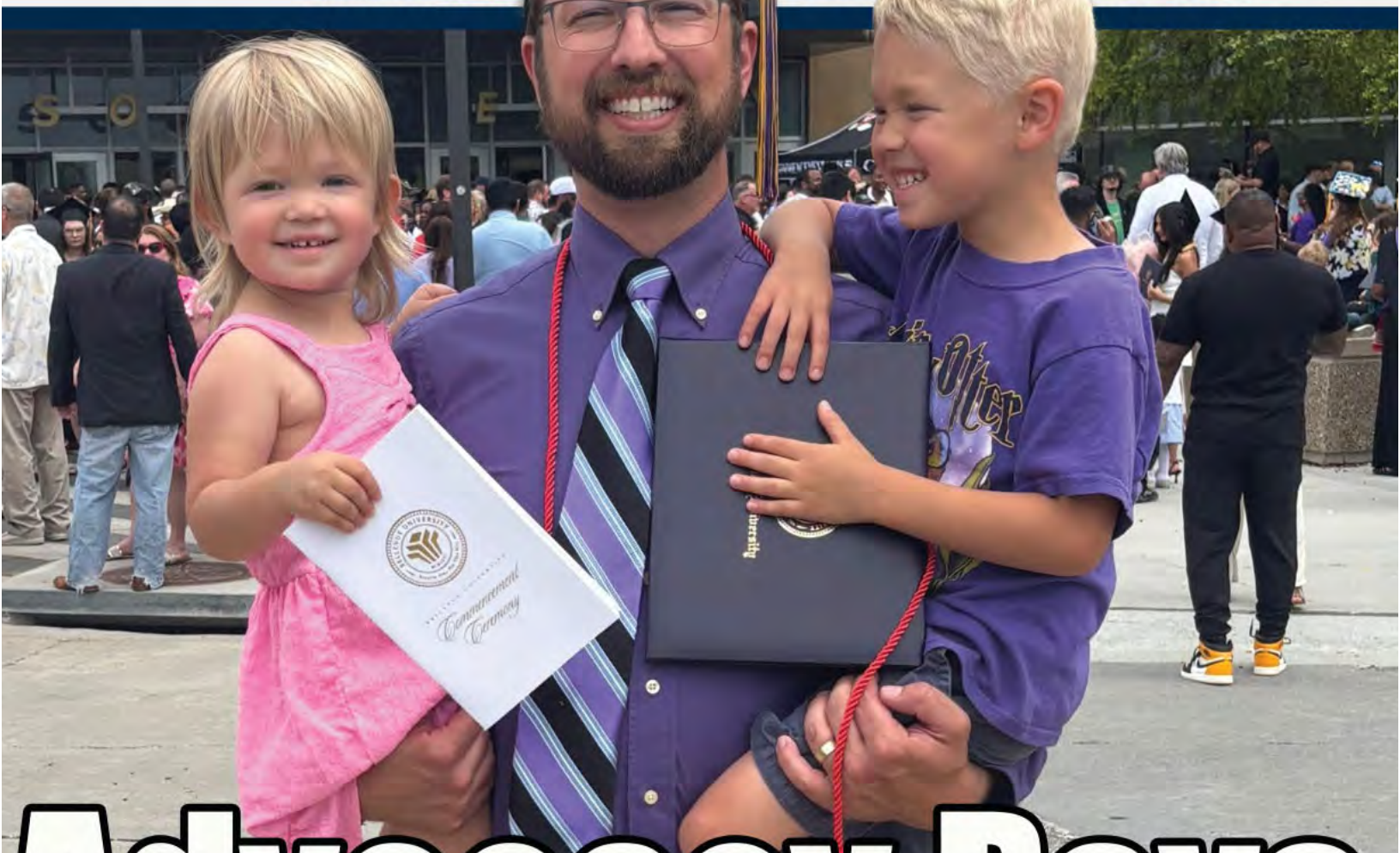


The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association November 2025



Advocacy Pays

**NSEA Steps In to Help a Member
Step Up the Salary Schedule**

- Celebrate American Education Week Nov. 17-21
- 25-26 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Applications Open Soon
- EHA Board Approves 2026-27 Insurance Rates & Changes



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Celebrate American Education Week!

#AEW2025

American Education Week (AEW) annually celebrates the achievements of public schools in America and honors the work of people making a difference in education. This year, the festivities will take place Nov. 17-21.

Each day of the week has its own theme, during which we celebrate our public school community.

Festivities honor the team of people—everyone from bus drivers and classroom teachers to cafeteria workers and administrative staff, plus countless others—who work in our public schools. Communities are invited to celebrate and thank school staff in fun ways throughout the week.

Monday: Kick-off Day

Celebrate the start of the week by familiarizing students with the theme, activities, and purpose of the event.

Tuesday: Family Day

Celebrate by inviting parents to actively experience how a school day goes for their students.

Wednesday: Education Support Professionals Day

Education Support Professionals Day is a day to celebrate a school's support staff.

Thursday: Educator for a Day

Celebrate by inviting community leaders to work as an employee in the school, performing all the duties of a teacher for a full day.

Friday: Substitute Educators Day

Substitute Educators Day celebrates people who are there to help educators when there is a sudden emergency or temporary leave.

Would You Like to Write for The Voice?

