

THE

VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ♦ September 2018

A BETTER TEACHER

**Lincoln Teacher Bryanne Schulz
Says Association Saved Her Career**

- **NGEN Revved Up for New Teachers**
- **NSEA Joins the Call for Equity, Dignity**
- **Advocacy is on the Road at Three Sites**



THE VOICE

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Advocacy Conference '18 Offered at Three Sites

Gering, LaVista, Kearney Sites Will Serve Members Across the State

Throughout history — and throughout ancient lore — good things have come in threes.

The constitution promises three things: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The ancient Latin principle of omne trium perfectum is “the rule of three.”

Thus it is good news that good things will take place at a trio of NSEA Advocacy Conferences in the next two months. The conferences are placed strategically across the state to reach the maximum number of local association leaders and negotiators.

The one-day conferences are set for Gering, LaVista and Kearney. With the exception

of Kearney, where a focused higher education component will be offered, the conferences will be virtually identical.

“These conferences are essential for association leaders and negotiators as we head into negotiations on Nov. 1,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “We plan to offer plenty of information and details that will assist in the negotiations and leadership process.”

NSEA Director of Collective Bargaining Randy Gordon said the conferences will be about more than negotiations. A focus will also highlight learning and sharing sessions organizing and advocacy. Tentative topics will include:

- Contract data and comparability study analysis.
- How to advocate for members.
- How to enforce your contract.

■ Tips on negotiating table tactics and strategies.

■ How to organize and communicate with members on bargaining issues.

■ Discussion on opportunities to network and collaborate on bargaining.

“The conference always strives to offer something for all members and leaders, from negotiators to officers to supportive members,” said Gordon.

“Advocacy means bargaining a good agreement but also means supporting members and growing the impact of your local association on your students,” he said. “Remember, teacher working conditions are also student learning conditions.”

Gordon urged each local to bring a team and to engage a new member in negotiations. For members who might need hotel accommodations, NSEA has secured a limited block of

rooms at a reduced rate near each site. You can make your reservations using the information below; room costs are the responsibility of each individual and will not be reimbursed (the room reservation date for the Gering conference passed in August):

■ **LaVista:** Reservations due by Sept. 5 at the Embassy Suites, 12520 Westport Parkway. \$109 plus tax. Call 402-331-7400 for reservations.

■ **Kearney:** Reservations due by Oct. 12 at the Fairfield Inn & Suites, 510 Talmadge Rd., Kearney. \$93 plus tax. Call 308-236-4200 for reservations.

For questions about lodging, reach NSEA’s Jan Anderson at:

jan.anderson@nsea.org

For details or questions about conference programming, contact Gordon at:

randy.gordon@nsea.org

2018 Advocacy Conference Dates & Locations

Saturday, Sept. 15

Weborg 21 Centre
2625 10th St.
Gering

Saturday, Oct. 6

Embassy Suites LaVista
12520 Westport Parkway
LaVista

Saturday, Oct. 27

The Nebraskan Student Union
University of Nebraska at Kearney
1013 West 27th St.
Kearney

On the Cover: NSEA and Lincoln Education Association member Bryanne Schulz in her classroom at Lincoln’s Park Middle School in August. With the help of NSEA, LEA and the Lincoln Public Schools, Schulz said she “became a teacher last year.” Learn more on page 7.

I Was One of ‘Those Kids’



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

*No child has
a choice of birth
circumstance,
they cannot
select their
family or
external
environment
ahead of time.
No child should
be judged for the
struggles they
may bring into
the classroom.*

”

There are many roles that define my life. I have been learning for 55 years; mothering for 35 years; teaching for 32 years; grand-mothering for six years; and leading NSEA for one year.

As a child growing up, I had a less attractive role: as I frequently tell members and others, I was “one of those kids.”

Every teacher has his or her definition of “those kids.” They might struggle with reading, or perhaps don’t have the advantages and means other students might enjoy. They might be exceedingly introverted, might have difficulty sitting still, might be perpetually distracted, might be positively brilliant, or might fit any one of a thousand other descriptions.

As these children come into our classrooms, we teach, care for and encourage them, giving a little extra of our effort. Each has a future that we hope will be bright and productive.

So, as each school year begins, I reflect on my many roles. Though I no longer lead a classroom, I never forget that I work for those of you in classrooms across Nebraska. My years as a student, mom, grandmother, teacher and Association leader are each important to my whole being.

So was my experience as “one of those kids.”

Six-Word Stories

During membership meetings prior to the school year, your Association leaders asked members to write down six words that describe them and their Association work. My six-word story is this: I was one of those kids.

I grew up in Sutherland. My family qualified as poor working class (my first-year teacher’s salary matched what my father made in after 25 years at the local grain elevator). We were cared for and we were loved, but we had very limited resources.

Thus, as a young child, I washed dishes in the cafeteria to earn my “free” lunch. My brothers preferred to walk home for a lunch of ketchup and Velveeta cheese on white bread (my husband says Velveeta “is not cheese” but when I was growing up, it was the only “cheese” we knew).

I was an introvert, usually placed in the same combination classroom with my uber-extroverted brother. I had little self-esteem and endured significant trauma and abuse as a child and teen. While I do not speak of those abuses often, I will do so if it can help just one person understand that no child should be punished for the trauma that festers beneath the surface.

Little Chance

As a child, I did not know what my teachers

thought of me, or what they knew of my situation. I had no idea whether they knew of my suffering.

I do recall Mrs. Downs, and wonder if she could see me now, would she believe I became a successful teacher? That I taught for more than 30 years? Would she believe I became a building rep, and then a local association negotiator, then local leader and local president? Would she believe that I am now the NSEA president? Probably not.

Perhaps she thought that with all the odds stacked against me, as one of “those kids,” that I had very little chance of reaching such heights.

All Children

Our mission at NSEA is clear. We “advocate for all education professionals, empowering them to provide a great public education for every student.” Our mission does not say we will advocate for “some” students. It says “every student.” It means “every student.”

This summer I spoke to a group of administrators working on endorsements to become superintendents. I told them forcefully that “If you are not becoming a superintendent to serve *all* students and *all* families, you should reconsider your choice.”

Why did I draw that sharp line? Because I was “one of those kids.”

That is part of what pushes me now to advocate for *all* children: No child has a choice of birth circumstances, they cannot select their family or external environment ahead of time. No child should be judged for the struggles they may bring into the classroom. They should be met with joy and encouraged to be the very best they can be every day.

We want educators who can be prepared to deal with “*all* kids” in a way that does just that: pushes and encourages them in a positive manner. Members at our annual meeting in April approved creation of a committee to focus on trauma-informed classrooms, and how to provide resources and professional development to assist teachers in that realm.

I know our membership is a vast and varied group. There are issues on which we can agree to disagree. But on this one issue, this important mission, we must all agree: we must work with *every* student, even “those kids.”

I know I will always fight for “those kids.” Someday one of them will follow in my footsteps.

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Dignity Ideals Unite Education Advocates

NSEA Joins Seven Nebraska Groups in Statement on Dignity, Equity for Students

NSEA has joined seven other Nebraska education organizations to endorse a Statement of Principle on Human Dignity, following racially-tinged incidents during the last school year.

