

The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association • December 2019



A Magical Evening

Benefit Gala Raises More Than \$62,000 in Donations

- Webinar Addresses Disruptive Environments
- Input Sought on Discipline Bill
- NPERS Retirement Plan in Good Shape



THE VOICE

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NSEA Can Assist with Home Loans, Evaluations

Membership Gives You an Edge on Life

The queries that come to NSEA's 18 organizational specialists sometimes reach into unexpected areas. This query recently arrived in the email inbox of an organizational specialist:

"I am a member and I'd like to know if there is anything you offer for down payment assistance or home buying."



While mortgage experience is not listed on the resume of any of NSEA's field staff, the answer, of course, is 'yes.' All NSEA members have access to the NEA's Member Benefits (NEAMB) program. The NEAMB programming provides scores of money-saving benefits to members, among them access to a national home mortgage program through – get this – First National Bank of Omaha!

The First National Bank of Omaha loan offering through NEAMB provides an estimated savings of \$700 at closing, and is available not only to members, but to their spouses, their parents and their children. The program offers low, competitive rates and options that help members (and their families) find a solution that fits just about any need. The program also has a sign-in option that allows members to check loan eligibility online. To learn more, go to

www.neamb.com

Sometimes, the assistance needed by a member can become quite serious in nature. For example:

"Yesterday I was called into my superintendent's office and he proceeded to tell me a series of rumors and hear-

say that different members of the community have come to him accusing me of public intoxication. Because of this, I am receiving an unsatisfactory on my teacher evaluation in the area of professional conduct. I was quite blind-sided by this and didn't know how to respond, but I believe I have a right to refute these unfounded accusations. What do I do now? I need help! I have never had a bad evaluation or anything of this sort in my career."

No other professional organization will stand by your side to assist you as you refute such allegations. Only NSEA has staff on the ground – 18 organizational specialists with expertise in all phases of education – across the state working to help members in such situations. They have knowledge of Nebraska Department of Education rules and regulations, and an understanding of your school district. They know your contract and your administrators. Confidentiality is standard practice. You'll get no such service from other "education" associations.

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

www.nsea.org

You will draw your answer from years of experience and expertise — expertise that gives you "The NSEA Edge."

Would You Like to Write for The Voice?

Would you like to write an item for *The Voice*? Would you like to write an opinion column or an article on what is working in your classroom?

NSEA would like to begin a regular page for members, entitled Voice from the 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: The Nov. 2 Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and Learn was a rousing success. From left, Jana Georgius, Saw Ket Htoo and Teresa Matthews played key roles. Learn more beginning page 7.

Lessons Learned



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“
Your Association
is also involved
with numerous
statewide
coalitions, all
working to
ensure that all
Nebraska
students get the
best education
possible.”

Reading has always been one of my first loves and one of my strengths.

I remember doing so well on my 7th grade testing that rather than participate in reading class I was given a job as office aide. Although that marked the first time in my life that I felt smart, that I felt good about myself in that regard, I had no idea the importance that reading and testing would eventually play in my life.

Testing these days is far more stressful on our children, and it does little to make our students feel intelligent. Further, high-stakes testing does not reflect well on lessons learned.

NSEA has a vested interest in and a commitment to helping all students be successful learners. Our commitment is exhibited in many ways. We have staff and members involved with several Nebraska Department of Education committees and work groups. We have representatives assigned to every area of policy-making and implementation. I serve on an NDE committee reviewing the Praxis test our college students must pass to gain acceptance to a state college or university education program.

NSEA has an active Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) committee working to make sure the educator's voice is a part of the state's ESSA plan.

Your Association is also involved with numerous statewide coalitions, all working to ensure that all Nebraska students get the best education possible.

Reading Across the State

Because I love reading, I try to schedule readings to classrooms of young students whenever and wherever I travel. Such readings keep me connected to our most important investment: our children. Those readings also connect me with members, giving me the access I need to talk about and learn of their concerns and needs. Those are details I can rely on to inform my messages to policymakers and other education stakeholders.

My best friend, Joy, and I began reading to friends in high school. She gave the Dr. Seuss classic *The Sneetches* to my daughter, Joy, nearly 30 years ago. When I travel to a school to read, that's my first choice for reading aloud.

In fact, I've read *The Sneetches* so often that I

have it memorized. I enjoy watching the faces of the students as I “read” without looking at the pages. The kids typically exchange questioning looks with their neighbor. I smile and keep reading.