Would you like to write an item for *The Voice*? Perhaps an opinion column or an article on what is working in your classroom? Submissions can be classroom-related, humorous, inspiring or otherwise teaching related. Submit your questions about the process, and your topics to us, at:

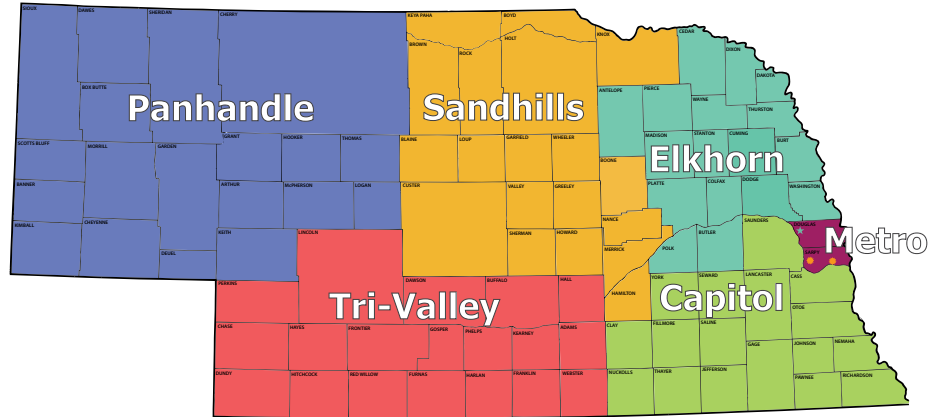
thevoice@nsea.org

On the Cover: Omaha Education Association member Nathan Jarvis received a pay bump after NSEA advocacy helped him cash in on his advanced degree. Read his story on pages 7-8.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIM ROYERS



In order to comply with NEA guidelines, the ♦ Gretna Education Association and ♦ Springfield/Platteview Education Association will be included in Capitol District, and ♦ Metro Community College Education Association is included in Elkhorn District.

We're Trying Something Different

This year, I've been thinking a lot about the questions guiding our work as an organization: *What does an engaged member look like? What does an engaged local association look like? How can we increase engagement across the state?*

Our goal is simple: we want every member to feel they have meaningful opportunities to get involved and to make their voice heard on the issues that matter most to them. As we've listened to educators from across Nebraska, we've focused on expanding access to those opportunities and removing barriers to participation.

One of the big challenges is travel. Nebraska is a big state! NSEA hosted its summer conference in Kearney this year. Even though that was centrally located, we heard from members who said getting there just wasn't an option.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2026, we will be trying something different. NSEA will be doing our best to bring the learning opportunities to you! Rather than having one single conference, we will host six different training opportunities in each of our governing districts (see map). The exact locations and dates have not yet been confirmed.

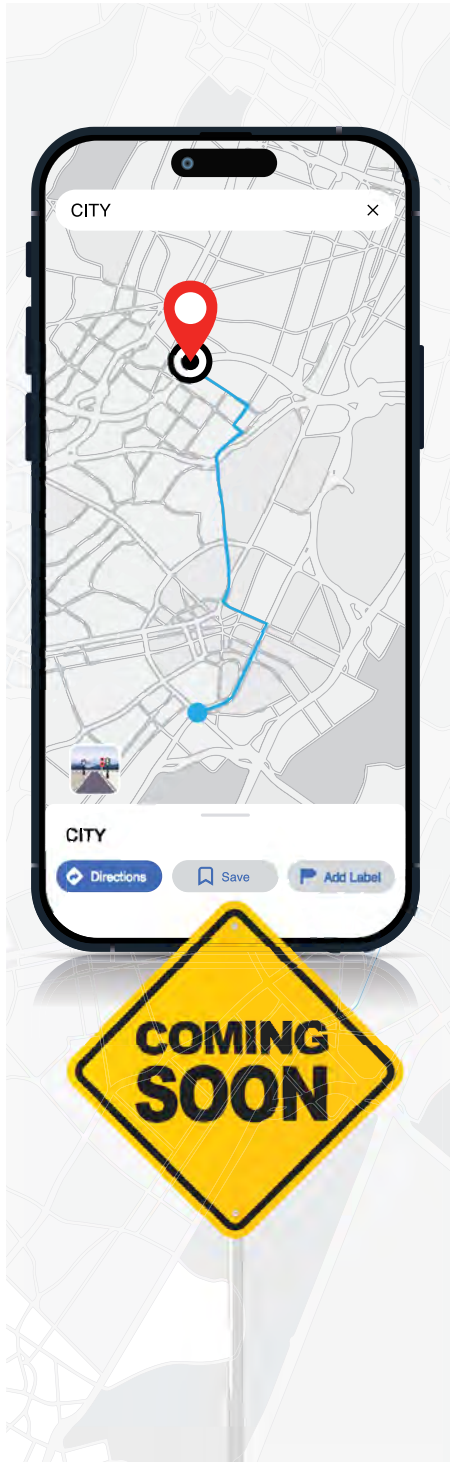
By offering training opportunities by governance districts, we hope to

increase member engagement and make it much easier for members to find a training that is closer to home. It will also allow NSEA to differentiate the trainings we offer so they better reflect your experiences in your own local association.

Our Goal

Our goal is to provide training opportunities that will meet you where you are in your leadership journey. If you are part of a veteran local leadership team, we want to provide you a chance to learn and grow. If you are newly elected into a role—like a local treasurer—we want to give you the foundation in the summer so you can be successful. We want to continue to provide training for those of you involved in negotiations. And even if you aren't serving in an official capacity within your local association yet, but want to figure out how you can get more involved, we'll have opportunities for you as well.

Keep an eye out this spring for more details as NSEA finalizes dates and locations. As your NSEA president, I sincerely encourage you to set aside a day to get out, learn from the best, and grow as a leader within our organization. We need your voice, your energy and your leadership!





NEA Joins Suit to Halt PSLF Rewrite

The National Education Association (NEA) has joined a broad coalition of labor unions and nonprofit organizations in filing a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The lawsuit alleges that the Administration has unlawfully altered the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program in a way that could penalize state and local governments or nonprofit organizations whose work it disagrees with. The coalition argues that this action violates a decades-old bipartisan commitment by Congress to support those who dedicate their careers to public service.

Public service employers and worker organizations warn that any politicization of the PSLF program could have a chilling effect on the public sector workforce. Cities across the country employ teachers, firefighters, social workers, and healthcare workers who could risk losing access to debt relief if the administration were to restrict PSLF eligibility based on political considerations.