At an August news conference led by Commissioner of Education Matt Blomstedt, NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell pledged the Association's support for students who are bullied, harassed or intimidated.

"I am here today to pledge to our students that we have your back and will work diligently with our members to create welcoming and inclusive schools that provide every student an opportunity to reach their potential and be productive members of our community," said Fennell.

Blomstedt said the Statement of Principle came about after several racially-based incidents at Nebraska schools last year.

"This group is dedicated to setting the right stage and the right conversation across the state of Nebraska," said Blomstedt. "We've had incidents where we feel that our students have been bullied sometimes based on race, sometimes based on ability."

Facing such aggression while securing sound citizenry for the future is a challenge in Nebraska and across the country, he said.

"We have to be thoughtful about how our schools lead in ensuring that we're building the right future citizenry," he said.

'A Matter of Human Dignity'

Fennell said that not every Nebraska child feels welcomed in school.

"We must realize that when racist taunts, bullying, comments about sexual orientation or sexual harassment are experienced by even one of our children, it is unacceptable and must be addressed swiftly and with conviction," said Fennell.

NSEA leadership has committed the Association to several objectives designed to improve "educational opportunities for all students" and to build "respect for the worth, dignity and equality of every individual in our diverse society" (see related story, below).

Each of the eight organizations, led by Blomstedt on behalf of the State Board of Education, signed the Statement of Principle. The NSEA Board of Directors approved the statement at a board meeting in June.

The Statement notes several tenets and values upon which



Not All Feel Welcomed: At a news conference announcing NSEA's endorsement of a Statement of Principle on Human Dignity, Executive Director Maddie Fennell said that not every child feels welcomed in Nebraska schools. She pledged that the Association will work to create welcoming and inclusive schools.

the United States and the State of Nebraska were founded, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the Nebraska Constitution. It then states that:

"Students in our schools have been experiencing negative, harassing and bullying conduct during the school day, and at school activities by the spectators attending those events or, and at times by opponents in an activity, that is directed at the other school's participants and spectators, often with a racial component. Such conduct is unacceptable and does not reflect the foregoing basic tenets of our society."

Further, the statement says that "This is not just a legal issue; but rather it is a matter of basic human dignity."

Blomstedt said "My call to action is that Nebraska will lead the way in addressing inequities of the past by focusing on opportunities to learn for all students and by adopting a relentless focus on outcomes that ensure all stakeholders deliver on the promise of equity."

Other organizations signed on include the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, The Nebraska Coaches Association, the Nebraska School Activities Association, the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association and the Nebraska State Athletic Administrators Association.

To read the Statement of Principle, go to the Nebraska Department of Education Website at:

education.ne.gov/press_release/

NSEA Adopts Objectives for Human Dignity Plan

Objectives will Support Joint Resolution

Joining seven other Nebraska school-related organizations, the NSEA Board of Directors in June OK'd seven objectives — some already underway — in support of the Statement of Principle on Human Dignity signed by those organizations (see story above). NSEA will:

- Promote the use of diverse literature in the classroom.
- Increase social justice awareness and capacity for advocacy by hosting social justice retreats for members across the state.
- Promote teaching as a career among people of color. This

objective includes support for Educators Rising chapters in high schools across the state as well as support for students taking the Praxis Core Test for entrance to college of education programs.

- Provide training for educators in how to talk about race and racism.
- Address the issue of race-based mascots and their impact on school culture.
- Form a social justice committee to coordinate activities and trainings.
- Provide members with information on the Nebraska Department of Education Standards of Conduct and Ethics.

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Mentor and Friend: Lincoln Education Association member Bryanne Schulz, right, learned much in the past year from Trisha Lind, a Lincoln Public Schools instructional coach at Park Middle School.

‘I Became a Teacher Last Year’

With Association’s Assistance, Young Teacher Finds Her Voice

LEA Saves a Career, Says Benson

When Bryanne Schulz stepped to the microphone to address more than 400 new Lincoln Public Schools teachers and staff last month, she flashed back to three years ago when she was sitting in that same audience of newbies.

She had accepted a job in Lincoln after commuting to Omaha, where she taught family and consumer sciences at Central High School for a year. That was her first teaching job after 10 years in radio and television.

Sitting in that crowd of new faces, Schulz recalls being anxious to get to work in the two buildings she would serve, anxious to meet new colleagues, anxious to get the school year underway.

“I was sitting there...just dying to

get out,” she admits.

Much has changed since then.

At the top of her list of changes is this: during her fourth year in the classroom last year, Schulz says she became a teacher.

Spurred by a principal who expressed doubts about her classroom skills, Schulz quickly turned to her professional Association for guidance. The relentless assistance of her Lincoln Education Association representative, and the work of a Lincoln Public Schools instructional coach, spurred her to embrace lifelong learning and to improve her teaching abilities.

The importance of her Association safety net was the crux of the message she relayed to Lincoln’s new staff before the start of the school year.

“When the LEA asked me to speak at the new teacher meeting, I said I would be honored. For everything they had done for me, the least I could do was tell my story and explain why membership is so important,” she said.

‘Without LEA, I don’t think I would be a teacher anymore. I am beyond grateful to LEA.’

— Bryanne Schulz,
NSEA Member

Middle Schoolers!

After her year at Omaha Central,

Schulz accepted a job teaching at both Scott and Park middle schools, about 10 minutes apart in southeast Lincoln.

Navigating between the two buildings added stress to her day. And she was the second family and consumer sciences teacher at both buildings – the “roomie” for already well-established teachers.

“And,” she said, “I thought Omaha Central would prepare me for anything. But middle schoolers are a whole different world of human beings!”

Schulz cruised through her first two-plus years in Lincoln. Toward the end of the second year, however, one of her building principals said he “had some concerns” regarding her classroom management, among other issues. He told her she would be placed on an intensive plan of improvement program when the 2017-18 school year began.

“Nobody wants their boss to come to them and say, ‘I have concerns,’” said Schulz.

“I was sad and kind of defeated. I thought I was at least good enough to win one of those ‘World’s Okayest Teacher’ mugs,” she said. “I definitely didn’t think I was doing a poor job.”

So Schulz did what every NSEA member should do in such a situation: she called her Association. She was connected to Lincoln Education Association Executive Director Susan Foster.

“She was with me for every meeting I had. She would read every email I received and every email I sent before I sent it. She was just a phone call away,” said Schulz.

“It was amazing to have the support they were giving me, the backup they were giving me,” she said.

‘Real Talk’

The Association support was about more than just meetings – and Schulz had a lot of meetings. She met with her principal, had weekly evaluations, and worked regularly and diligently with LPS instructional coach Trisha Lind to improve her skills.

But LEA’s Foster opened her eyes to the big picture.

“She would give me what I liked to call ‘real talk,’” said Schulz. “She would sit me down and say ‘Listen, you might need to accept this and do everything they say. Don’t just get upset and don’t get frustrated and think this is all about you. This is about the students.’”

Schulz began to look more broadly at her career and her students, rather than the moment. She soon warmed to the idea of improving her skills.

“Once I took that view, I flew. I embraced my instructional coach meetings and I ended up with a great friendship and relationship with Trisha,” she said.

