeVos education agenda, and ending the proliferation of unaccountable charter schools dominated the 96th NEA Representative Assembly (RA) held in early July at the Boston Convention Center.

Nebraska delegates – nearly 100 of them – were particularly pleased when the Latino Peace Officers Association of Omaha was awarded the NEA George I. Sanchez Award before the more than 8,000 delegates.

In her keynote address, NEA President Lily Eskelsen García didn’t sugarcoat the dire challenges facing public education.

“But we can win. We have the power,” she said.

Eskelsen García assured the 7,000 delegates that NEA would not try to find common ground with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who is pursuing an aggressive school privatization agenda, while refusing to protect the most vulnerable students from discrimination.

Giving the close of Day 1 the feel of an organizing rally, NEA Executive Director John Stocks celebrated the student advocacy, member solidarity, and recent victories by NEA state affiliates.

“All across the country, you are demonstrating that we have the resolve to fight for what’s right for our students and educators, the resilience to take a hit and bounce back, the audacity to demand respect, and the relentless will to win,” Stocks said. “In school after school, campus after campus, local after local, state after state, it is you who are giving voice to the needs of our students, educators, and public education.”

Police Officers Honored

NSEA members were pleased to see the Latino Police Officers Association of Omaha on stage again. The LPOA received NSEA’s Great Plains Milestone Award at the Association’s Delegate Assembly in 2014. The Sanchez award is one of NEA’s highest honors.

The Latino Police Officer Association (LPOA) was founded 15 years ago in South Omaha. The LPOA strives to create a positive relationship between communities of color and law enforcement. Through school visits, athletic programs, and Christmas and Easter events, the police officer volunteers in the LPOA spread a positive message to the youth. It is through these programs and activities the LPOA teaches children that human and civil rights are paramount in life and have improved human relations with the community.

Sharp, New Line

Delegates overwhelmingly approved a new policy statement in response to the rapid expansion of unaccountable, privately managed charter schools.

“We oppose any charter schools that do not meet the criteria because they fall short of our nation’s responsibility to provide great public schools for every student in America,” said NEA Vice President Becky Pringle, who led a task force charged with writing the new policy statement.

The statement draws a sharp new line between charter schools that have a positive effect on public education and those unaccountable, privately managed charter schools that hurt public schools and students. NEA will forcefully support state and local efforts to limit charter growth and increase charter accountability, and slow the diversion of resources from neighborhood public schools to charters.

Burton: Teachers are Essential

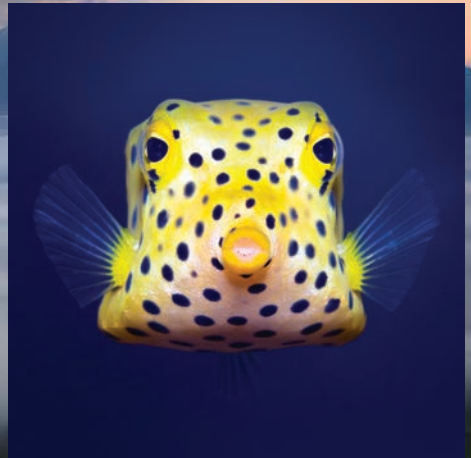
One of the indisputable highlights of the 2017 RA for the delegates was the appearance of LeVar Burton, this year’s recipient of NEA’s highest honor, the Friend of Education Award.

Burton, host of the long-running PBS children’s series, “Reading Rainbow,” saluted the impact his mother (a teacher) had on his life, and passionately calling for adequate funding of public education and greater respect for educators.

“I believe that what you have to offer is essential to this nation,” Burton said. “And our desire to lead the world in any meaningful manner depends on you...Without you, we go nowhere.”

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Oct. 1 is Deadline for NEA Medical, Related Liability

Cost Remains \$13

Nurses who teach or supervise in the medical arts area can obtain additional liability insurance through the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program Insurance – and it is amazingly inexpensive.

For the low, low fee of \$13 – a fee that has not changed since 2005 – the NEA plan offers nurses, other health educators and athletic trainers additional coverage for teaching and supervisory responsibilities.

The policy is available to both active and active part-time NSEA members and covers school nurses for:

- Rendering first-aid and regular nursing services as a part of the member's educational employment.

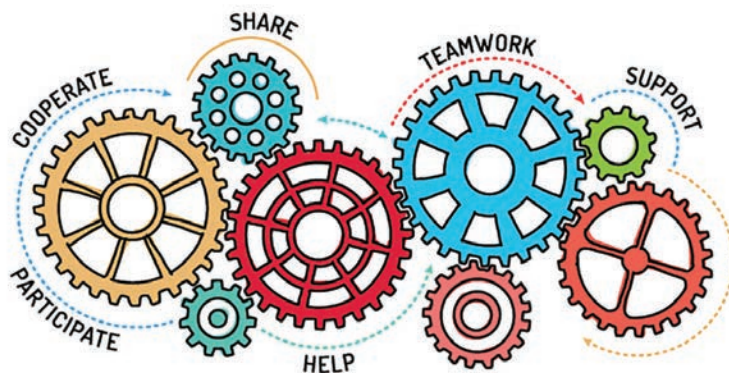
- Administration of oral prescription medicine to students, if advance written authorization has been provided.