The plaintiffs include the cities of Albuquerque, Boston and Chicago; the City and County of San Francisco; the County of Santa Clara; the Center for Immigrant Rights; the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights; Legal Aid DC; the National Assoc. of Social Workers; the National Council of Nonprofits; Oasis Legal Services; the American Federation of Teachers; the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; and the NEA.

The coalition is asking the courts to overturn the new rule and preserve the PSLF program as Congress originally intended—a bipartisan commitment to supporting those who serve their communities, regardless of politics.

Apply now for 2026 Belz, Lynch, Krause Grants

Good teachers are always looking to improve their skill set, and the NSEA makes learning easier with an award from the Belz, Lynch, Krause Educational Grant Fund. The 2026 application deadline is Sunday, March 1, 2026.

Grants are awarded for projects related to improving a local association, development of instructional materials or for staff development for individuals of a local association. Eligible recipients are any NSEA member, group of NSEA members or any NSEA local association.

The application must include an abstract of the project (not to exceed four typed pages) including the following information:

- need;
- how the project will address that need and relate to professional growth goals;
- project description;
- timeline;
- a budget statement; and
- methods of evaluating success.

Applications must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. CST on March



Belz



Lynch



Krause

1, 2026. Recipients will be notified in March.

A letter describing and evaluating the project must be submitted by the recipients to NSEA's Scholarship and Grants Committee within three months of project completion.

The grants are named for John Lynch, NSEA's executive director from 1959 to 1974; Paul Belz, executive director from 1974 to 1984; and Helen Krause, NSEA president in 1966 and the first Nebraskan to serve on NEA's Executive Committee.

Further details and the application form can be found at www.nsea.org/BLK. For questions, contact Chris Garcia at 1-800-742-0047 or email Chris.Garcia@nsea.org.

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2025-26

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act Grant



The NDE is excited to launch the 2025-26 school year Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act Grant Program (TRRA). Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-8,112, the purpose of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act Grant Program is “to provide financial incentives to recruit and retain teachers in Nebraska classrooms.” This program is open to teachers from public and nonpublic schools, as well as teachers employed by an ESU.



The retention grant is for **\$2,500** for teachers in their 2nd, 4th or 6th year of teaching. This includes time teaching outside of Nebraska.



The high-needs grant is a one-time grant for **\$5,000** for teachers who have been issued an endorsement in specific high-needs areas with a contract to teach in that area. You can check your issue date of your endorsement at: teach.education.ne.gov. It must be issued on or after 6/2/2023.



The guidelines and application can be found at: education.ne.gov/csds/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-act/ or by scanning the QR code.

The first step is filling out the application. If selected, additional documentation will be necessary.



The application will **open November 17, 2025 and closes on December 17, 2025, at 11:59pm CST** and applicants will be notified no later than January 31, 2026. If you qualify for both grants you can apply for both grants.

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ADVOCACY PAYS: NSEA Steps in to Help an OEA Member Step Up the Salary Schedule

When Nathan Jarvis, a first-year teacher at Morton Middle School, accepted his first full-time teaching position with Omaha Public Schools (OPS), he didn't expect that his law degree would become a point of difference between himself and the district. The former compliance professional and licensed attorney said OPS initially said they would not recognize his juris doctorate (J.D.) on the district's salary schedule.

"They said they weren't going to honor the advanced degree," he recalled. "That's when the NSEA stepped in."

Finding Purpose in a New Profession

Jarvis' path to education was far from traditional. After earning his bachelor's degree in criminology in 2012 and his law degree three years later in 2015 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he worked in insurance compliance or "lawyer light," as he put it.

"I was tasked with making sure companies filled out their paperwork correctly to avoid being sued by the government or to continue receiving federal or state money," he said. "I didn't really enjoy it."

Jarvis and his wife, Audrey, welcomed two children between 2020 and 2023. His experiences as a father, combined with his wife's role as an educator at Papillion-La Vista, influenced his decision to transition into teaching.

"I had kids and realized I actually liked them," he laughed. "I've always loved social studies, so teaching just felt like the right fit."

Jarvis earned his bachelor's degree in education from Bellevue University, with an endorsement in secondary social studies. During that time, he gained hands-on experience substitute teaching across the Omaha metro.

He officially joined OPS in 2024 as a college and careers instructor at Morton Middle School - a position that he felt would benefit from his juris doctorate.

OPS and most other districts reward advanced degrees and professional growth by aligning those degrees within the district's salary schedule. There are established steps for master's and Ph.D. degrees, but Jarvis' J.D. didn't neatly fit into those categories, according to the district.

The Degree Dilemma

A master's degree (M.A., M.S., M.Ed., etc.) typically requires 30–45 credit hours, while a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) often involves 60–90 credit hours beyond a bachelor's degree, varying widely by discipline. By comparison, Jarvis' law degree required between 90 and 95 credit hours and three years of full-time study to complete. Given the time and effort required to earn a J.D., Jarvis was shocked to discover that the district didn't view it the same way it does a master's or Ph.D.

"They were the hardest courses I've ever taken," he said. "It's not really about memorizing a bunch of laws—it's about learning how to write and argue effectively, how to research, and how to interpret complex, often outdated legal language. It's more skills-based than content-based—

less about remembering what a law says and more about understanding how to think through and apply it.”

NSEA/OEA Steps In

With encouragement from his wife, a member of the Papillion-La Vista Education Association, Jarvis reached out to the Omaha Education Association (OEA) for help.

Working with NSEA Organizational Specialist Kathie Garabrandt and the Nebraska State Education Association, Jarvis appealed the district’s decision.

“At first, the district agreed to a higher placement,” Garabrandt said. “But then we received an email backtracking on that decision. We knew the district was having some internal struggles about where the placement should be.”

Garabrandt contacted colleagues at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln College of Law for guidance, and eventually, the dean of the College of Law sent a letter to the district on Jarvis’s behalf.