‘The Association helped save Bryanne’s career. No other organization, no other association can make that claim because no other organization provides service like that.’

***— Jenni Benson,
NSEA President***

Schulz and Lind met and emailed frequently, and Lind provided a multitude of resources. The weekly observations, scary at first, began to help her gain confidence and skills.

“I was filling my teaching tool box with all these things I had learned through LEA, through my supports at school and from my principal. I realized he wanted me to do better,” she said.

“I decided that ‘if you want improvement, watch me. I’m going to give it to you,’” she said.

By the end of her plan of improvement, Schulz said she did something that shocked herself: she impressed her principal.

“He was very proud of me at the end of that situation,” she said.

Line in the Sand

With her skills improving, administrators ended her improvement plan participation a few weeks into the second semester last year. Schulz said the number of behavior incidents in her classroom have diminished, and her management skills are now simpler and easier.

“My line in the sand for classroom disruptions is much more abrupt than it used to be, so I have much more classroom instruction going on than what once was,” she said.

One of her principals told her that her revamped lesson plans and forms – with identifying remarks and notations redacted – were used in a meeting of administrators to illustrate how well a successful plan of improvement might work.

NSEA President Jenni Benson said the assistance given Schulz is one more example of the services provided to Association members.

“The Association helped save Bryanne’s career. No other organization, no other association can make that claim because no other organization provides support like that,” said Benson. “We are all proud of the teacher that she has become.”

Schulz believes that given time, she will become an even better teacher.

“When I started teaching, I felt I knew a lot. But I don’t think I was open to the whole ‘lifelong learner’ concept of ‘I can change, I can grow and learn,’” she said.

“It’s a defining fact for someone to realize that they might not be in a career if not for the support that a group gave them,” said Schulz. “Without LEA, I don’t think I would be a teacher anymore. I am beyond grateful to LEA.”

Instead of a casualty of the profession, Schulz may have become a teacher for life.

“I’ve said to both of my principals ‘I became a teacher last year.’”

‘Nobody wants their boss to come to them and say, ‘I have concerns.’

***— Bryanne Schulz,
NSEA Member***



New and Energized! Six relatively new-to-the-teaching-profession educators and Association members traveled to Columbus, OH, in June. Their task: to attend an NEA conference on organizations like NSEA's New Generation of Educators Nebraska (NGEN). From left are Rae Carbaugh, Niobrara: NSEA Organizational Specialist Heather Fritz; Jordan Koch, Papillion-LaVista; Jake Barry, Elkhorn; Denton Beacom, Gretna; Megan Brown Pitrat, Syracuse-Dunbar-Avocca; and Tatiana Eskridge, Omaha.

NGEN Revved Up, Ready to Go

New Association Program Will Support Teachers at the Start of Their Careers

It has been a busy few months for the core group of young Nebraska teachers asked to design and build the engine for a membership model that will drive the future of the Association.

Those young teachers have been asked to assemble a program to assist, encourage and acquaint their early-in-their-career peers with each other, with the teaching profession and with their Association.

Now the program is revved and ready to hit the road!

The result is a new offering under the NSEA umbrella of services. That offering is called New Generation of Educators in Nebraska, or NGEN – pronounced as ‘engine.’

“The acronym is appropriate since public education provides an educated populace – the fuel, if you will – that drives our state’s economic engine,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “That fuel is vital to the future of our state and economy.”

Through NGEN, Association staff and members will provide early career educators with contacts, resources and engagement in their local and statewide associations.

“This will be a place for teachers in years one through seven in their careers to go and ask questions, learn more and develop leadership qualities,” said Heather Fritz, an NSEA organizational specialist charged with advising NGEN.

Benson said the program is essential to the Association’s future – and to the education profession.

“We must attract and retain young teachers in Nebraska classrooms,” said Benson. “From those new-to-the-profession teachers, we must identify and develop future Association

leaders. NGEN will be key in both efforts.”

A hand-picked core of young NSEA members have already been at work. Six were at an NEA-hosted conference in Columbus, OH, in June. Nebraska was one of 33 NEA state affiliates with NGEN-like programs attending.

“One of the tasks these young teachers were charged with in Columbus was to come up with the ‘why’ for NGEN,” said Fritz. “They did great work.”

The ‘why’ they wrote is this: “The mission of NGEN is to drive early career educators toward success by fostering membership engagement, advancing teaching excellence through professional development, and creating a network of support through mentorship opportunities

and classroom resources.”

NGEN will provide such opportunities at social events and through – at least at the start – monthly web-based professional development. The professional development programming could start as early as October, said Fritz. A slate of committee appointees is expected to be approved at the September meeting of the NSEA Board of Directors.

The program sprang from a year-long study by a committee commissioned by the April 2017 Delegate Assembly. At NSEA’s April 2018 Delegate Assembly, members approved the study proposal to create the standing committee to address the needs of teachers in the first seven years of their careers.

A \$64,500 National Education Association Foundation Great Public Schools grant will fund the operation.

Plans call for a link to the NGEN program facts and details on the NSEA home page. NGEN is also active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

Teachers in their first seven years in the classroom interested in participating should contact Fritz at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

heather.fritz@nsea.org



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NEA Grant Supports New, Rural Teachers

Mentoring, Coaching Available Through NSEA and Virtual Programming

Young teachers (both Association members and potential members) in rural Nebraska may now apply to receive Virtual Instructional Coaching and Virtual Mentoring provided by a trained NSEA teacher member.

Research shows that these job-embedded professional supports have multiple benefits for teachers and students. Results from a New Teacher Center research study (2018) show that students gain up to an additional five months of learning when their teachers received high-quality support. Mentoring and Instructional Coaching are some of the best forms of professional development because they are directly linked to improving instruction and developing stronger relationships with students.



Copich

Increased Retention

The NSEA Instructional Coaching and Mentoring Program is beneficial to teachers regardless of experience or ability. This program is specifically designed for new teachers within their first three years of teaching and the virtual aspect adds convenience and flexibility. The goal is to support new teachers in the profession, to encourage their success, and to increase retention of new teachers in rural areas of the state.

"We hear from new teachers that while they appreciate the mentors that their school districts provide, they also benefit from having a mentor who lives and works outside of their home school district," said Dr. Cindy Copich, Teaching and Learning specialist for NSEA. If provided, district-

provided mentors are usually only set up for the first year of support. New teachers recognize that the first-three years are often the most challenging.

Copich said new teachers participating in a pilot program in central Nebraska last year described how having a virtual mentor allowed them to have open and candid conversations with an experienced NSEA teacher and fellow-union colleague from outside their school district. New teachers feel secure in the knowledge that their NSEA mentor and instructional coach will keep their private conversations and concerns completely confidential, said Copich.

Virtual and Flexible

New teachers also like the flexibility and quality of the virtual professional support. With all the meetings and responsibilities new teachers have, the virtual program allows them to schedule time with their mentor and coach when it works best for them.

New NSEA members may participate in a full year of instructional coaching or mentoring at no cost. Potential members may participate for one semester. New teachers who want to apply and receive virtual instructional coaching or virtual mentoring or have questions about the program, need to contact Dr. Copich at 402-875-2123 or at:

cindy.copich@nsea.org

Applications are due as soon as possible.