In addition to nurses, eligible school employees include dental hygienists, occupational therapists or physical therapists. NSEA members who are athletic trainers are also eligible to purchase the coverage.

Interested NSEA members should send a letter requesting the coverage, along with a check for \$13, payable to NSEA, to: Megan Lyons, NSEA, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Be sure to indicate your occupation (school nurse). Also include your home and work telephone numbers.

Checks for the 2017-18 school year must be received by Oct. 1, 2017. Checks received after that date will provide coverage for the remaining months of the employment year.

For details, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.



Advocacy Conference 2017: Training and Tailgating!

The time is now to “gear up” to negotiate contracts for 2018-19.

Those local association officers, negotiators and others who work to secure respectable and competitive wages and benefits for members should plan to attend NSEA's 2017 Advocacy Conference on Sept. 29-30 in Columbus.

The Friday evening, Sept. 29, session will include a football watch party, as the University of Nebraska plays the University of Illinois in the Huskers' first-ever televised Friday evening game.

Registration will open at 5 p.m. Friday, with breakouts at 6 p.m., followed by the football social – an excellent opportunity for informal discussion. Friday evening breakouts will tentatively include sessions on comparability, contract enforcement, and time and space for teams to network. Enforcing Your Agreement and a negotiator discussion group. There will also be a discussion group for higher education member negotiators.

Saturday will open with a continental breakfast available beginning at 6 a.m., and vendors opening at 7:30 a.m. Work will begin with an 8:30 a.m. keynote address.

At 9 a.m., participants can attend any of more than 20 breakouts slotted into six

tracks, including these tentative tracks:

- **New Negotiators:** Topics under consideration include Writing and Managing Proposals; Negotiations Table Basics; Mock Negotiations.

- **Research-Analysis:** Salary Schedule Analysis; School Budgets and Lids; Comparability Study Basics.

- **Advanced:** The Workload Challenge; Model Contract Language; Bargaining Difficult Topics.

- **Advocacy:** Enforcing Your Agreement; Social Justice; Don't Sign That.

- **Organizing:** Your Leadership Structure and Bargaining; School Board Elections; Legislative Action.

- **Current Bargaining Issues:** Engaging and Communicating with Members Around Negotiations; Contract Placement Language; Using EdCommunities to Collaborate.

Lunch is provided at noon, and the conference will close by 3:30 p.m. Activities will be held at the newly remodeled River's Edge Conference Center at the Ramada Inn.

Register for the conference at:

www.nsea.org/AdConf

Questions? Contact Jan Anderson at 800-742-0047 or at:

jan.anderson@nsea.org

Ag Sack Lunch Program Brings Ag Awareness to Students

An effort to increase agricultural awareness with Nebraska young people and their families is back for an eighth year.

The Ag Sack Lunch program provides a free lunch and an agriculture-focused learning experience to fourth-graders who come to Lincoln each year to tour the state capitol as part of their educational curriculum. While they eat lunch, students hear a presentation about the crops and livestock species raised in Nebraska and the important role agriculture plays in the state economy.

The sack lunches consist of Nebraska-produced food items to help students appreciate where their food comes from. They also receive card games called “Crazy Soybean” and “Old Corn Maid,” which include ag facts, to take home to play with their families and friends.



Since the inaugural offering in 2010-11, nearly 35,000 students have participated in the Ag Sack Lunch program. It is sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Board, the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, the Nebraska Corn Board and the Nebraska Beef Council.

Ag Sack Lunch invitations have been sent to fourth-grade teachers at 660 elementary schools in 44 eastern Nebraska counties. Reservations for the 2017-18 school year are limited to 5,000 students on a first-come, first-served basis. These spots fill up quickly, so teachers are urged to sign up as soon as possible — even if their state capitol tour dates have not yet been finalized. Reservations can be made at:

agsacklunchprogram.com

For details, call Karen Brokaw at 1-402-432-2299.



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Staff Roles Change with Retirements

Four Veterans Depart; Gordon, Raphael, Hicks, Foster Take on New Association Roles

On Aug. 31, 88 years of experience left the NSEA umbrella of services.

Retirements of four veteran organizational specialists caused much change. Among them was **Ron Goldenstein**, who, with 42 years of service to members was certainly among the deans of Association employees across the country.

Goldenstein was one of NSEA's earliest field representatives when he started in September 1975 and has worked with members across the state. His most recent assignment as collective bargaining specialist utilized his expertise in that arena.