“The dean, in his letter, kind of politely ripped into them,” Jarvis said with a laugh. “He pointed out that the J.D. has about 60 more credits than a master’s and is at least as rigorous as a Ph.D., with all the extensive writing, research, and defending of positions involved. After that, they finally honored it.”

Salary Step Up

The district ultimately agreed to place Jarvis one step below a Ph.D. on the pay scale. That change translated into roughly a \$10,000 annual pay increase. For Jarvis, that single win underscored the power of union advocacy.

“This single outcome has more than justified my membership. That one annual increase easily covers about a decade’s worth of dues,” he said.

Jarvis said in spite of the hiccup over placement, he is enjoying working as a career instructor at Morton Middle School. His background in law helps him in the classroom every day—whether it’s explaining how to research effectively, interpret complex information, or help students think critically about their futures.

“A lot of kids put ‘lawyer’ on their



Advanced Degrees BY THE NUMBERS



Of Nebraska public K-12 teachers surveyed during the 2020–21 school year, 58.8% held a master’s degree, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).¹



According to the same NCES data, another 6% of Nebraska public educators surveyed held a degree higher than a master’s, such as an education specialist or doctorate.¹



According to the National Education Association’s 2023–24 Teacher Salary Benchmark Report, beginning teachers with a master’s degree nationally earn about **8.3%** more on average than those with only a bachelor’s degree.²

1. National Center for Education Statistics, “Percentage Distribution of Public K-12 School Teachers, by Highest Degree Earned and State: 2020–21,” April 2023, https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/estable/table/ntps2021_sflt04_t1s.asp

2. Teacher Salary Benchmark Report: 2023–2024. Collective Bargaining & Member Advocacy Department, April 2025. Available at: www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2023-24-teacher-salary-benchmark-report.pdf

vision boards,” Jarvis said. “I can help them understand what that really looks like.”

Check Your Paycheck

While Jarvis’s situation was unusual, it highlights the kind of complex pay and placement issues that NSEA helps members navigate.

In some cases, errors in salary placement or payroll—whether overpayment or underpayment—can create real financial strain for educators. Each case requires careful review and individual resolution.

Local associations are encouraged to remind members to check their first paycheck each school year for accuracy and to assist new members in verifying their placement. Many potential problems can be prevented through this simple step.

If you discover a discrepancy, contact your NSEA Organizational Specialist right away at 1-800-742-0047. NSEA’s advocacy can make all the difference—just as it did for Jarvis.

EHA Approves 2026-27 Rates

For more information about the plan, visit ehaplan.org.

Nebraska educators know that keeping high-quality healthcare benefits affordable is an important part of negotiations. In late October, the Educators Health Alliance (EHA) Board of Directors announced the rate and benefit change decisions for the 2026-27 contract year effective Sept. 1, 2026. There will be an overall increase of 7.25% for the medical and dental insurance plans used by nearly every Nebraska school district, following action by the Educators Health Alliance (EHA), a consortium of three statewide public school groups that manages the plan.

All medical insurance rates will increase by 7.44%, and dental insurance rates will increase by 3.17% for active employees and retirees from the 2025-26 rate level.

"While our medical claims have increased in the most recent months, we are comfortable approving a rate increase below some of the industry surveys we have seen," said Trish Guinan, EHA board chair and NSEA executive director. "Given the current rate of inflation, we are particularly pleased we've been able to maintain

our streak of more than 20 years without a double-digit increase in rates, and to average an increase of 5.01% for the last decade."

Guinan also noted that there will be some benefit changes made in 2026-27.

"We believe it is important to minimize the change in benefits to our members," Guinan said. "While we have been able to maintain our deductible offerings in the 2026-27 plan year, we did make changes to several copays in order to reduce the rate increase. We were able to maintain zero copays for mental health and substance abuse visits and did not increase the copay for primary care visits."

The successful rollout of the alternate network product offering to all districts in areas of the state where network competition exists will be continued in the 2026-27 plan year.

Guinan said the single-digit increase in premium rates is made possible due to several factors, including:

- The implementation of several new programs to manage pharmacy costs;



- Programs designed to assist in the management of chronic and emerging diseases; and
- Holding the line on health and administrative cost increases.

"The EHA Board has taken some strategic actions to manage our claim costs, especially with respect to the expansion of a diabetes claim management program to pre-diabetics and the launch of a new program to manage musculoskeletal claims," said Beth Kernes Krause, EHA vice chair and Auburn Public Schools board of education member.

"The EHA Board takes its responsibility for plan oversight very seriously," said Mike Dulaney, executive director of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. "We believe the rate and benefit decisions reached for the 2026-27 plan year will allow the EHA to continue to provide a quality, affordable health insurance plan well into the future."

"The EHA Board understands the financial concerns of our members as well as the fiscal constraints facing school districts," said Colby Coash, associate executive director of the Nebraska Association of School Boards. "With over 92,000 members in the plan, EHA has the largest risk pool in the state, which allows more predictability and stability in rates. This benefits both districts and individuals and their families."

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NSEA TRACKS INTERIM STUDIES THAT COULD **AFFECT PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Even though the second session of the 109th Nebraska Legislature isn't scheduled to convene until Jan. 7, 2026, work is already well underway. The Education Committee has begun a series of interim study hearings to examine key issues that could shape the future of education in Nebraska. NSEA is committed to keeping members informed about these crucial discussions and ensuring educators have opportunities to make their voices heard on matters that directly impact classrooms, students, and schools across the state.

What is a Legislative Interim Study?

An interim study is a process that allows legislative committees to explore specific topics or issues between the regular legislative sessions. These studies often focus on gathering information, hearing stakeholder feedback, and developing potential legislative solutions for upcoming sessions. Interim studies provide a unique opportunity for education professionals to share their firsthand insights on the real-world impact of proposed policy changes and offer solutions informed by classroom experience.