The program is funded through a three-year, \$450,000 grant from the National Education Association's Great Public Schools Grant Fund. The funds will encourage virtual coaching and mentoring in rural areas of Nebraska where teacher retention is traditionally the weakest.

More than 30 percent of rural Nebraska teachers leave the profession in the first five years of their careers.

"The skills and knowledge this program will provide to new teachers, along with the number of teachers this program will keep in the classroom, will benefit Nebraska students for years," said NSEA President Jenni Benson.

Book on Capitol Useful in 4th Grade

Nebraska teachers can now download a free booklet that details the production and the history of the design of the mosaics of fossils that grace the floors of the Nebraska State Capitol.

The book would be useful in fourth grade Nebraska history studies as well as to natural science and social science teachers. Art teachers may also benefit.

Authored by R.F. Diffendal, Jr., PhD, the 80-page book is full of the original design illustrations for the Capitol mosaics, as well as photos and explanations of the wildlife depicted.

Diffendal is Professor Emeritus in the Conservation and Survey Division (Nebraska Geological Survey) of the School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a volunteer curator of invertebrate fossils for the University of Nebraska State Museum.

He said the guide is a progress report on what he has learned about the mosaics, including who chose the fossils to depict and who designed and made the mosaics.

Look for the 'Download' button at: **digitalcommons.unl.edu/diffendal/67**

Improve Reading Skills for the Dyslexic

Educators have an opportunity this fall to learn how structured literacy supports improve reading outcomes.

The opportunity will be at the Nebraska Dyslexia Association's Fall Celebration Saturday, Oct. 27, at the Phoenix Academy, 1110 N. 66th St., Omaha.

Dr. Tanya Ihlo, director of the Nebraska MTSS Implementation Team and a University of Nebraska-Lincoln research associate professor at the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools, will offer a talk on "Improving Reading Outcomes through Implementation of Evidence-based, Structured Literacy Supports."

Dr. Edward Truemper, Omaha physician; and Micah Johnson, a Blair Public Schools ninth grader, will share their "Journeys with Dyslexia."

The conference, from 9-11 a.m., is free and open to all. Refreshments provided, and no registration required.

Your administrator may authorize professional development credit. Questions? Call 402-434-6434 or go to:

www.ne-da.org



SMART WAYS

to Manage Your Student Loans

Some Options Will Increase Your Costs or Eliminate Federal Loan Safeguards

By Kaitlin Pitsker

Blair Green Thielemier graduated in 2011 from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences with a doctorate of pharmacy and \$65,000 in federal student loans. She diligently paid more than her required payments every month, but after four years her balance still stood at \$35,000—primarily because a large portion of her payments went toward interest. Thielemier, 31, wanted to pay off her loans faster, so she decided to refinance with a private lender, which offered to reduce her 6.3 percent fixed rate to a roughly 2 percent variable rate. With more of her payments going toward principal, she was able to pay off the balance in less than two years.

Refinancing your student loans has advantages, but it also poses risks. You can streamline the repayment process by combining your loans into a single monthly payment. You may be able to lower your monthly payments by extending the repayment schedule. And some options, such as the one Thielemier chose, can lower your overall interest rate. But plans

that make your payments more affordable typically increase the total amount you pay over the life of the loan. Plus, refinancing federal loans with a private loan, as Thielemier did, means giving up some protections that only federal loans have. Those protections include deferment and forbearance, which allow borrowers to postpone or reduce payments if they're unemployed or experience other types of economic hardship, as well as loan forgiveness.

If you're interested in refinancing, start by identifying which of your loans are federally sponsored and which, if any, were issued by private lenders. Review the interest rate on each loan, as well as your monthly payments and how they fit into your budget. From there, consider whether your primary goal is convenience, a more affordable monthly payment or a lower interest rate. If you're simply looking for a way to streamline your federal student loan payments, you may want to consolidate rather than refinance them. Consolidating your federal loans will allow you to select a repayment plan that works best for your budget.

Pros and Cons of Consolidation

If you have several federal student loans, consolidating them through the

federal government can make payments more convenient. Most federal student loans, including direct loans, Stafford loans and Perkins loans, can be consolidated into a single loan through the Department of Education's Direct Consolidation Loan program. You can't include loans from private lenders.

Consolidating won't lower your interest rate or save you money over the life of your loan. The interest rate of your new loan will be the weighted average of the interest rates of the loans that you combine, rounded up to the nearest one-eighth of a percentage point. Federal student loan

NSEA Offers Information

Do you have student loan debt? Are you sure whether you qualify for any federal forgiveness programs?

NSEA can provide workshops on the NEA "Degrees Not Debt Federal Student Loan Forgiveness" program. Those workshops provide members valuable information about:

- Income driven repayment.
- Public service loan forgiveness.
- Teacher loan forgiveness and cancellation.

For more details, contact NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.



interest rates vary annually and by loan type, but direct subsidized and unsubsidized loans for undergraduates have carried fixed interest rates of between 3.76 percent and 4.66 percent in recent years. To see what your new interest rate would be, use the loan consolidation calculator at:

finaid.org/calculators

Once your loans have been combined into a direct consolidation loan, the change can't be undone. If you're a public service worker, the payments you've already made will no longer count toward the 120 payments required to qualify for federal loan forgiveness. If you have Perkins loans, which are granted to low-income borrowers, you may qualify for loan cancellation if you are employed in certain fields or volunteer with AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps. However, that benefit disappears in a consolidation, so you may not want to include those loans. Borrowers may choose to exclude other loans from a consolidation, too.

For example, some may decide to keep the highest-interest loan and funnel any extra cash toward early repayment.

Repayment Options

In addition to converting several payments into a single monthly payment, consolidating your federal loans will allow you to pick a new repayment plan. Most borrowers with federal student loans are put on a 10-year plan, in which you pay the same amount each month until the loan is paid off. If that's unaffordable, look for another option.

There are three main types of repayment plans: ones that stretch repayment over a longer period, ones that gradually increase the amount of your monthly payments, and ones that base the amount of your payments on your income.

Borrowers with more than \$30,000 in federal debt who want to lower their monthly payments can choose the extended repayment plan, which increases the loan term to 25 years. The graduated repayment plan requires lower monthly payments at first, then increases them, usually every two years, as your income presumably rises.

The government also offers several income-driven repayment plans. With these, you'll be expected to dedicate 10 percent to 20 percent of your discretionary monthly income toward your loans for 20 to 25 years, after which any remaining amount is forgiven. (For public service workers, the remaining balance will be forgiven after 10 years.) Another option, the income-sensitive repayment plan, calculates payments based on

your annual income, with a repayment period of up to 15 years.

To see what your monthly payment and loan terms would look like under different repayment plans, go to StudentLoans.gov and use the Repayment Estimator. The longer the repayment period, the more you will ultimately pay in interest, so pick the plan with the highest monthly payment you can afford.

Private Loan Trade-Offs

Unlike the federal government, private lenders will refinance both private and federal student loans into one loan. Assuming you've established a good credit history, you'll likely be able to score a lower interest rate on a private loan than you did during college, and borrowers with stellar credit profiles may be able to get a reduced rate for their federal loans, too.