*“Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches had bellies with stars.
The Plain-Belly Sneetches had none upon thars.
Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small.
You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.”*

In dozens of classrooms, grades preK-6, I teach about the lessons we can all take from *The Sneetches*. If your memory of *The Sneetches* is foggy, the story tells the tale of Sneetches who treat each other poorly, based on a single identifying attribute, a star.

When I finish reading, I ask the students about lessons they might take, about the author's purpose. Every time I ask such questions, the response has been outstanding. To kindergarteners, the lesson is one of kindness. To older students, it is about diversity and discrimination. To some, it is about bullying. To others, it revives closely-held memories of being wronged, treated badly.



For a Falls City Reading: NSEA President Jenni Benson, center, poses with the Falls City mother and daughter teachers Maygan Ramsey, left, and Christine Ramsey, right.

Ever-Necessary Reminder

Last week, there was a new response to the lesson. “It's about how you feel about yourself, because if you don't feel good about yourself it doesn't matter if you have a star or not,” said a third-grader.

That was a profound moment, a lesson that gave me pause to think. I had had quite a week and was struggling, facing personal obstacles. That child reminded me that whether I had a “star” was of little consequence.

The Sneetches offers an ever-necessary reminder of our need to be aware of our treatment of others. Sometimes just lending an ear is enough. Caring can be enough.

Likewise, we need to care for ourselves, we need to feel good about ourselves, whether we have that star or not. Working collaboratively to ensure ALL children are successful can be a difficult, stressful job. As we head into the busiest time of the year, take time for yourself. You'll be a better educator, and your students will reap the benefits.



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Modest Growth for State Retirement Plan

Yearly Snapshot Shows Fund in Great Shape

It was another year of mostly good news for the state's retirement plan for teachers.

Although the 6.7 percent return on investment for the year that ended June 30 fell shy of the 7.5 percent assumed rate of return, the plan's funded ratio improved from 88.8 to 90.3 percent.

Just six years ago, following the Great Recession, the plan's funded ratio was 77 percent. The plan's funded ratio is the level of assets in proportion to the plan's liabilities.

"We're in a string of years where it's been easier to give reports than it was a few years ago. We like that," consultant Brent Banister told the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems (NPERS) Board of Directors at its Nov. 18 meeting.

Banister and Pat Beckham work for Cavanaugh Macdonald Consulting, and provide an annual assessment of the retirement plans for school, state patrol and judicial employees at the NPERS board meeting each November. The assessment reviews a snapshot of the plan taken on July 1 of each year – the first day of the state's fiscal year. The review also projects where the plan might be headed.

Market Value Grows

Beckham said it was an overall favorable year with improved funding ratios for all three NPERS plans. Further, the school plan remains on track to be 100 percent funded by 2028. Just three years earlier the projections set the 'fully funded' date at 2038.

All three plans under the board's purview experienced modest growth in the year ended June 30. The school plan's market value assets grew by \$578 million, to \$12.2 billion, a 6.7 percent increase.

The market value assets for the plan for state judges grew by \$7.6

million to \$195.7 million. The market value assets for the state patrol plan grew by \$15.9 million to \$436.6 million. The plan for judges has a funded ratio of 98.1 percent, while the state patrol plan is funded at 87.3 percent.

"These plans have all been well-funded," said Beckham.

No Additional State Dollars

The consultants also project no need for additional state contributions for 30 years, assuming the rate of return remains steady, and assuming the state makes its current contributions to the plan each year. They also said the fund could withstand a 6.25 percent rate of return for the next 10 years without any additional state payments required.

The state contributes funding equal to two percent of teacher salaries each year. Education employees contribute 9.78 percent of salary, and school districts contribute the equivalent of 9.88 percent of that salary. The state plan covers all K-12 public education employees in Nebraska except for those in Omaha. Omaha educators fall under a separate plan founded several decades

before the state plan.

The state patrol plan includes 915 members, and the plan for judges includes 341 lives. The school plan is by far the largest, with 91,909 active and retired educators either contributing to or benefitting from the plan in retirement.

Janis Elliott chairs the NPERS board, was a member of NPERS and when she taught at Bellevue, is a former member of the NSEA Board of Directors and is now a physics teacher at Omaha Central High School. She thanked those who lead and work for NPERS.

"We can't lose sight that more than 91,000 people are affected (by the school plan). It changes lives. I get a little emotional thinking about that. Thank you for your work," she said.

91,909

The number of active and retired educators either contributing to or benefitting from the state retirement plan for public school employees.