Interim study hearings are more than just a forum for discussion—they are a chance for educators to shape the

direction of future legislation. Testifying at these hearings allows teachers to advocate for policies that support student success and to inform legislators about the day-to-day realities of the classroom. By participating, NSEA members can ensure that decisions made in the State Capitol are grounded in the real-world needs of students and educators.

The 2025 interim session continues to address pressing challenges in Nebraska's education landscape, with several studies directly impacting teachers and students:

LR144 (Kauth) is building on the momentum from earlier meetings, the LR144 roundtable discussions are focused on innovative alternative pathways for teacher certification. These pathways would enable highly experienced professionals from other fields to receive hands-on training directly from school districts, accelerating their entry into the classroom. Sessions have already taken place on July 23, Sept. 3, Oct. 3 and Oct. 27. This effort is particularly timely as Nebraska grapples with teacher shortages in critical areas like special education and STEM, potentially expanding the educator pipeline without overhauling existing regulations.

LR204 (Juarez) provides a vital forum for unpacking

the root causes of teacher burnout and its ripple effects on retention and student outcomes. A follow-up meeting on Oct. 17, building on the July 23 session, centered on firsthand perspectives from teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders while reviewing and expanding upon earlier findings. Key discussion points included administrative burdens, classroom discipline challenges, emotional demands, and disparities between urban and rural settings. The latest public hearing, held on Nov. 6 synthesized these insights, aiming to craft actionable recommendations for alleviating burnout through policy changes like enhanced mental health support and workload reductions. NSEA President Tim Royers, Omaha Education Association President Kathy Poehling, Tri-Valley District President Ben Welsch and Omaha Education Association Board of Directors representative Rae Carlson all testified in the hearing.

LR196 (Kauth) seeks to examine truancy in Nebraska schools to identify underlying causes and effective interventions. With meetings held on Aug. 27 and Sept. 24, this effort brings together stakeholders including NSEA, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and county attorneys. The focus is on developing best practices to reduce chronic absenteeism, which research links to long-term negative outcomes like poor academic performance and increased justice system involvement. Outcomes could inform 2026 legislation to refine compulsory attendance laws and bolster support services, ultimately easing the additional burdens on teachers managing irregular attendance.

Upcoming Reviews

The School Finance Review Commission, which convened for the first time in August, will deliver its annual report on Nov. 20 at 9 a.m. This report will scrutinize the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) formula, proposing enhancements to school funding equity amid ongoing fiscal pressures.

LR230 (Lonowski) is scheduled on Nov. 21 at 9 a.m. will explore services following retirement and discuss easing the 180-day break-in-service requirement for retired teachers to 120 days, mirroring other state pension plans and facilitating quicker returns to substitute roles.

LR220 (Fredrickson) advocating for increased funding for Level 3 special education contractual services, and **LR228**, evaluating compensation adequacy for postsecondary instructional faculty, remain unscheduled but are poised to influence resource allocation debates.

2026 Legislative Session Outlook

As the 2026 session approaches, lawmakers are preparing to translate findings from interim studies into concrete legislation—with teacher burnout and retention at the forefront. Informed by LR204's comprehensive review, educators can expect proposals aimed at tackling the systemic drivers of exhaustion and turnover.

NSEA surveys and national data underscore the urgency of these efforts. Top solutions identified include raising educator pay, hiring additional support staff, and reducing non-instructional duties to alleviate post-

pandemic fatigue. Senator Margo Juarez has emphasized incorporating these insights into policy, potentially through legislation requiring parent engagement initiatives and expanded behavioral support to address classroom stressors.

A flagship priority remains advancing LB440, the Education Leave and Support Act, which would provide paid Family and Medical Leave for teachers. Although the bill did not pass in 2025, its reintroduction could significantly strengthen recruitment and equity—particularly for early-career educators navigating life events such as maternity leave.

These goals, however, face fiscal headwinds. A projected state revenue shortfall—currently estimated at \$451 million for the current 2025–26 biennium—could complicate budget deliberations. Speaker John Arch and other legislative leaders have warned that recalibrating spending priorities will be a key challenge next session. Amid property tax relief pressures, NSEA will continue to advocate forcefully to ensure K–12 education remains a top funding priority.

Upcoming Engagement

NSEA is facilitating senator visits to school districts prior to and during American Education Week, from November 10–21, offering lawmakers a chance to shadow teachers and gain firsthand insight into their daily challenges and needs. This initiative will highlight the real-world impact of policy decisions on classrooms across Nebraska, and offer lawmakers a chance to experience the challenges teachers face every day.

Apply Today for Retention Grant



The NSEA is grateful for the support offered by the Nebraska Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant, but believes the program needs to be significantly improved to cover all teachers. In the upcoming legislative session, the NSEA will continue to work with Senator George Dungan to champion LB411, which would expand the grant program.

Rather than just provide grants to teachers in their second, fourth, or sixth years, LB411 will allow the Nebraska Department of Education to award grants to all educators, regardless of their years of experience. Below is a breakdown of the amounts that would be awarded:

- First through six-year teachers: \$2,500
- Seventh through fifteenth year teachers: \$3,000
- Sixteenth year and beyond: \$4,000

If adopted, LB411 will also require that these grants be awarded automatically to teachers, rather than requiring those eligible to apply for them each year. The bill increases the high needs retention grant from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Educators with endorsements in special education, mathematics, science, technology, or dual credit will be eligible.

Application information can be found on page 5. The application opens on Nov. 17 and closes on Dec. 17 at 11:59 p.m. CST.



What's at stake for Nebraska Children & Communities?

Recent federal funding cuts to child nutrition and food assistance programs are threatening access to essential resources for Nebraska families and schools, according to advocates and state data.