If you refinance your federal loans with a private lender, you'll typically lose such benefits as deferment and forbearance. Still, borrowers with high-paying jobs in the private sector may conclude it's worth giving up those safeguards in exchange for a lower interest rate, says Miranda Marquit, of StudentLoanHero.com, a website that offers student loan management and repayment tools.

Start by contacting your current loan servicer and bank, as well as a few other lenders. Borrowers who are eligible for private loan refinancing may also want to consider nontraditional lenders, such as CommonBond and SoFi. The stronger your overall credit profile, the lower the interest rate you'll receive. Fixed interest rates currently range from about 3 percent

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Organizational Specialist Heather Fritz



to 10 percent, and variable rates range from 2.5 percent to 8 percent.

Get several quotes so you can compare interest rates and terms, and ask about other benefits that the lender offers. For example, CommonBond and SoFi allow borrowers to postpone payments under certain circumstances—if you lose your job, say, or you return to school. To compare lenders and see additional options, visit StudentLoanHero.com, Credible.com or StudentLoanConsolidator.com.

Most lenders let you choose to pay off the loan over five to 20 years. A longer repayment term will lower your monthly payment (and increase the amount of interest you pay overall), whereas shorter terms generally come with a lower rate. Most private lenders don't offer flexible repayment options, such as ones that base your monthly payment on your income.

Some lenders charge an origination fee, typically up to 2 percent of the amount of the loan, but many roll the fee into the loan. Most lenders offer both fixed-rate and variable-rate loans. The Federal Reserve is expected to raise interest rates at least two more times this year, which would make a variable-rate loan more expensive. Still, a variable-rate loan could be a smart strategy if you think you'll be able to pay off a large portion of the debt while the rate is still low, or if the loan has a cap that will keep your interest rate from increasing by more than a few percentage points.

Be prepared to clear a high bar to qualify. Last year, nearly 60 percent of borrowers who applied to refinance student loans with a private lender were turned away, according to a survey from LendEDU, a loan comparison website. The average credit score among those who qualified was 764, and about one-third of borrowers who refinanced had a co-signer. Only about 43 percent of those who were approved ultimately refinanced, suggesting that the interest rate many were offered wasn't low enough to seal the deal.

For those who qualify for a lower rate, though, the savings can be substantial. Say you have \$40,000 in loans with an average interest rate of 6 percent and a 10-year repayment period. If you qualified for a 4 percent fixed-rate loan, you would pay roughly \$40 less each month and save about \$4,700 over the 10-year repayment period.

To see how much you would save

by refinancing at a lower rate or shortening your repayment term, visit StudentLoanHero.com and use the site's student loan refinancing calculator.

Don't Count on Loan Forgiveness

If you're employed by the government or a nonprofit organization, Uncle Sam may forgive your federal loans. To qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, you must work full-time for the federal or a state or local government, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, or a private not-for-profit organization that provides a qualifying service, such as emergency management, law enforcement or early childhood education.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimates that about one-fourth of U.S. workers—including teachers, social workers, nurses, police officers and employees at nonprofit organizations—are in a public-service job that may qualify them to have the balance of their federal loans forgiven after 10 years under an income-based repayment plan.

The requirements sound straightforward, but some borrowers who thought they were making qualified monthly payments are learning otherwise or facing major delays getting their loans forgiven. If you want to qualify, make sure your loans, your employer and your payments are eligible for the program, and keep records of loan consolidation, payments and other communications. Borrowers seeking loan forgiveness should submit an Employment Certification Form to the Department of Education each year to confirm eligibility and the number of qualified payments they've made.

Ten years after the public-service loan forgiveness program launched, its future is uncertain, which is important to keep in mind if you're planning a career in public service. The first group of participants were eligible to have their loans forgiven last fall, but it's still unclear how many borrowers from that group had the balance of their loans wiped out. Meanwhile, legislation pending in Congress includes a Trump administration proposal to end the program for new borrowers.

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Oct. 1 is Date for Medical Liability Forms

Nurses, Trainers, ADs Eligible for Coverage; Rate Unchanged since '05

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. Dental hygienists and athletic trainers, however, are not provided coverage for rendering, supervising or teaching under the EEL Program. They can, however, through the endorsement, pick up coverage in all three activity areas. Only members in these five occupational categories may purchase the Medical and Related Arts Endorsement.

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 2018-19 must be received by Oct. 1 to provide coverage retroactive to the start of the school year. 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.



Talking it Out: Working out details of a membership plan during an Omaha membership meeting in August were, from left, Jordan Koch, Papillion-LaVista; and Angelique Wright and Molly Davies, Omaha.



A Pose with the Pres: During an August membership workshop in Lincoln, members took a moment to pose with NSEA President Jenni Benson. From left are Mary Woodard, Lincoln; Benson; Brenda Mullen, Lincoln; and Marsha Silver, Scribner-Snyder.

Membership as a Must

Association Leaders Share Benefits of Joining with New Hires

It happens every year. School districts across the state hire new teachers, or veteran teachers transfer to different school districts.

And each year, your professional association — NSEA — works hard to maintain and grow membership, with good reason: there is strength in numbers. Strength in contract negotiations, strength in member benefits purchasing power, strength in political influence with those who make education policy.

In most cases, it is members themselves who lead the membership drive, as shown here in these photos from the August 2018 membership drive.



Three Thumbs Up! Upon signing, everyone gave new NSEA member Rylee Hanks a thumbs up! From left are Annabelle, Hanks and Omaha Education Association's Jan Machmuller.



I Joined! Sporting the Omaha Education Association's yellow 'I Joined' stickers are OEA members Paula Stormberg, Kathy Poehling and Leslye Seymour.



Membership pros: Learning about the best way to recruit new members during a workshop in Omaha were Faith Johnson, Omaha, left; and Amanda Gehrke, Millard.



Convention Lineup: In the midst of the action on the NEA Representative Assembly convention hall in Minneapolis were, from left, Kathy Poehling, Beth Winbinger and Barb Schroeder. All are members of the Omaha Education Association.

Tide Turns for Education

Groundswell of Support Found in 'Red for Ed' Campaign

With challenges to educators and public schools mounting, more than 6,200 delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly met in Minneapolis in July with a need for good news.

The U.S. Supreme Court had just dealt association membership a blow in the Janus v. AFSCME ruling a week before the July 2 convening.

By the closing gavel four days later, delegates left ready to harness the energy of the burgeoning "Red for Ed" movement.

These are dark days, NEA President Lily Eskelsen García told members.

"Billionaires placed themselves over the rest of us; they have no sense of servant leadership; Billionaires believe that they are our rulers," she said.

But a groundswell of energy and support for public education is already having an enormous impact. The movement started in West Virginia in February and

quickly spread to Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona, Colorado and North Carolina.

"You spoke the powerful truth that we are fierce fighters who will stand up for ourselves and for our students and we will be heard!" Eskelsen García said.

Nearly 100 Nebraska educators attended.

Student Allies

Educators have an ally in students, she said. Whether it's demanding lawmakers properly fund schools or acting to help keep students safe from gun violence, young people have taken the call.

"You see them come together in a collective voice. You feel the power of their action — they're not complaining. They're not waiting for permission," Eskelsen García said, before she yielded the stage to David Hogg, a survivor of the Parkland, FL, school shooting and outspoken advocate for common sense gun laws.