Mentoring, Teaching Videos on the Way

You'll soon see new videos featuring NSEA members. A set of social media videos feature members offering ideas for solving typical classroom issues. Other spots encourage members who are in the first 7 years of their teaching career to join NSEA's free mentoring and instructional coaching programs, supported by a grant from the NEA Great Public Schools Fund. Program details, links to sign up, and posters to download are found at: nsea.org/mentor

In addition, a new public service announcement encouraging the next generation of teachers will appear on television across the state, thanks to NSEA's partnership with the Nebraska Broadcasters Association. The video features experienced teachers talking about educators who helped them become better teachers – and letting the next generation of teachers know they'll do the same for them. The goal is to work together to make sure every child has great public school teachers.



Above, from left, are Brittney Hodges-Bolkovac, Lincoln Dawes Middle School; Nathan Mueller, Hastings Senior High; Leah Borer, Grand Island Senior High; and Anne King, Omaha's Belvedere Academy. Above, Decua Jean-Baptiste principal at Belvedere Academy, tapes a segment.



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Bright and Shiny Faces! Members of the Westside Education Association attended the Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and LEARN. From left are Michael Fryda, Maggie Person, Cassandra Birdsell, Crystal Shirkey, WEA President Teresa Matthews, Stephanie Sabin, Renae Stirba, Sara Rodwell, Travis Vo and Guy O'Brien.

A Magical Evening

Benefit Gala for Children's Fund, LEARN Raises More Than \$62,000 in Donations

Jana Georgius clearly remembers the "kind of rowdy" student who signed up for her teacher prep class at Omaha Bryan High School three years ago.

"No way!" Georgius recalls telling the student's counselor, noting that she had subbed in another class where the young man was "loud and obnoxious."

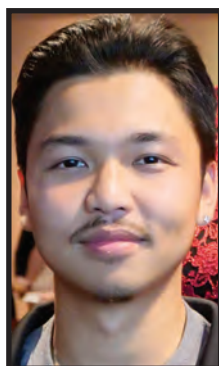
Today, that now-graduated student, Saw Ket Htoo, is recalled as "a ball of fire," said Georgius. "We're very, very fortunate that we had him. He's done things that none of us have ever done."

Htoo was also fortunate. As a refugee from Myanmar (formerly Burma), the NSEA Children's Fund was available to assist when he needed dress clothes to wear to state and national Educators Rising competitions.

He repaid the good deed in November at a \$100-a-plate benefit before more than 200 guests in support of the NSEA Children's Fund and NSEA's professional development non-profit, LEARN (Leading Excellence and Robust Networks). His success was celebrated at the Gala.

With the help of a generous set of donors (see Page 8), the Gala raised more than \$62,000 for the Children's Fund and LEARN, becoming the most successful fundraiser in NSEA history. That total far surpasses the \$15,000 raised by the most successful of the summer golf tournaments held in the early days of the Children's Fund.

"We have been greatly blessed by the generosity of our friends and members," said NSEA President Jenni Benson.



Htoo

The evening was almost magical – a word Georgius used to describe Htoo's move toward the teaching profession.

'Magical' Change Leads Toward a Dream

The Bryan counselor told Georgius that Htoo's dream was to become an art teacher. Soon after her first encounter with Htoo, he became active in the Georgius-led education program and in Bryan's Educators Rising chapter.

"Something magical happened from his sophomore to junior year," said Georgius. "Classroom evaluations from his practicum teachers were amazing. The young children he worked with adored him. He got along well with fellow students."

"He was absolutely magical to have every day in class in his junior and senior years," she said.

It was Georgius who eventually suggested that Htoo enter one of the Educators Rising competitions, each designed to help students learn more about the teaching profession. He selected Pre-K literature, and while most submissions in that category are team efforts, Htoo's entry

was unique in that he supplied both artwork and text for his children's book.

His topic was even more noteworthy. As one of Myanmar's Karen people, he authored a book to help preschool children who needed assistance to retain their heritage. His book included each letter of the Karen alphabet with a corresponding picture and pronunciation in English.

"He does not want them to lose touch with their culture," said Georgius.

One issue came up before state competition, however: His family – which includes a houseful of younger sisters – could not provide the black dress shoes and dress clothes he would need for state and



Master of Ceremonies: Retired Omaha South teacher and former Omaha newscaster Carol Kloss McClellan, center, emceed Gala activities. She is with Carolyn Grice, former NEA Director of Nebraska, left; and NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte, Millard, right.



Tekamah-Herman in the Room! Members of the Tekamah-Herman Education Association also attended the Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and LEARN. From left are Kevin and Leslie Brenneis; Duey and Tracy Heffelfinger; Jane and John Walford; Molly Miller; K.J. Belfrage; Luis Fernandez; and Manni Belfrage.

possible national competition.