Congress and the Trump administration have withdrawn funds allocated to support school nutrition, local food initiatives and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which officials say could have long-term effects on student health and local economies. The reductions come even as Nebraska has relied heavily on such programs: SNAP brought nearly \$332 million into the state, helping put food on the table for more than 64,000 Nebraskans and supporting local retailers. Nearly half of participating households include children or individuals with disabilities.

Advocates warn that the loss of these funds will undercut programs designed to reduce hunger, bolster rural economies and strengthen schools' ability to provide healthy meals. In 2023–24, 167 Nebraska schools adopted the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), providing free breakfast and lunch to 70,821 students. Without the program, many children may not get the nutrition they need to learn and thrive.

Since 2013, Nebraska has received more than \$1.1 million in Farm-to-School grants to purchase local food and produce for school meal programs, and in 2025 was awarded over \$6.3 million through the Local Food for Schools and Child Care (LFSCC) program to support meals through 2028. Advocates say early termination of these funds before full disbursement could jeopardize the reach of these initiatives.

Programs Defined

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a

federal program that allows schools with high numbers of students from under-resourced families to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students, helping them stay nourished and focused on learning. Schools qualify if at least 25 percent of students are identified through data-matching as participating in means-tested programs like SNAP. Cuts to programs such as SNAP and Medicaid reduce the number of eligible students, which can jeopardize a school's ability to offer free meals to all.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serves as the nation's first line of defense against hunger, helping decrease food insecurity for low-income households. Because eligibility is directly linked to the number of students enrolled in programs like SNAP and Medicaid, reductions threaten schools' ability to maintain free meal programs through CEP.

Farm-to-School Funding supports schools in purchasing food and produce from local farmers and ranchers, integrating nutrition education and gardening into meal programs to promote healthy eating and community engagement.

Actions You Can Take

Urge your members of Congress to:

- **Restore access to SNAP.** For more information, visit frac.org/action.
- **Protect and expand CEP** to ensure more children benefit from free school meals.
- **Support restored funding for Farm-to-School and LFSCC programs.** For more information, visit farmtoschool.org/policy/take-action.

SNAP in Nebraska.

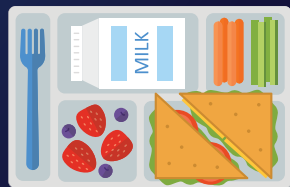


\$332 Million

SNAP brought nearly \$332 million dollars into the state supporting children, local retailers and helping Nebraskans put food on the table.

Free school meals for 64,047 children

SNAP supported more than 64,000 children, making them automatically eligible for free school meals.



\$1.1 Million

Farm-to-School grants have brought \$1,174,973 in funding to purchase local food and produce for schools since 2013.



167 Schools

The Community Eligibility Provision, which provides children with free school meals, was adopted by 167 schools in the 2023–2024 academic year, reaching 70,821 students.



\$6.3 Million

\$6,323,231 was awarded to Nebraska through the Local Food for Schools and Child Care (LFSCC) program in 2025, intended to support meals for schools and child care centers through 2028.

These funds were terminated before full disbursement.

Food for 150,000+

SNAP helps 152,006 Nebraskans put food on the table. Of those Nebraskans, 49% were households with children, 32% were households with older adults and 49% of households had an individual with a disability.

32%



49%

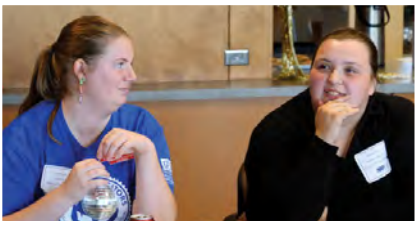


49%



Visit: www.nea.org/nutritioncuts to see the full report

Data sources include: Food Research & Action Center and the National Farm to School Network



NSEA Aspiring Educators Prep for Conference

NSEA Aspiring Educators from across Nebraska will gather at York University on Nov. 14–15 for the annual Fall Conference and Career Fair, an event designed to connect teachers, students and school districts while offering professional development opportunities.

The conference opens Friday evening from 5 to 9:30 p.m. with guest speakers, networking sessions and creative activities meant to help attendees unwind and make new connections. On Saturday, the focus shifts to the career fair, running from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., where participants can meet and interview with school districts from across the state. Organizers encourage attendees to dress professionally and bring updated résumés.

In addition to the career fair, the event will feature breakout sessions, panel discussions and professional development workshops covering a range of education topics. Organizers say the goal is to foster both career advancement and community among educators.



Now is the time to discuss who you or your local association might nominate for one of the honors awarded at Delegate Assembly in April. Any NSEA member may nominate a member teacher, Education Support Professional (ESP) or deserving group. The 2026 Assembly will be held April 24–25 at Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel. Members are eligible for:

- **Early Career Educator Award:** Honors a teacher who has excelled in their first five years of teaching.
- **Award for Teaching Excellence:** Honors a teacher who has excelled in the classroom over a period of time.
- **Education Support Professional of the Year Award:** Honors an ESP who has excelled in their job. Finalists will be notified in March, with winners announced at the assembly. Recipients receive a \$250 cash award.
- **Community Service Award:** Honors NSEA members or local associations involved in volunteer work outside of classroom hours.
- **The Tom Black Local Public Relations Award:** Honors local associations for outstanding internal communication.

Members can also nominate individuals or groups for these awards:

- **The Great Plains Milestone Award:** Honors an individual or group for promoting human and civil rights.
- **Administrator of Excellence Award:** Honors a public school administrator who strives every day to help students and staff be successful.
- **Friend of Education Award:** NSEA's highest honor is presented in recognition of an individual or organization that has made a statewide contribution to education or to Nebraska educators.
- **Outstanding Media Award:** Honors a newspaper, television or radio station for coverage of education issues and promotion of public education.

Nominations may be submitted online at www.nsea.org/DA or mailed to NSEA Awards, 605 S. 14 St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. All nomination materials must be received at the NSEA office no later than 5 p.m. on Feb. 6, 2026.