Three other organizational specialists have retired:

■ **Duane Obermier** taught at Grand Island and was president of the Grand Island Education Association. He was NSEA vice president for six years before becoming president. As Bylaws were altered to extend the president's term from a limit of three, two-year terms to two, three-year terms, he became NSEA's longest-serving president at seven years. He has been northeast Nebraska's organizational specialist for 11 years.

■ **Maureen Nickels** was an organizational specialist for 17 years, primarily in south central Nebraska. She taught at Grand Island, and in 2014 was elected to the State Board of Education. She is a past president of the Grand Island Education Association.

■ **Dan Studer** retires as executive director of the Lincoln Education Association, having served educators for 13 years. He was key in starting LEA's Harvest of Books program and the LEA Foundation. He is a past president of the LEA.

"These skilled advocates for educators will be missed by our members and their colleagues," said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell. "We are fortunate to have staff with a tremendous depth of skill and ability to draw on as we fill their positions."

IN NEW ROLES with NSEA are **Carol Hicks**, **Randy Gordon**, **Susan Foster** and **Michelle Raphael**. Hicks has been an organiza-

tional specialist for Omaha Education Association members for eight years. She worked northeast Nebraska for six years in the mid-1990s before returning briefly to her native Texas. Hicks leaves her OEA duties for the northeast Nebraska post vacated by Obermier.

At NSEA four years, Gordon served an area roughly bounded by Broken Bow, Franklin and McCook. He fills Goldenstein's role as collective bargaining specialist. He taught lower elementary, and served on LEA's Board of Directors, negotiations team and as a building rep.

Raphael takes Nickels' south central Nebraska unit. She has for three years been on NSEA's associate staff, teaching members about the Association's Navigator software. Navigator provides contract comparability studies that are crucial to local negotiations.

She worked for the Lancaster County Treasurer as banking director, accountant and budget officer. She worked 16 years for the state treasurer and is a Certified Treasury Professional. She has taught at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and at Bellevue University.

Foster becomes the executive director of the Lincoln Education Association upon Studer's retirement. She is a former teacher-turned-attorney-turned university administrator and worked as an organizational specialist in the LEA office since Feb. 1.

Foster taught at Millard, worked as an attorney in Omaha, and then worked at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as assistant to the chancellor for Institutional Equity and Compliance as the Title IX coordinator.

Retiring...



Goldenstein
42 years at NSEA



Obermier
Past president



Nickels
State board rep



Studer
Leaving LEA

New Assignments...



Hicks
Northeast Unit



Gordon
Bargaining duties



Foster
New LEA Exec



Raphael
Cather Unit

New Hires...



Figueroa
New at OEA



Fritz
Central Unit



Thomason
Associate Staff

THREE NEW HIRES are at NSEA. **Liz Figueroa** follows Hicks at OEA. She taught in North Carolina and in the Bronx, NY, before returning to Omaha. She variously taught English, social studies and gifted at McMillan Magnet School for 20 years, and at South High and Benson High. She served more than three terms on the OEA board of directors, and was a building rep for 20 of 22 years with OEA.

Taking Gordon's Central Unit duties is former kindergarten teacher **Heather Fritz**. She taught for 20 years in Fairfax County, VA, and two years in Bismarck, ND, before joining North Dakota United. There she worked with the student program and early career educators.

Natalie Thomason has stepped in to fill Raphael's associate staff duties. The Lincoln native has a bachelor's degree in psychology and criminal justice. She most recently was a project manager for Agilx, a Lincoln software firm.



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*Visit us online or call for eligibility requirements.
NEA Members Insurance Trust is a registered trademark of the NEA Members Insurance Trust.
NEA Complimentary Life Insurance coverage is issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ.



Save With Susan

Are you all revved up for the new school year?

For many of you, the routine has settled in and you are well on your way to the end of the first quarter. I hope the details here will give you some renewed energy!



Estes

NEA's Click & Save, the online discount buying service for NEA members, highlights select retailers and merchants each month.

Check out these featured "Buy-lights" for September:

■ **Anthropologie.com:** Exclusively for teachers is a 20 percent off full-price items until Sept. 11.

■ **Container Store.com:** Get your classroom and office organized with the latest products and free shipping on orders of \$75 or more from The Container Store.

■ **DiscountSchoolSupply.com:** Stock up now on classroom essentials, from arts and crafts materials and school supplies to educational toys and classroom furnishings. Get free shipping on orders of \$79 or more.

■ **The Walking Company:** Check out the specialty footwear, including the latest in foot scanning technology and orthotics for all-day comfort at work, at play, or for a night on the town! Free shipping on orders of \$100 or more.