"I want the kids to know what it's like to be a teacher," said Georgius. "Not only what teachers sound like, but to start off we need to look like what a teacher looks like. They need items to attend conferences and to go work in classrooms and to be prepared to go to recess duty."

That's where the Children's Fund came into play. Georgius called NSEA, the dress clothes were purchased and Htoo entered competition. At state, he finished second. At nationals, he was third.

Until then, no Bryan student had ever placed at state, much less nationals. Htoo has since read his book in preschool classes around Omaha, and the goal is to put his book in the library of every area building that has a preschool program.

Now a Bryan graduate, Htoo is enrolled at Metropolitan Community College and is working toward his dream of becoming a teacher, a goal that was assisted by the Children's Fund. Georgius said the brief time working with Htoo was rewarding.

"We were just so happy to have him in the program," she said.

Not a Bystander with Children's Fund

Molly Davies uses the Children's Fund frequently as an English language learner teacher at Omaha's Central High School.

She told the Gala audience that the opportunity to advocate for social justice and stand in solidarity with members across the state "are the two things that compel me to be a committed and active member of the Omaha Education Association and the NSEA. Those are also the values that compel me to give to the NSEA Children's Fund."

When she doesn't personally purchase items for her students, Davies uses the Children's Fund for eyeglasses, prescriptions, clothes, winter gear, backpacks and shoes.

"Not buying that item or accessing the Children's Fund makes me a bystander while I watch a kid be excluded from the learning environment because their needs are not being met," said Davies.

Using the fund is "an act of solidarity that facilitates every teacher's desire to make sure each child is fully included in the life of a classroom and that failing to meet those

needs affects the kids' capacity to learn."

She thanked those who take small acts to support the Children's Fund, such as payroll deductions to benefit the fund, or buying a ticket to the Gala. "I want to thank you for taking the time to come tonight and for donating to the Children's Fund so that we can fill and meet needs in the lives of Nebraska students," she said.

Professional Development Helps Teacher Reach Goals

On a pleasant Saturday two summers ago, Teresa Matthews attended an NSEA social justice retreat. Her intent was to stay for a few sessions and leave to enjoy the nice day.

"I ended up staying for the entire day, attending sessions on everything from sex trafficking to trauma-informed schools," said Matthews, an elementary art teacher for the Westside District 66 Public Schools, and president of the Westside Education Association. She found the speakers "amazing."

"I teach in a high-poverty school. That retreat caused me to revisit some of the assumptions and expectations I've held for the last 20 years of my career," she said.

When NSEA offered an 11-week professional development on Challenging Racism, Matthews was on board. That series offers a comprehensive study of race, racism and equity, driven by facilitated conversations built through facts, stories, reflection and relationships.

"I want to thank NSEA for taking the lead on a really sensitive topic," she said.

"NSEA's Challenging Racism class provided me the opportunity to examine and build my own story about race and the ability to address race with my students, colleagues or anyone," she said. "These conversations and stories have led me and the other teachers in my class to actively work against racism and to more fully understand the experiences of students of color."

Opportunities such as those are on the rise for members of NSEA. More than 30 professional development sessions were on the agenda for NSEA Delegate Assembly in April 2019. The inaugural NSEA University, held in Lincoln in July, offered more than 180 sessions.

Matthews thanked those who supported

Generosity for Education

More than a dozen corporations, non-profits and individuals gave generously to the Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and LEARN. Combined with proceeds from individual tickets, the event raised more than \$62,000, after expenses. The sponsors were:

Socrates Level, \$30,000+

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First National Bank of Omaha

Valedictorian Level, \$5,000+

Holland Foundation

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LEARN and other NSEA causes.

"We need support from those who stand with us. Only then can we reach our personal as well as our professional goals. Thank you for your support of NSEA's LEARN program and for quality professional development for Nebraska's teachers."

Ceramic Apple Sales Boost Profits

A highlight at the Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and LEARN was a silent auction of artwork by educators and friends of education.