"We are young and



Papillion-LaVista in Attendance: These delegates from the Papillion-LaVista Education Association were all smiles at the NEA Representative Assembly. From left are Jared Wagenknecht, Lindsay Wilson and Carrie George.



The Daily Caucus: NSEA delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly met every day at 6:30 a.m. to caucus about issues on the RA schedule that day. Addressing fellow delegates at various times were, from left, Jill Kimbrough, Grand Island; Sasha Cervantes, Omaha; and Amy Sabatka, North Platte.

that means we don't have to accept the status quo" Hogg said. "And we never will. We intend to close the gap between the world as it is and what it should be."

In a sign of solidarity, Eskelsen García brought to the stage Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers.

'Red for Ed'

Building collective strength and national coalitions was the focus of NEA Executive Director John Stocks' speech.

"What the Red for Ed movement has shown us is that when members and non-members, parents, communities, and students stand together, we are a formidable force and together we can fight and win," he said.

Speeches and celebrations are always highlights of any RA and 2018 was no exception, but the business of the RA is ... business. Delegates spent the lion's share of their time in the Convention Center debating and adopting new policy statements, resolutions, amendments to existing policies and more than 100 new business items, which, taken together, create a detailed NEA education policy blueprint for the upcoming year.

Wearing Red for Ed: NSEA President Jenni Benson, center, pauses for a red-tinged photograph with Millard Education Association members Stacy Kester-Pearson, left, and Allison Stansberry, right.

Arizona on Track

On the last day of RA, as delegates celebrated Red for Ed, Marisol Garcia, vice president of the Arizona Education Association, stood on the convention floor to deliver remarkable news about how educators are leading this change.

In July, Arizonans submitted 270,000 signatures (100,000 more than needed) to put an initiative on the ballot that, if approved, could raise hundreds of millions of dollars in education funding.

"This spring, when we walked out, we walked out for our children, and we did it with the support of NEA," Garcia said as the delegates stood and applauded. We knew you were with us, and when we go to the polls in November, we will win!"



'Yes' on No. 67: Neligh-Oakdale's Lisa Hanson signals NSEA delegates with the caucus' stance on an amendment to NEA Bylaws.



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Deals Galore at Click & Save!

Getting ready for the new school year involves more than just stocking the supply closet! Check out deals on apparel, backpacks, footwear, electronic devices, and more!

NEA 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:

■ **Old Navy:** Find stylish clothing at reasonable prices for adults and kids alike! Save up to 20 percent off sale merchandise. Get free shipping on orders of \$100 or more.

■ **Reebok:** Outfit yourself for work or play with high-quality and durable clothing and footwear from Reebok. Save up to 50 percent on sale items and get free shipping on orders of \$49 or more.

■ **Calendars.com:** Get organized for the new school year! Peruse the world's largest inventory of wall calendars, desk pads, and planners. Save up to 75 percent off select calendars.

■ **Office Depot:** For school supplies, check out deals and save up to 50 percent.

Be sure to check Click and Save often for unadvertised, limited time offers, including discount dining certificates from Restaurant.com. Join the thousands of NEA members already registered for NEA Click & Save. To start saving today, go to:

www.neamb.com/clickandsave

Great Deals on New & Used Cars

Now is a great time to get good deals on end-of-model-year cars. If you're in the market, the NEA Auto Buying Program through TrueCar is the first place you should look! NEA members and their families enjoy preferred pricing year-round, save an average of \$3,383 off MSRP on new cars, plus get these other benefits:

■ **Get Guaranteed Savings on New Cars:** See upfront dealer pricing information and lock in your Guaranteed Savings on new cars before you visit the dealership.

■ **Used Car Discounts:** Save hundreds off the list price.

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

■ **Enjoy a Hassle-Free Experience:** Bring in your Price Certificate to a Certified Dealer or show it on your mobile phone.

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

Renters: Be Insured for Less Than \$1 a Day

Protect Your Possessions from Fire, Water, Theft

You've been busy preparing for the new school year. The dollars you spend purchasing materials for the classroom add up quickly, but you do it so students will start the semester on a positive note.

You're so focused on their needs that you may forget about your own needs: getting enough sleep, eating right and protecting your important possessions.

If you're a renter, the NEA® Auto & Home Insurance Program provided by California Casualty can help take some of the stress away. For about \$12 a month (well under what an average person spends each month for coffee, cell phone service or internet) you can get coverage from fire, water damage or theft.

NEA Member Benefits partnered with California Casualty to provide you this important benefit because it's a good investment that gives you peace of mind, allowing you to concentrate on helping students succeed. Here's why:

■ It includes liability protection, which pays legal or medical bills if you are sued by someone who tripped and got hurt at your home, if your dog bit someone, or for damage to others from a fire that started in your unit.

■ It provides living expenses if you're evacuated or while your place is repaired or rebuilt after a fire or flooding from a broken water pipe

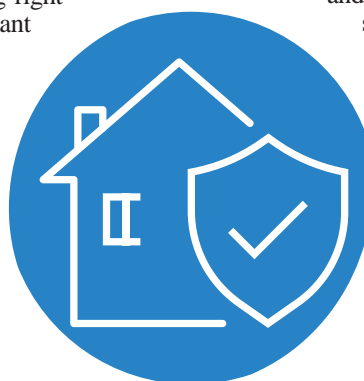
■ It covers personal items damaged or stolen from your vehicle (after the deductible)

■ It pays for items stolen while traveling or on vacation

The liability limits of your policy also extend into the classroom.

Renters insurance does so much to protect you and your possessions that it's hard to imagine not having it. However, 60 percent of renters are taking a risk and doing without this important protection.

They either think their landlord's insurance will cover their possessions (it doesn't), they don't think they have enough items to protect, or that it costs too much.



Imagine the cost if you had to replace everything you owned because of a fire or break-in. Renters insurance will pay for living expenses and will help replace teaching materials, your mattress and bedding, stereo equipment, computers, other electronics, and all the pots, pans, silverware and other things in the kitchen.

If you're on a tight budget, it's possible to reduce premiums by choosing a slightly higher deductible, being a nonsmoker, and having security devices, sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers. In many cases, the savings from simply bundling with your auto insurance will pay for your renters insurance.

Another way to save is to make a comprehensive inventory of all the things you own, so you will only pay for what you need. Having that inventory will also help speed up a claim if something bad happens. California Casualty has an easy to read inventory guide for you to use.

When you weigh the value, having renters insurance just makes sense. Find out how little renters insurance costs, and how much it covers; call a California Casualty advisor today at 1-800-800-9410 or visit:

www.calcas.com/NEA

California Casualty also has educator specific professional information and numerous resources for you, like a moving guide checklist, at the California Casualty blog at:

mycalcas.com

While you're looking into renter's insurance, don't forget to enter California Casualty's "Wherever Your Journey Takes You... We'll Be There" Sweepstakes at:

www.winajourney.com

A lucky educator will win a 2018 Dodge Journey.

This article furnished by California Casualty, founded in 1914 and serving the needs of educators since 1951. California Casualty is the only auto and home insurance company to earn the trust and endorsement of the NEA. As a result, NEA 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. Learn how to save by getting a quote at www.neamb.com/autohome, or by calling 1.800.800.9410.