Check Click & Save often for unadvertised, limited offers, including discount dining offers at Restaurant.com. Join the 427,000 NEA members registered for NEA Click & Save. To start saving, go to:

www.neamb.com/clickandsave

Satisfaction, Savings

You can also find satisfaction and savings by shopping the exclusive GE Appliances Store for everyday discounted prices.

NEA Members receive free delivery on orders over \$399 through Sept. 13 on GE Appliances Store purchases.

Go to the website at neamb.com/ge and click the 'Start Shopping' button to login or register for access to the GE Appliances Store. Once registered, you can login to shop anytime at

www.shop4ge.com

Installation and removal of old appliances are also offered on many products.

Learn and Save

You can learn more and save more at:

www.neamb.com

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

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

Don't Let Hackers Kidnap Your Data

Back Up Files; Update Operating Systems

By **Nellie S. Huang**

Kiplinger's interviewed Alan Brill, an expert on cybersecurity at Kroll, a corporate consulting firm. Read excerpts from our interview below.

News that the recent ransomware cyber-attack targeted hospitals and health care networks causes worries about the safety of medical data. What records are susceptible to attack?

The cyberattackers who encrypted the data on computers and held it for ransom weren't after medical records or other personal information. They wanted the ransom. But in the United Kingdom, some emergency rooms were shut down, and treatments were delayed because medical staff couldn't access patient records. That's scary. The next threat could be, "Pay us or we will not give you access to your data, and we will sell it to the bad guys." That kind of attack will be here shortly, if it's not here already.

Are U.S. consumers vulnerable?

Yes. This ransomware went viral. It had the ability not only to encrypt data on the machine it infected but also to search for other machines on the network that it could access and encrypt.

How can we protect ourselves?

Keep your operating system up to date. Microsoft, Apple and others issue updates in order to close holes that could cause trouble.

You need to upload them to your PC. Many people don't, or they're using obsolete versions of Windows, such as XP or Vista, that leave them vulnerable to cyberattacks. Back up files once a month by saving them to the cloud, an external hard drive or a memory stick. There is no such thing as 100 percent protection, so back up your data.

What if you're already a target?

There's no assurance you'll get your data back even if you pay. But computer scientists have figured out how to unlock your data from some ransomware. Search the web for unique words in your ransomware note to see if a free decoder is available. It doesn't always work because data that the decoder needs may no longer be on your hard drive. But you can try.

What about attacks that do target personal info?

Is my medical data at risk? If you have health insurance, someone can steal your identity to assume your benefits. But there are things you can do. Treat medical ID cards like ATM cards. Don't leave them lying around. When you get an explanation of benefits letter in the mail, make sure you had the services described. If you don't get an EOB, it might mean the bad guys got into the insurer's system and changed your mailing address and e-mail. Call your insurer right away

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Students Can Win with Safe Driving Ideas

High school and college students can win a share of \$15,000 available in the 2017 Fall Create Real Impact contest from Impact Teen Drivers and California Casualty.

Grand prizes of \$1,500 will be awarded for the best peer-to-peer messages highlighting solutions to reckless and distracted driving in the video, music, art and creative writing categories.

Prizes will also be awarded to schools with the most entries and top vote getters. Online voting will take place Oct. 7-12, with judges determining category grand prize awards by Oct. 16.

The Create Real Impact contest targets an end to needless traffic crashes involving young drivers. The contest was initiated as a proactive solution to the deadly epidemic of inattentive teen driving. Submissions of creative ideas to prevent distracted teen driving will be taken through Oct. 6. Entrants, ages 14-22, can find details and enter their work at:

www.createrealimpact.com

California Casualty has been serving educators for more than 65 years and is the only auto and home insurance company to earn the trust and endorsement of the NEA. As a result, members qualify for exceptional rates, deductibles waived for vandalism or collisions to your vehicle parked at school, holiday or summer skip payment plans and free Identity Defense protection – exclusive benefits not available to the general public.

Nebraska Loves Public Schools Airs New Film

Immigrant, Refugee Students Featured in New Documentary

Nebraska Loves Public Schools – a nonprofit dedicated to supporting public education through film – will host two screenings of its new immigrant and refugee documentary in September.

Seeds of Hope will premiere in Omaha and Lincoln, at 7 p.m. on Sept. 13 and Sept. 14, respectively.

Seeds of Hope, from the award-winning creators of the I Love Public Schools project, offers a look inside the globalization of Nebraska's classrooms. The 35-minute film demonstrates how schools welcome and educate immigrant and refugee families as they start their lives over in America. Audiences will follow stories from Nebraska's newcomer students: the inconceivable trauma and tribulations of their past, the perseverance to succeed in the present, and their hopes for a brighter future through quality education.

Since 2000, according to the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska public schools have seen a 113 percent increase in English Language Learner (ELL) students. The film illustrates how ELL education affects schools, the community, students and families.