Friends of NSEA sponsored the purchase of 30 ceramic sculptures and volunteers gave their talents to add unique designs. The artists were:

- Nicky Bowers, McPherson, KS, art teacher
- Megan Pitrat, Syracuse-Dunbar, Avoca special education teacher
- Tracia Blom, South Sioux City art teacher
- Martha Livingston, Lincoln, NSEA staff
- FAST Life Skills Students, Adams Central Elementary, Hastings
- Kim Fitzekam-Szelag, Lincoln retired teacher
- Kate Wilcox, Lincoln art teacher
- Shelley Speidell, Lincoln art teacher
- Anne King, Omaha ESL Specialist
- Audrey Poehelman, Lincoln elementary teacher
- Kari Caddell, Omaha art therapist
- Marsha Silver, Scribner-Snyder art teacher
- Michele Byrnes, First Nebraska Credit Union, Lincoln
- Renae Noble, Chadron world language teacher
- Geoff Semrad, Fremont art teacher
- Weenonah Miller, Bellevue art teacher
- Amelia Koneck, Omaha art teacher
- Randy & Judy Novotny, It's Yours Pottery, Omaha
- Staci Stunkel, Hastings art teacher



Apple Art: Thirty sculptures like these were sold to fund NSEA non-profits.

Report: More Nebraska Kids Living in High-Poverty Areas

Nebraska is one of just 10 states to experience an increase in the number of children living in concentrated poverty since the Great Recession a decade ago, according to data from The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Casey Foundation researchers looked at neighborhoods where poverty rates are at or surpass 30 percent and found 8.5 million children nationwide living in concentrated areas of poverty between 2013 and 2017.

"Over the last seven years, since the last time that the Annie E. Casey Foundation published this report, we went up to 8 percent of our children in Nebraska living in these high-concentrated poverty areas," said Chrissy Tonkinson, research coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska.

Tonkinson said 36,000 Nebraska kids now are living in poverty, with some communities affected more than others. More than three-quarters of the state's children living in poverty are non-white, and some 14,000 live in immigrant families.

Nationally, the number of children living in poverty declined by 8 percent. South Dakota was the only state adjacent to Nebraska

to also see an increase.

Scot Spencer, associate state director of advocacy for the Casey Foundation, said growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods affects practically every part of a child's life. They tend to lack access to healthy food and quality medical care, often face greater exposure to environmental hazards and can experience higher levels of chronic stress linked to diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

He said that when these children grow up, they are more likely to have lower incomes than children who relocate away from communities of concentrated poverty.

"Living in high-poverty neighborhoods puts young people at risk," he said. "We think that they really deserve to live in communities where they can learn, play, grow."

The report offers some remedies, including property-ownership models that preserve affordable housing and ensuring all neighborhoods have quality schools, access to job opportunities, reliable transportation and safe places for recreation.

For more details, go to:

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With Help, NSEA to Push Discipline Bill to Passage

Assistance Needed to Quantify Extent, Nature of Discipline Needs

In May, during the final weeks of the school year, hundreds of NSEA members sent emails, wrote and made phone calls to state senators, their extensive efforts all in support of LB147, a much-discussed student discipline and safety bill.

Those contacts, and the work of NSEA leaders and staff, made a difference. On a 25-14 vote, LB147 was pulled from the Education Committee to the full Legislature for consideration.

As the 2020 session of the Legislature nears, LB147 remains up for consideration by senators. Passage will depend on a strong show of support for LB147. NSEA seeks to muster statewide support, beginning with an effort to catalogue instances in which educators have been injured in the course of classroom or schoolyard duties.

"We're asking educators who have been assaulted or concerned for their safety while teaching to help us quantify the extent and nature of the discipline and safety problems they encounter in their classrooms," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "The more information we can provide senators about how and why these assaults occur, the more effective our message to senators will be and the more senators who will advocate for passage of LB147."

"We are asking members to answer a short survey about violence they have encountered in the classroom," said Benson. She emphasized that details will be strictly confidential, unless an educator specifically grants NSEA authority to share details with policymakers.

"We worked very hard with Sen. Groene, with other sena-



Nebraska Legislature '20

tors and with other education and child advocacy stakeholders to hammer out LB147 language last spring," said Benson. "We have come far, and we do not want to miss an opportunity to pass legislation that would have a positive affect on every student and every teacher in Nebraska public schools."

The first of two components to LB147, as amended, would allow school personnel to use physical intervention to safely manage the dangerous behavior of a student until the student is no longer a danger to themselves, or others. This language, modeled on the Nebraska Supreme Court decision in *Daily v. Board of Education*, would move language from case law into statute. The second component would require school districts to have a publicly available policy on how and when a student can be removed from and returned to class, along with details on the need to provide instructional and behavioral interventions.

"Teachers and administrators must work collaboratively to develop and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment in every school and classroom, and LB147 is a step in that direction," said Benson.

The survey asks educators to provide the date and brief synopsis of the incident, the resulting consequences and other details that might be helpful in letting state senators know why passage of LB147 is necessary. Again, individual details will be held in strict confidence.