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It's About Respect



**Executive
Director
Maddie Fennell**

“

**It's not about
the pay. It's
about all of the
ways an entire
sector of the
country's most
selfless givers
have been
complicit in a
system that has
evolved to bilk
them in every
way it can:
of their time,
their money,
their energy, and
their emotions.**

”

Last year I read *Why Teachers are Walking Out*, a blog by Seth Nichols that really struck a chord with me. With his permission, we have reprinted a portion of his post. You can read the full post at this website:

<https://sethnichols.wordpress.com/>

Here is an excerpt from Nichols' post:

For the last 10 years, I've been a covert operative in Women's World, a.k.a. a public school. I am not a typical elementary teacher. I am male. And I am often confounded at what I have seen my coworkers silently acquiesce to, happily playing along, fueled only by the sense of the purpose they work from. I am not surprised that teachers in many states have had walkouts. *I am surprised that they waited so long to start.*

Obviously, I'm sympathetic to my colleagues. I'm also sympathetic to garbage collectors, Haitian farmers and CPS caseworkers. In comparison, our job might be considered a breeze for the pay, with its dreamy holiday schedule and all.

Let's not go down that rabbit hole, though, because the walkouts aren't really ultimately about “pay,” the face usually presented.

Women are *done* being taken advantage of.

That's what this is about. Don't think that it's a coincidence that mass walkouts are happening within a year of the #metoo movements, the sex abuse revelations, or the women's marches.

It's not just about pay. It's about respect. It's about boundaries crossed and people used. It's about unrealistic, unspoken expectations systemically enforced, leaving the perceived inability to speak up for oneself. It's about a mass of subservient people waking up one day to see the reality of what they've been putting up with all along.

When you hear stories and shine light into cultural blind spots, you start to see that there has been widescale, nationally accepted inequalities kept alive for decades in the dungeons of school halls, among the nation's largest female workforce.

Aren't Whiteboards Expensive?

I was in a meeting with my female colleagues, needing student whiteboards for math. (Imagine your teachers back in 1987 requesting an overhead projector. Basic.) A good set might run \$50.

As a norm, I don't request purchases from the “company.” I often forget it's even an option. When I mentioned it to a co-teacher on the way to the meeting, she gave me a sarcastic, “Good LUCK...”

I said, “Hey, if this school, on its \$10 million budget, can't afford \$50 whiteboards how do they expect someone supporting a family of six on a teacher's salary to be able to?” She said she had never thought of that.

She had never *thought* of that. This is our culture. Where you aren't allowed to think about *asking* for your needs to be met.

The *given* is to figure it out. Because women will. Had I asked 20 different teachers about whiteboards, 10 of them would start spewing out names of stores. The other 10 (older) would give me some DIY weekend instructions that involve table saws. Seldom would any of them *think* to say, “Umm, ask for them...”

Injustice and oppression thrive in places where the norms are never questioned.

My boss didn't *think* that way, either. Minutes before, my boss had told us, “We'll do anything to help you.” Minutes later, I was met with a kind sigh, and “Aren't whiteboards pretty expensive?” One of our support staff spoke up, “Didn't you ask me about those last year? I'll get you some.” And she did. Possibly on her dime. I didn't ask.

The fact that the whiteboards were such a small purchase illuminates the problem.

A man's operative norm tends to be, “since it's not a big deal, the company should have no problem helping you out.”

A woman's norm tends to be, “since it's not a big deal, you should be able to handle it yourself.”

The Sum of the Straws

I've witnessed a teacher running a fever, surrounded by nurses taking her blood pressure, get up and stumble down the hall, on her way to wrangle kids.

I've witnessed a teacher passing a kidney stone refusing to go home.

I've witnessed a teacher get punched.

I've witnessed teachers yelled at, demeaned, and criticized, and then go chase down the kid to make sure he is okay.

And all that was just this week.

Nothing we handle is a huge deal. But the sum of all the straws on the camel's back have become a crushing weight for so many.

It's not about the pay. It's about all of the ways an entire sector of the country's most selfless givers have been complicit in a system that has evolved to bilk them every way it can: of their time, their money, their energy, and their emotions.

Pay for it yourself.

Create it yourself.

Stay late and put on that function yourself.

Meet during your time.

Work during your weekend.

Be kind to people yelling, ignoring, cussing, and hitting you. Then, make sure they pass the new standards.

...And be prepared to take bullets for them, too.

These things are not said as much as they are collectively understood, which is much worse.



Winner No. 1: NSEA-Retired President De Tonack holds one of two awards won at the annual NEA Retired meeting. Awards feted the NSEA-Retired Advocate newsletter, and the coverage of NSEA's Read Across America coverage that appeared in the NSEA-Retired Corner.



Winner No. 2: NSEA-Retired board member Carol Krejci, left, won a drawing at the NEA Representative Assembly. With her is Ted Dintersmith, author of "What a School Could Be: Stories About Critical Positive Changes Happening in Schools Across the Country."



Winner No. 3: Lincoln Retired member Margie Nowak, left, won an afghan made and donated by member Billie Bussmann. The raffle raised money for LEA-Retired's scholarship program, which benefits Lincoln graduates who will enter the student teacher ranks in the coming year.

Fall Conference Will 'Follow the Water'

Many have seen the Nebraska Educational Television production, Follow the Water, which tracks the Platte River from its source in the Rocky Mountains.

Now members of NSEA-Retired can meet the team that filmed the hour-long program at the NSEA-Retired Fall Conference in Kearney on Tuesday, Oct. 16.

The morning keynote will feature NET producer and director Chris Lesiak, who will talk about the stories and challenges Michael Forsberg and Michael Farrell endured – and that every drop of water endures – in the 900-mile journey from the mountains to the plains.

The afternoon conference agenda will feature a "core" experience in communities, gratitude and service. Prepare for an activity comparing "apples to apples," designed for the young and young-at-heart. Breakout sessions, prizes, and a great lunch plus desserts are always part of the fall conference.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Kearney, just north of the Interstate 80 exit. The conference opens at 8:30 a.m. with registration and coffee.

Members can also register for a pre-event on Monday, Oct. 15, at 7 p.m. at McCue's Taproom in Kearney.

Register by Tuesday, Oct. 9, at nsea.org/retired. The event is free for NSEA-



Leaders for 2018-19: Here are your leaders for NSEA-Retired for the coming year. Seated, from left is Roger Rea, Omaha, vice president; De Tonack, Lincoln, president; Ruby Davis, Omaha, secretary; Art Tanderup, Neligh, treasurer. Regional directors are, standing from left, Carol Krejci, Omaha, Metro; Pat Etherton, Lincoln, Capitol; Guy Roggenkamp, Grand Island, Tri-Valley; Francis Rohrich, Norfolk, Elkhorn; Dee Gillham, Bartlett, Sandhills; and Jim McDermott, Scottsbluff, Panhandle. Not pictured is John Jensen, Omaha, Metro.

Retired members, \$10 for guests. For details reach Megan Lyons at 1-800-742-0047 or at:

megan.lyons@nsea.org

Special Life Membership Offer

We encourage you to participate in our new NSEA-Retired, one-time offer, which is good until June 1, 2019.