The film includes footage from schools in Lincoln, Omaha, Chadron and Schuyler, as well as from the Center for People in Need, the New Americans Task Force and Yates Community Center.

Following each screening, there will be a Q&A with Director and Executive Producer Sally Nellson Barrett, featured cast members, and school leaders. A Take Action reception, where participants can learn ways to help immigrant and refugee students and families locally, will follow. All events are free and open to the public. Here are details:

■ **Omaha, Wednesday Sept 13**, Aksarben Cinema. RSVP at:

seedsofhopeOmaha.eventbrite.com

■ **Lincoln, Thursday, Sept. 14**, Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. RSVP at:

seedsofhopeLincoln.eventbrite.com

The film will be available online Sept. 15 at: iloveps.org

Since 2011, the Nebraska Loves Public Schools (NElovesPS) project has been documenting the stories happening in public schools across Nebraska. *Seeds of Hope* is one of the more than 50 'I Love Public Schools' films the organization has created since its inception. Nebraska Loves Public Schools is dedicated to supporting public education one documentary film at a time, and is also responsible for the I Love Public Schools shirts worn by Nebraskans everywhere.

NPPD Launches STEM Initiative

Nebraska Public Power District has launched the Pathways to a Technical Future initiative.

Pathways allows students to achieve knowledge, practical skills, expertise and literacy that will equip them to be successful in the emerging STEM workforce through experiences tied to academic requirements.

The program is built upon a plan that correlates "Open Source" learning with business fundamentals and education strategies. "Open Source" allows students to capitalize on the scope and power of the Internet.

Public power content is integrated within the projects and resources in six stages.

Pathways establishes a framework by which teachers provide opportunities for student development through innovation. Taking advantage of established "open source" movements, advances in innovation tools, and utilizing local resources (such as public power utilities), educators can follow a holistic approach to teaching.

Pathways integrates local business and education through technology and student-led activities. The implementation includes four components: teacher professional development opportunities; online Learning Object Repository; STEM Connections Lab (portable makerspace for schools to check out); local partnerships.

Teacher development includes opportunities to learn how to use the Pathways program in their classrooms, as well as discovery time with equipment and resources.

Resources include lessons, activities, presentations, videos and career connections. The STEM Lab gives access to tools and equipment that will encourage a student focused maker's mentality. For details, visit:

pathways.nppd.com/p2020



Fun at the County Fair!

Teachers and members of the Arlington Education Association were busy at the Washington County Fair in late July touting public education and their own school system! They gave away pens, clips, notepaper and other items to members and fair attendees. From left are Leslie Gubbels, Marcia Kaup, AEA President Shawna Koger, Kristy Rollins, Carla Kaup, Liz Fedde, Gail Barth!

Middle School Educators to Meet at York

The Nebraska Association for Middle Level Education (NAMLE) invites educators who work with "students in the middle" to the 2017 Professional Development Institute. The event is designed to meet the needs of students by supporting teachers and administrators with teaching strategies.

Keynote is author, humorist, former Denver middle school teacher Jack Berckmeyer. Early in his career he was named an outstanding educator at his school and dis-

trict. Now he owns Nuts and Bolts – Ready to Lead, Teach and Learn. He brings energy and humor to help educators remember why teaching makes a difference. Other sessions focus on student needs. If interested in presenting or registering, go to:

namlems.org

The fee is \$80 for members, and includes light breakfast and a lunch. The cost for non-members is \$100. The site is York Middle School, Friday, Oct. 6, 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Will Your Idea Change Education?



**Executive Director
Maddie Fennell**

“

Right now, in a Nebraska classroom, there is a teacher with an idea that can amplify their impact on students, or perhaps even completely transform Nebraska's public schools.

”

Have you ever been sitting around the teachers' lounge (or favorite happy hour spot) with colleagues and someone comes up with a brilliant idea that could really transform your school, classroom or even state policy?

Maybe your idea was to:

- Develop stronger relationships with parents and your community;
- Institute a new mindfulness curriculum;
- Strengthen your new teacher mentor programs;
- Work with mental health advocates to provide more resources for struggling families;
- Build a website that provides technology integration ideas for teachers
- Use your literacy expertise to write a better version of state policy (like the third grade reading bill – the bill that allows retention of third graders who are not yet reading at grade level).

I have seen all of these ideas – and many more – become reality thanks to the hard work of teachers. Teachers just like you who struggled because their great idea just couldn't get off the ground.

But those teachers also had one VERY important thing that we at NSEA will soon make available to YOU. They had Teach to Lead.

No Fees

Over the past three years, Teach to Lead has helped drive a national conversation on teacher leadership and helped teachers turn their leadership ideas into action. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, ASCD and the U.S. Department of Education have been joined by more than 100 supporting organizations in this critical work. It is Teach to Lead's mission to expand opportunities for teacher leadership by providing resources, facilitating stakeholder consultation, and encouraging professional collaborations to develop and amplify the work of teacher leaders.