To add your story to the collective voice, please complete the school violence survey at:

nsea.org/school-safety

NSEA Seeks to Quantify the Extent of Discipline Issues

As NSEA works with state senators to push LB147 to passage, documentation of the extent of discipline issues in Nebraska classrooms would be of help. NSEA President Jenni Benson asks members who have been assaulted, injured on the job or who have had a concern about their safety to complete a school violence survey. Details will be kept strictly confidential. Complete the survey at:

nsea.org/school-safety

Children's Fund Assistance Can Make a World of Difference

Members Urged to Use Fund to Assist Kids in Need

NSEA members help students learn every day. They also help students be prepared to learn every day, through generous giving to the Association's Children's Fund.

Founded in 1994, the Children's Fund has one goal: to provide children with all they need to be successful at school. That might mean a new coat for a coatless child; dental work for a child in pain; eye-glasses for a child who cannot see.

Teachers often use their own cash to help these children, knowing they can't help every child. For that reason, NSEA created the Children's Fund, and



continues to work to raise money.

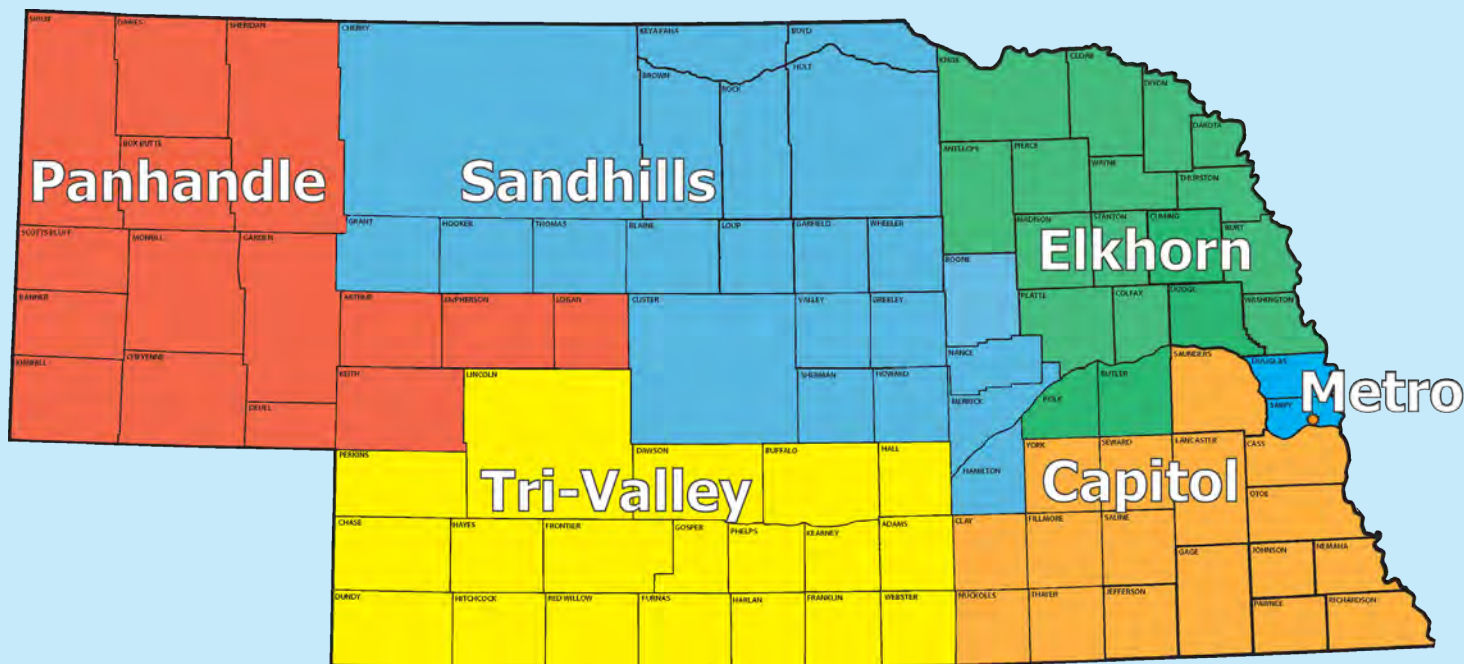
In the past two years alone, the Children's Fund has provided nearly \$100,000 in relief.

The Children's Fund relies purely on donations from members, from local associations and from outside donors who understand the need and see the Children's Fund as a just cause.

NSEA members use the fund to help children when they see a need. NSEA members are also the biggest contributors to the fund and the fund is always in need.

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

sally.bodtke@nsea.org



☀ In order to comply with NEA guidelines, Springfield/Platteview Education Association will be included in Capitol District.