By joining NEA/NSEA with a lifetime membership, either as a fully-retired member, or through a pre-retired

subscription, you will receive a \$100 refund from NSEA-Retired.

You will also save an additional \$50 on the NEA-Retired membership, which increases \$50 on Sept. 1, 2019.

To join, go to nsea.org/retired. Don't forget you can stretch payments over several months. For details, reach NSEA's Membership Department at 1-800-742-0047:

— De Tonack, President
NSEA-Retired

Retirements Result in NSEA Staff Changes

Wolf Longest-Ever NSEA Employee; Trio of Retirees Gave 93 Years Service

Nearly 93 years of expertise left the NSEA with the retirement of three Association staffers on Aug. 31. Among them:

■ Julie Wolf, NSEA's longest-ever employee, at just two months short of 45 years. Wolf retired as administrative assistant to the NSEA president, a post she held for 35 years.

■ Jay Sears, organizational specialist, joined NSEA on Jan. 1, 1984, and with nearly 35 years, is another of the longest serving Association employees.

■ NSEA Director of Research Larry Scherer joined staff in early 2005 after a lengthy career working with the Legislature.

"Association members are saying goodbye to some of their fiercest, most passionate advocates with these retirements," said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell. "The departure of their expertise and their devotion to the Association will truly be missed by members across the state."

New to staff are organizational specialists Todd Tystad and Andy Isaacson, and administrative assistant Martha Livingston. Tystad serves NSEA's West Central Unit, or the 15 counties bounded Thomas and Blaine counties to the north and Red Willow and Harlan counties to the south. Isaacson serves the Metro West Unit, which includes Millard, Westside and ESU No. 3. Livingston is administrative assistant to Fennell and NSEA President Jenni Benson.

Eight Presidents

Wolf began working at NSEA in November 1973 as an assistant to research and the Association's fledgling field staff operation. She also operated the switchboard and picked up Association mail, which at that time was delivered to the state capitol across the street from the NSEA Headquarters.

Since taking the role of administrative assistant to the president in 1983 Wolf has served eight Association presidents. She also spent 30-plus years on the road over the July 4th holiday, attending to duties for members at the NEA Representative Assemblies around the country.

Having taught social studies for 12 years in Seward, Sears joined NSEA as an organizational specialist for local associations in the Omaha metro area, beginning in 1986.

In 1996, he became the NSEA program director for instructional advocacy, a post he held for 20 years before adding field staff duties in southeast Nebraska to his schedule.

Sears' face is well-known at the State Board of Education, where he monitored activities for 20 years. He was also active at the Legislature, where he lobbied frequently on behalf of teachers and public education.

Sears was active in NSEA's work with the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education (NCTE), serving on that State Board educator preparation advisory committee. He also served on the Teacher Education School Accreditation Committee.

A 'Return to Roots'

Scherer arrived with a wealth of experience on the state aid formula – in fact he had a key role in writing the formula.

After earning a degree from the University of Nebraska College of Law, Scherer was legal counsel for the Legislature's Business and Labor Committee and later for the Education Committee. There, he was lead staff and author of the Tax Eq-



Wolf



Sears



Scherer



Tystad



Isaacson



Livingston

uity and Educational Opportunities Support Act – the state aid formula used to distribute nearly a billion dollars in tax funds to Nebraska's public schools.

In addition to lobbying state senators on school funding issues, he has worked closely with NSEA's Higher Education members in recent years. He is also a trained mediator.

Gordon native Tystad returns to his roots in his western Nebraska unit. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and taught elementary school in Lincoln before taking work as a literacy coach and administrator at the elementary and middle school levels in Los Angeles. He served on the Lincoln Education Association negotiations team, the school board contact team, was a faculty rep, and was a delegate to NSEA Delegate Assemblies.

Iowa Experience

Isaacson began his career as a paraprofessional at Plattsmouth. He then spent 11 years as a high school special education teacher at the alternative school for the Papillion-LaVista Public Schools. He owns a bachelor's degree in psychology from Nebraska Wesleyan University, a bachelor's in special education from Peru State College, and a master's in educational leadership from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Isaacson is a past treasurer and past president of the Papillion-LaVista Education Association. He comes to NSEA after two years as an organizational specialist for the Iowa State Education Association, where he served southeast Iowa.

Livingston's hiring was previously announced in *The Voice*. Her past work as executive assistant to the general manager at Nebraska Educational Television and assistant to the president of the Nebraska Community Foundation makes her a great fit as an administrative assistant to Benson and Fennell.

Hampton, Omaha Central Earn \$1k Each

California Casualty Grant Benefits Athletic Departments

Two Nebraska high school athletic departments have received \$1,000 grants from an NSEA member benefits partnership through California Casualty.

The checks for \$1,000 were presented to athletic departments at Omaha Central High School and Hampton High School.

NSEA member Joel Miller applied on behalf of the Hampton Public Schools. The award will be used to benefit the junior high basketball program for both boys and girls.

NSEA member Jay Landstrom applied for Omaha Central, where the funds will be used for the football program.

The California Casualty grant was established to provide support to public school sports programs affected by reduced budgets.

The program considers requests for public middle/high schools where athletic programs are in jeopardy and in need of funds. The application deadline is Jan. 15 each year.

Applications must be submitted by an active employee of the school for which the grant is requested. The applicant must be a current member, or referred by a current member, of NSEA. Advise your principal and athletic director of your grant request as they will be contacted about your application status.

A selection committee reviews applications and applicants will be notified of their status in the spring. Awards must be used to subsidize the sports program(s) identified on the grant application and cannot be used for student awards, construction or other school programs.

California Casualty requires permission to publish details of the award. For more details, or to apply, watch *The Voice* or go to:

CalCasAthleticsGrant.com

Speaking of Education

“Teachers are now expected to educate all students to a level once reached by only 20 percent of the students and to do so in a highly multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic society that is faced with rapid technological change and economic disarray.”

— **Clinton E. Boutwell,**
*School Administrator,
Education Analyst, Author*

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

Time-Saving Text Book Distribution

From Lynne Kelsey, an English teacher in California.

“To save time on the first day, I number textbooks ahead of time. Then, I alphabetize my class list and assign numbers to the students. I assign the numbered textbook to the same numbered student. I place the books on the students’ desks prior to school so that on the first day all they have to do is write their names in the books.

This keeps me from worrying about quiet time projects while I distribute books. Coordinating numbers also helps during the year when I find a book in the classroom. At the end of the year I can immediately see if I’m missing any textbooks. All my co-workers that have tried this rave over how much easier it makes the first day.”

Works4Me
NEA's e-mail
classroom tip of the week!

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



Winner No. 1: Staff members from each grade at Lincoln's Sheridan Elementary School hold books purchased with the prize money from NSEA's Read Across Nebraska campaign last winter. Seated, from left, are kindergarten teacher Angela Penner and third grade teacher Alyssa Emery. Standing from left are first grade teacher Mallory Schmidt, school librarian LaVonne Hanlon, fifth grade teacher Lindy Gushard, second grade teacher Julie Ehlers, and fourth grade teacher Shari McCright.