NSEA's new 501(c)3 is called LEARN – Leading Excellence and Robust Networks – and will sponsor a one day Powered by Teach to Lead Teacher Leadership Conference on Saturday, Dec. 2, at Kearney. There is no registration fee, meals will be provided and most travel costs will be covered for your team.

There is No 'Sit and Get'

Here's how it works:

■ A teacher has a great idea that they believe will strengthen education at the classroom, school, district or state level.

■ The teacher talks about their idea with others for their feedback and support.

■ The teacher tells us about their idea by applying no later than Sunday, Oct. 15, at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/9JH3GP9

■ A team of practicing educators reviews all submitted ideas and chooses those that they believe will have the greatest impact or potential for success.

■ If chosen, the teacher is notified and given about three weeks to put a team of five stakeholders together. The teacher decides who should be on the team. Members can be other educators, administrators, school board members, parents, legislators or students. It's up to the applicant to decide who the key team members will be.

■ Your team is paired with a critical friend. This person has expertise in strategic planning or your idea (for instance if your idea was about early childhood, we might ask the Buffett Early Childhood Institute to assist you).

■ Your team takes part in a pre-conference webinar to learn more about the process.

■ Your team joins us in Kearney on Dec. 2, and

together you develop a strategic plan utilizing the expertise of a national trainer.

This isn't a "sit and get" conference. You'll work with your team, not just listen. You will be given the skills and support to develop a road map of essential program elements that the team can follow to success once they get home.

Shoot at the Moon!

How do you get your team to Kearney?

First, talk with your colleagues and friends and start generating ideas. Allow yourself to dream big!

It's better to shoot at the moon and miss than shoot at a skunk and connect!

Second, apply for the Summit by the deadline I mentioned earlier, at the link above.

Right now, in a Nebraska classroom, there is a teacher with an idea that can amplify their impact on students or perhaps even completely transform Nebraska's public schools. Join us in Kearney to collaborate, problem solve, and develop action plans to put your own expertise into action!

Start Dreaming!
Apply for the Dec. 2 Teach to Lead Summit no later than Sunday, Oct. 15, at:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/9JH3GP9

Review leadership plans from past national summits at:
teachtolead.org/summits/action-plans/

NSEA-Retired to Launch CORE Project

Goal is to Provide Aid to Active Teachers, Students, Others

NSEA-Retired membership is near 6,000 educators. Members have joined in various ways: pre-retired life, life, and annual. For years those dues and the participation of those members have been actively serving the education profession in many ways.

We are now seeking to be of even more help to active members, student members, and the profession. We are seeking volunteers to what we at NSEA-Retired are calling CORE, or Call On Retired Educators. Here are some ways in which you can help:

- Local mentoring of student members at a local event or on local college campus;
- Assist at local NSEA meetings;
- Make contacts and build relationships with legislators and policymakers.
- Mentor new educators;
- Assist with Read Across America through Cat in the Hat readings at local school(s) and other efforts.
- Other. There is always an “other!”

Retirees, please review the list and let us know what you can do by contacting Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

In turn, active teachers, please review the list and let us know how we might be of help. Thank you!

Nebraskans to NEA Meeting

Six delegates to the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly were elected from Nebraska and were also delegates to the NEA-Retired meeting June 27-28 in Boston. In addition to delegates, NSEA-Retired board members Ruby Davis and Dee Gillham attended.

NSEA-Retired board member John Jensen serves as vice president of the NEA-Retired Association. One of his responsibilities is the organization of fundraising for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, which collected more than \$98,000 this year. The NEA Fund collects voluntary contributions which are used for political purposes, including, but not limited to making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for federal office.

The theme of the 2017 NEA-Retired annual meeting was Uniting Our Members and the Nation. Action resulting in a successful new business item at RA was asking that NEA draft model legislation to be used in states to address current concerns such as gerrymandering and attacks on right to work



In Boston: Positioned before a quilt at the NEA-Retired conference in Boston in June are the Nebraska delegates: Front, from left, are John Jensen and Carol Krejci, Omaha; and Tom Black, West Point. Back, from left, are Jim McDermott, Scottsbluff; Roger Rea, Omaha; and De Tonack, Lincoln. Proceeds from the raffle of the quilt benefit the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

and teacher pensions. Three scholarships of \$2,500 were awarded to student members.

Fall Conference a Birthday Treat!

The NSEA-Retired fall conference is set at Aurora's Leadership Center (east end of town; north of Highway 34) on Tuesday, Oct. 24, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

At the conference, we will celebrate NSEA's 150th birthday, along with the 150th birthday of Nebraska. Dr. Craig R. Christiansen, former Executive Director of NSEA, will help attendees celebrate those birthdays at the conference with stories of NSEA through those years.