Give Leadership a Try!

There are untold benefits to leadership. Leaders have a hand in policy, strategy, membership and planning. Leaders learn much, meet many and grow professionally.

If such benefits are attractive to you, consider the personal growth brought about by leadership in your professional organization.

The window for filing for the more than two dozen elected positions on NSEA district boards and the NSEA Board of Directors will open on Wednesday, Jan. 1, and will close on Sunday, Feb. 9.

Election of members as at-large delegates to NEA Representative Assembly will occur on the same timeline. Watch the January edition of *The Voice* for details on that filing process.

NSEA members will vote beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 21. Voting will close at midnight on Sunday, March 15.

To file, go to the NSEA website and click on '2020 District Elections.' Select your district, and choose the office you seek. Candidates will need their 10-digit NSEA membership number. Your number will be found above your name on the mailing label of *The*

Voice, or on the email that delivers the digital editions of *The Voice*. Call NSEA if you have questions: 1-800-742-0047.

The filing process allows candidates to post a 50-word statement, which voters can read during balloting. Type the statement in a Word or other text document and then paste the statement into the appropriate box during the filing process.

Note that NSEA encourages minorities to seek Association office at all levels. NSEA's Minority Involvement Plan says "It shall be the goal of the Association to seek minority representation on governing and appointive bodies at least equal to the percentage of minority membership for that appropriate level."

If you do not have Internet access, mail your name, address, local association name and a 50-word statement to: NSEA Elections, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Be sure to state which office you are seeking.

In all cases, the deadline for filing for office is Sunday, Feb. 9. NSEA's website is at:

www.nsea.org

Required to Vote: A Valid Email Address

NSEA members are urged to set a good example at every turn, and that includes at the voting booth. Members can elect the next round of NSEA leaders by casting a ballot in the Association elections.

Voting opens at 12:01 a.m. Friday, Feb. 21. Prior to that date, members with valid email addresses on file will receive an

email detailing the process.

NSEA members without a valid email address on file will receive a postcard explaining the voting. If you do not receive a postcard or an email from NSEA by Thursday, March 12, call 1-800-742-0047.

Update your e-mail address with NSEA at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

www.nsea.org/contact-us

THE VACANCIES

A statewide (see map) look at NSEA leadership opportunities for 2020-21:

ELKHORN DISTRICT

- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Two seats on the district executive committee.
- One seat on the NSEA Board.

CAPITOL DISTRICT

- President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- One seat on the district executive committee.
- One seat on the NSEA Board.

METRO DISTRICT

- Vice President
- Three seats on the district executive committee (subdistricts 3, 6 and 9).
- Two seats on the NSEA Board.

PANHANDLE DISTRICT

- President
- Vice President
- Two seats on the executive committee (Area 2, Area 3).

SANDHILLS DISTRICT

- Treasurer
- Secretary
- One seat on the District Executive Committee.

TRI-VALLEY DISTRICT

- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Three seats on the District Executive Committee (one each from the East, Central and West subdistricts).
- One seat on the NSEA Board.

Alternatives to Punishment is Topic of Webinar

Monthly Seminar Series Designed to Enhance Teaching Skills

NSEA's professional development programming rolls on in December, with a new topic and a new presenter.

Jennifer Bauer is an elementary teacher for the Niobrara Public Schools. She teaches fourth grade and grades three

through five science at Niobrara. She will lead the Thursday, Dec. 12, webinar, which will focus on Building Student Accountability: An Alternative to Punishment.

NSEA members who seek professional development can check in with these new-to-NSEA monthly webinars from the

comfort of their own home or school office. A teaching professional like Bauer guides discussion on classroom topics at 6:30 p.m. CT each month.

Bauer grew up in Niobrara, where she said her mother — a teacher of 32 years — played a role in her own decision to become a teacher.

“Her passion and dedication in touching children’s lives had always been an inspiration to me,” said Bauer.

Bauer earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Wayne State College, and now has a master’s degree in elementary STEM education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“As an educator, I strive to instill creativity and ingenuity in

my students while drawing on their innate curiosity and natural wonder of the world around them,” said Bauer. “I also believe that building relationships, making connections, and fostering a caring learning environment is essential to student success in the classroom!”