Looking Ahead

2026 Delegate Assembly

April 24-25
Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel

2027 Delegate Assembly

April 23-24
Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel

How do I...

Propose a Bylaws Amendment?

- The Bylaws are the fundamental rules which govern basic organizational questions, such as the definition of membership and election of officers. The Bylaws can never be suspended and can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in a secret ballot at the annual Delegate Assembly — and then only after delegates have received prior notice of the proposed change.
- Article XII—Amendments—Section 1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Delegate Assembly. Amendments shall be proposed in writing at least 45 days prior to the Assembly and referred to the Bylaws Committee for study and report.

Visit www.nsea.org/proposed-bylaws-amendment for the deadline information and to submit an amendment.

Propose a Resolution?

- A Resolution is a statement of belief or a position adopted by the Annual Delegate Assembly that establishes a continuing NSEA policy until changed by the Annual Delegate Assembly.
- The Resolutions Committee shall be composed of the general officers of the NSEA, members of the NSEA Board of Directors, the Nebraska representatives on the NEA Resolutions Committee who will serve as committee co-chairs, the alternates of the NEA Resolutions Committee who will serve as committee vice-chair, and any at-large NEA Resolutions Committee member who is a NSEA member.
- Proposed resolutions and amendments to Continuing Resolutions may be prepared by the NSEA Standing and Ad Hoc committees, the NSEA Board of Directors, NSEA District Boards or Caucuses, or individual members of the NSEA and submitted to the Resolutions Committee via the NSEA website. The maker may include a rationale concerning the purpose for the motion. Proposed resolutions and amendments shall be added to the report of the Resolutions Committee.
- The Resolutions Committee shall have the authority to edit for clarification any resolution or amendment. Proposed resolutions and amendments submitted to the Resolutions Committee shall be published through EdCommunities and in the Delegate workbook. Any Resolution submitted prior to the submission deadline may be amended from the Delegate floor.

Visit www.nsea.org/proposed-resolution for the deadline information and to submit a resolution.

Introduce a New Business Item?

- A New Business Item is a statement that establishes, alters, or abolishes substantive policies or programs of the Association. Such a proposal shall not be in direct conflict with an existing Association Bylaw and/or Resolution. Each New Business Item shall be in force for one year, or for another length of time specified by the Annual Delegate Assembly, and may be renewed at the discretion of the Annual Delegate Assembly.
- New Business Items must be submitted to the NSEA President via the NSEA website. The maker may include a rationale concerning the purpose for the motion.
- New Business Items directly or indirectly involving an expenditure of funds shall be accompanied by a cost estimate provided by NSEA management.
- The NBI Committee reviews all NBIs prior to final printing, and holds conversations with makers, if necessary, to revise where needed
- Any New Business Item submitted prior to the submission deadline may be amended from the Delegate floor.

Visit www.nsea.org/proposed-new-business-item for the deadline information and to submit a new business item.



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TRISH GUINAN

“
Serving on the EHA board as chair has been a true privilege. It has given me a front-row seat to witness the dedication, expertise and care that go into protecting the health and well-being of Nebraska’s educators.
”

Message from the Executive Director

This October, I attended my last in-person Educators Health Alliance (EHA) board meeting. Whether educators realize it or not, the EHA board plays a huge role behind the scenes. We’re the stewards of your health plan.

The EHA is a nonprofit partnership representing the Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB), the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA), and the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA). Together, we’ve built a long history of providing exceptional health coverage for educators and their families—coverage that’s truly by educators, for educators.

This spring and summer, the board undertook a major project. In March, we released a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek competitive bids for the EHA’s insurer—a responsible and necessary step to ensure we’re offering the best coverage at the best cost for the more than 90,000 education employees, early retirees, and their dependents across more than 300 school groups.

Along with my fellow EHA board members, I rolled up my sleeves and went deep into the process of finding the best fit for members. We reviewed benefits from several health insurers, held in-person interviews, and asked tough questions.

Behind the Scenes

From there, the team—along with consultants from Health Insurance Risk Advisors and Mercer—dug into every detail: costs, customer service, pharmacy benefits, and medical management. We wanted to make sure we weren’t just getting a good price, but real value for our educators and their families.

After months of careful work, the board voted to select Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) as the insurer for the EHA program

for the 2026–27 plan year (Sept. 1, 2026–Aug. 31, 2027).

Competitive Rates

When the 2026–27 rates were released this fall, the overall increase was just 7.44%—well below the national average increase of around 18–20% projected for next year. That’s a solid win for educators across the state.

Nationally, health care costs continue to rise, driven by factors such as prescription drug prices, hospital costs, and increased demand for medical services. Even so, EHA’s careful management, strong partnerships, and focus on long-term stability helped keep the rate increase far below what many other groups are experiencing.

Every percentage point matters. For districts, it means more stability in budgeting. For employees, it means less money out of each paycheck and more predictability when planning for the year ahead. Holding rates steady—or in this case, keeping an increase well below national trends—reflects the power of collaboration between educators, administrators, and school boards who share the same goal: affordable, high-quality health coverage that supports the people who make our schools thrive.

An Honor to Serve

When I retire at the end of December, I know that NSEA will continue to have a strong voice on the board. Six of the 12 voting members represent the NSEA.

Serving on the EHA board as chair has been a true privilege. It has given me a front-row seat to witness the dedication, expertise and care that go into protecting the health and well-being of Nebraska’s educators. Every meeting, every decision, and every percentage point we save makes a real difference in people’s lives.

No Tricks, Just Treats: CORE Volunteers Bring the Fun



NSEA-Retired members never miss a chance to make a difference—or to have a little fun along the way! Through CORE (Call On Retired Educators), these spirited volunteers continue to lend their time, talent and heart to the Association.

This fall, LEA-Retired members Margie Nowak, Arlene Rea and Rita Bennett answered the call to help at a Spooktacular Halloween Trunk-or-Treat event. Decked out in festive spirit (and surrounded by plenty of candy) these volunteers greeted families, handing out treats and spreading smiles.