The afternoon will offer controversial U.S. history stories through postage stamps by Humanities Nebraska presenter Bob Ferguson. Between those presentations will be breakout sessions: Speed Traveling 5 Countries, Safe Driving Tips from the State Patrol, Building Better Body Balance, Scam Alert: How Not to Get Ripped Off, Blue Cross-Blue Shield Updates and Life is a Marathon – What's Next?

Morning refreshments and lunch are free for members. Additional guest registration is \$10 each. Afternoon dessert and prizes end the afternoon. Reservations are due by Oct. 17. To reserve a space, call Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or email her at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

You will soon be able to register on line

by going to nsea.org/retired.

Also: Attendees are welcome to come for campfire, s'mores and conversation on Monday evening, Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m. at the Leadership center

Quilts Go to Ogallala, Grand Island

NSEA-Retired raffle ticket donations for a quilt and an embroidered blanket during the 2016-17 year totaled \$1,628 from more than 1,600 tickets sold. The drawing was done by President Nancy Fulton on July 25. Winner of the lap quilt, made and donated by NSEA Organizational Specialist Michelle Raphael was Ogallala's Janice Cerny. The winner of the embroidered baby blanket, made and donated by Gloria Boham, was Sharon Roggenkamp, Grand Island.

Proceeds go to the NSEA Children's Fund which provides needed items to students from across the state upon request. Congratulations to the winners, thank you to Michelle and Gloria, and to all who gave.

Oops!

The May edition of The Corner inadvertently left off the names of six members who attended the NSEA Delegate Assembly in April. Those omitted were Guy Roggenkamp, Jan Barnason, Mary Ann Niemoth, De Tonack, Tom Black and Roger Rea.

— De Tonack

— President, NSEA-Retired

SEAN Program Sweeps Awards at NEA Student Program Gala

“Nebraska Night” would have been a much shorter name for the 2017 National Education Association Student Program Student Leadership Conference Awards Banquet. It would have been apropos, too!

Members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) – NSEA’s student program – took the stage several times to accept awards for work during the 2016-17 year, and swept social justice categories.

“It was an incredible honor and truly indicates our student leaders achieved their goals of focusing on social justice issues this year,” said SEAN Advisors Kristen Sedlacek, an organizational specialist for NSEA, and Kristi Capek, NSEA’s graphic artist and webmaster.

Among the awards to SEAN:

■ **Outstanding State Student Leader:** Went to past SEAN President Denton Beacom. The Wayne State senior was cited for enthusiasm in his work in building membership and for leadership in planning statewide conferences. He organized the first SEAN Lobby Day at the Legislature, and led 27 members to the capitol to meet with senators. He testified against a bill to reduce retirement benefits for teachers hired after July 1, 2018.

■ **Excellence in Social Justice:** The Hastings College chapter was cited for ef-



Beacom

orts to bring social justice awareness to future teachers. The chapter defined social justice as “fair is not equal...fair is providing what is needed.” The nomination said “we believe our purpose is to provide

what students need to ‘even the playing field’ so that every child from every diverse population has an equal chance for success. When children need accommodations in the classroom, they should be provided without question.”

■ **Excellence in Social Justice:** The state organization was cited for a social justice panel at SEAN’s spring conference. Beacom found three high school students to participate in a panel on social and racial justice. SEAN members listened as panelists explained their hopes, dreams, concerns and experiences as students of color. The panel experience was described as “incredibly powerful” for all.

■ **Outstanding State Achievement:** The state chapter was cited for organizing the first SEAN Lobby Day in March. More than two dozen students attended and learned about pending legislation that would affect them and their classrooms. Students then identified their senators, and each student committed to talking to several senators about education issues.

Fennell Selected to Chair National Teachers of the Year

NSEA Exec Applauds Organization’s Mission

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) elected Madaline (Maddie) Fennell as Chair of the Board of Directors at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in July.

Fennell, the 2007 Nebraska State Teacher of the Year and a National Board Certified Teacher, is a 27-year veteran of the classroom who also served as a mentor to her peers as a literary coach. She is now the Executive Director of the Nebraska State Education Association.

“I believe in the mission of NNSTOY,” said Fennell. “NNSTOY advocates for the voices of highly effective teachers at the decision-making table because teacher leadership is the key to transforming our education system into

what our students need and deserve. I am honored to be working with the NNSTOY board and staff to advance this work as Chair of the Board.”

As Board chair, Fennell will ensure the Board is meeting its responsibilities to the organization, will convene and preside over meetings of the Board, and will lead the governance work of the organization.

NNSTOY members are State and National Teachers of the Year and Finalists for State Teacher of the Year from every state and territory, who teach all subjects and grade levels. They have been recognized by their state for their effectiveness in the classroom and trained to use their teacher leadership to improve education policy, practice and advocacy on behalf of all students.

Learn more at:

www.nnstoy.org

Richard Swett

Richard Swett, 84, Kearney, died May 2, 2017. The Ainsworth native graduated from Wood Lake High School in 1951, served four years in the U.S. Air Force, and then attended Kearney State College, earning a teaching degree in 1959. He taught at Superior and at Malvern, IA, before returning to Kearney in 1964, where he taught until his retirement.

Swett was a Husker fan, enjoyed gardening, reading historical biographies, hunting, fishing and traveling. He was a life member of the NSEA and a member of the First Presbyterian Church and American Legion. His wife, Sharon, and two children survive.

Lorene Behrends

Teacher and NSEA activist Lorene E. Behrends, 91, died in Lincoln on July 10.

The Vesta native attended Peru State College and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She taught early elementary and special ed for 54 years, including stops at Walton, Holland, Norris and Lincoln.

In the mid-1960s she was active on the science demonstration team for NSEA’s famed HelpMobile program, which traveled the state to provide professional development to teachers.

She was a building representative at Meadow Lane Elementary and later served on the Lincoln Education Association Board. In May 1992, she was a founding member of the Lincoln Education Association-Retired and served as treasurer and president. She was also treasurer for NSEA-Retired.

She is survived by a daughter and two brothers.

Jim Van Marter

Teacher and lifetime NSEA member Jim Van Marter, 88, Holdrege, died July 20.

The Pennsylvania native enrolled at Kearney State College after discharge from the Air Force in 1949. He taught business at Beaver City and Sargent before joining the Holdrege faculty. He was past president of the Nebraska State Business Education Association, the Nebraska Wrestling Coaches Association, and the Nebraska Athletic Director’s Association. He was past president of the Holdrege Education Association, and past president of NSEA District V.

He was a past city councilman and mayor of Holdrege, and past president of the Nebraska League of Municipalities. In 1999 he was named an Outstanding Alumni of the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Take Action!

Use NSEA Mobile App, Save with Click & Save

As the new school year gets underway, don't forget some of the great benefits of NSEA membership.

First, NSEA offers a wonderful application for your mobile device. The app allows you to download selected calendar items to your electronic calendar, including regional and statewide Association events, as well as the dates of Nebraska School Activities Association championship events.

The app also provides links to NEA Member Benefits, *The Voice*, Legislative Updates and other resources. You can also choose to receive special Association notifications through the app.

Find the app by searching your app store for "Nebraska State Education."

NEA Member Benefits offers the Click & Save benefit to Association members.

Click & Save is the very best way to save big dollars! It is the most popular discount program for NEA members and their families. The shopping service offers savings from hundreds of top retailers, online stores, and local merchants. Macy's, Lowe's, Best Buy, Crate and Barrel are some of those on board.

Learn more about Click & Save at the NEA Member Benefits website at:

neamb.com

Speaking of Education

"There will rarely be genuine and healthy laughter in a classroom unless the teacher can laugh at a number of things in general, and at himself in particular."

— *Anonymous*



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

Classroom Mailing Center Reduces Chit-Chat

Deborah A. Myers, a sixth grade teacher in Tennessee:

"I bought enough file system boxes to create a classroom mail center, similar to the ones the teachers have in the office. My students place their homework in their mailboxes. They put their questions and concerns in my mailbox, and while they are doing early morning work, I read and respond personally to those notes. I get to give students that one-on-one attention they need.

I also get to know students a little better. Somehow they share more when they know I'm going to read it and respond right away. The chit-chat has been reduced in the classroom because students have the freedom to place notes in classmates' mailboxes. They know that they can only retrieve their mail after ALL of their morning work is completed. Homework, letters home, and other important materials are handled in a very orderly manner. This mailbox system has really worked4me."



Bonus Tip: Keep Those Desks Clean

Debbie Winger, a sixth grade social studies teacher at Shawnee Middle School, Fort Wayne, IN:

"My tip can be used for any grade and it has to do with cleaning the classroom. To get pencil marks off of desks, I buy a tub of baby-wipes (cheap ones work just as well as name brands). I give each student one and they go to work on their desk tops. Not only are they easy on the hands and non-toxic, the desks get cleaned and the room smells nice and fresh!"

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

Be Professional!

That was the message when this photograph appeared in the Dec. 4, 1953, publication of NSEA's *Education News*, a predecessor to *The Voice*. The photograph shows Lincoln English and social studies teacher and NSEA member Lois Schwab posting her Association membership card in her Irving Middle School classroom. The room card, said the caption, is "evidence to patrons, students and fellow workers of their professional interest."

In the more than 60 years since, the NSEA room card continues to be a part of Association culture. Snap a closeup of yourself, or you and colleagues with your NSEA room cards. Email the photo to the editor at al.koontz@nsea.org to see yourself in print!