From costumes to candy corn, CORE members continue to prove that retirement doesn't mean slowing down—it just means showing up in style!



Fall Medicare Insurance Seminars

Each fall, NSEA-Retired partners with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska to present informational seminars on Medicare across the state.

The sessions cover the basics of Medicare, explore coverage options available through the Educators' Medicare Supplement, and explain how to select a Medicare Part D provider for the prescriptions you take.

Four in-person seminars were scheduled this fall in cities across Nebraska, and there's still time to attend — the final in-person session will be held in Kearney. Don't miss your last chance to get helpful, firsthand information and answers to your Medicare questions. Check the chart for times and locations for each session.

For those unable to attend in person, two additional virtual seminars will be offered in November via Zoom.

Find additional information on the NSEA-Retired website at www.nsea.org/retired.



BCBS In-Person Sessions

Morning sessions: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (check in at 9 a.m.)
Afternoon sessions: 1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. (check in at 1 p.m.)

Kearney	Tuesday, Nov. 11 Educational Service Unit 10 – Room B (76 Plaza Boulevard)
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Webinars

Wednesday, Nov. 12, 9:30-11 a.m. CST
Thursday, Nov. 13, 7-8:30 p.m. CST

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P E L O F Z D
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How the Children's Fund Brings Students' Needs Into Focus



Every day, teachers notice the small details that can make a big difference for students. Sometimes it's a child squinting at the whiteboard, holding a book too close or struggling to keep up in class. Often, the problem isn't effort, it's vision. And while educators are quick to step in, buying supplies or lending a hand from their own wallets, they cannot meet every need alone.

Since 1994, the Children's Fund has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to help students with immediate needs. A common request is helping with the cost of eyeglasses.

For some children, glasses mean more than clear sight—they open doors to confidence, participation and academic growth.

There is never any red tape or lengthy delay for members wanting to use the fund to help a student. A call to Karen Hunt at the NSEA (800-742-0047) is usually all that is needed.

For more than three decades, the Children's Fund has helped educators provide not only glasses, but a clear vision of what's possible for Nebraska students. With continued support, no child will have to sit in the back of the classroom, straining to see their future. For more information, visit nsea.org/childrensfund.

NSEA works with ESPs to create learning opportunities and supports for them to elevate their professional excellence throughout their careers. Together, we can make good things happen, including:

- Securing better pay, benefits, and working conditions;
- Gaining Professional Development and leadership training;
- Having strong, effective representation in job-related disputes;
- Accessing affordable life, health, disability, and casualty insurance programs; and
- Receiving on-the-job liability insurance of up to \$1 million.

Contact NSEA today at (800) 742-0047 or email questions to info@nsea.org.

Have a student teacher? Sign them up for Aspiring Ed!

A semester of student teaching is a unique time for an educator, and it's the perfect time to surround oneself with support from other new and seasoned educators.

If you have a student teacher in your classroom this year, encourage them to become a member of the NSEA-Aspiring Educators. You may even set aside some time to walk them through the process and help them understand the myriad of benefits they'll receive as a member of the Association.

Feeling especially generous? Pay their Aspiring Educators dues—just \$40 for the year!

Benefits of membership for Aspiring Educators include student loan forgiveness workshops, access to year-round professional development opportunities, big savings through the NEA Discount Marketplace, the \$1 million Educators Employment Liability insurance policy and much more.

First-year educators will also benefit from involvement in

NewGEN, NSEA's New Generation of Educators in Nebraska. The organization is comprised of early career educators in their first seven years of teaching who network and support each other through the challenges of a new teaching career.

For more information or to help a new member register, go to www.nsea.org/JoinNow, or contact the NSEA Membership Department by calling 1-800-742-0047 or emailing membership@nsea.org.

NSEA 150+
Presents

Family of Teachers



Enid and Bill



Nancy Marty



John Marty



John Stanton



Mary Stanton



Matthew & Maureen
Scott



Maggie Parrish



Marcel
Kadera-Redmond



Taylor Stanton

Meet the Stanton Family of Teachers

Every legacy has a beginning. For the Stanton family, that story starts in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the late Rev. Bill and Enid Stanton served the children of Bristow. From that small, faith-rooted community, a family of educators grew—spanning generations and classrooms across the Midwest.

Two of Bill and Enid's children followed in their parents' footsteps into education. John and Nancy (Stanton) Marty both taught for Omaha Public Schools before retiring—John as a social studies teacher and Nancy as a lower elementary educator. John and Mary (Walsh) Stanton also devoted their careers to education, with John serving in a variety of school counseling roles and Mary working as a technology coordinator before both retired after decades of service

in public and private schools.

The next generation continues the family's tradition of teaching and service.

John and Mary's children and their spouses carry on the legacy: Matt and Maureen (Stanton) Scott serve in the Millard and Gretna school districts—Matt as a math facilitator and Maureen as a middle school special educator. Maggie (Stanton) Parrish is a professor of speech communication in Carroll, Iowa. Taylor (Partusch) Stanton, married to John and Mary's son Corey, is a school social worker with Springfield Platteview Community Schools. Marcel Kadera-Redmond, married to John and Mary's daughter Michaela, teaches physical education in the Spring Hill, Kansas, School District.

From Bristow to Springfield, from classrooms to counseling offices, the

Stanton family's commitment to education remains strong. Dating back to Bill and Enid, this family of educators has earned degrees from many of Nebraska's colleges and universities, including Luther College, Midland Lutheran College, Wayne State College, Chadron State College, College of Saint Mary, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Concordia University, and Nebraska Wesleyan University.

The Stantons' story is a reminder that one family's dedication to children and community can leave a legacy that spans generations.

Does teaching run in your family? Share your story and be featured in Family of Teachers at www.nsea.org/Family.