NSEA’s professional development offerings are a component of the Association’s plan to provide professional growth in the profession. Utilizing the Zoom platform allows NSEA to reach teachers across the state, wherever they are most comfortable learning. Members can register at this link:

www.nsea.org/webinars

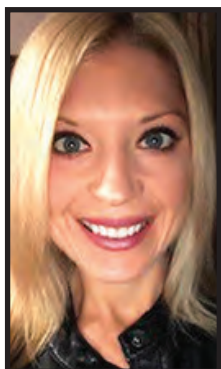
This month’s session will be followed a week later, on Thursday, Dec. 19, with a group coaching session and extension of learning. That gives time for participants to “test drive” strategies learned in the earlier session. The group coaching session will also allow participants to ask questions, fine tune their delivery and share their successes with colleagues.

The December session will be the fourth monthly session this school year. Previous session topics were Building Positive Relationships with Students, Social-Emotional Learning and Getting a Good Start: Setting Clear Expectations. Future topics include:

- Preventing Burnout
- De-escalation Strategies
- Trauma-informed Classrooms
- Restorative Practices

For more details, call or email NSEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich at 1-800-742-0047, or:

cindy.copich@nsea.org



Bauer



Nominate a Co-worker for NSEA Recognition

Now is a good time to begin discussing who you or your association would like to nominate for one of the honors to be given at NSEA’s 159th Delegate Assembly in April.

In addition to awards presentations, elected delegates will conduct association business, and elect a president, vice president and NEA director. Up to 30 sessions of professional development will be offered to delegates and the general Association membership.

For the awards, any NSEA member may nominate a member teacher, ESP or deserving group. Mailed nominations must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 14, 2020, and should be sent to NSEA Awards, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Nominations may also be submitted online, with required supporting material mailed to

the NSEA. Online nomination forms are found under the ‘Call for Nominations’ link at:

www.nsea.org

The 2020 Delegate Assembly will be held at Lincoln’s Marriott Cornhusker Hotel on Friday evening and Saturday, April 24-25. NSEA members are eligible for:

- **Rookie of the Year:** Honors a first-year teacher who excelled in the 2018-19 school year.
- **Award for Teaching Excellence:** Honors a teacher who has excelled over time.
- **Education Support Professional of the Year:** Honors an ESP who has excelled in his or her job.

Finalists will be notified in March, with winners revealed at Delegate Assembly. Recipients receive a \$250

cash award. NSEA members are also eligible for:

- **The Great Plains Milestone Award:** Honors an individual/group for promoting human and civil rights.
- **Community Service:** Honors NSEA members and/or local associations involved in volunteer work outside of classroom hours.
- **Local Public Relations:** Honors local associations for outstanding communication within the association.

Also to be presented:

- **Friend of Education:** Honors an individual or organization that has made a statewide contribution to education.
- **Media:** Recognizes a newspaper, television or radio station for coverage of education issues and promotion of public education.

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text HigherEd to 73915

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Ease Holiday Stress with These NEAMB Programs

Winter Break is near! This means out-of-town travel, hosting, and most likely gifts and entertainment. This must be balanced with welcoming 2020 — which could involve reviewing finances, New Year's Resolutions and prepping for the upcoming tax season. Whatever the plans, NEAMB.com has your back!

■ The holidays mean shopping for gifts, travel and more! Learn about smart online shopping, ways to wrap up your gift list quickly and in-budget, and how to manage the guilt and holiday stress — all at:

neamb.com/everydaysavings

■ Did you graduate last Spring and now you're worried about student loan payments? Find out if you're eligible to lower your monthly payments and perhaps qualify for student loan forgiveness. Go to:

neamb.com/studentloans

■ With the end of the year it's hard not to start thinking about tax season and your financial wellness. We can help you understand the 6 essential financial moves to make before the end of the year as well as how to set yourself up for financial wellness in 2020, all at:

neamb.com/finance

Build Relationships in a High-Tech World

Strategies Engage Colleagues, Students

By Heather Wolpert-Gawron

I recently conducted a teacher engagement survey, and some of the most telling findings are that 42 percent of teachers say they are most engaged through face-to-face learning, while more than a quarter (27.1%) of the respondents said they prefer to learn from home.

Technology can be used to help bridge these two requests in a way that nurtures relationships between teachers and builds community among colleagues.

It is no coincidence that many of the strategies that engage teachers also engage students as well. In my earlier research on student engagement, many students cited technology as a preferred way to build knowledge and skills and develop relationships with teachers. So how can we combine technology and one-on-one interactions in a way that engages us and our students? Consider these possibilities:

For Teacher Learning

Throw a learning potluck party. Invite a colleague who specializes in a certain teaching tool or pedagogical strategy to speak at your home on a weekend. Invite some other educators over and ask everyone to bring food to share. Everyone will benefit from the learning and conversation that follows. It's kind of like a TED Talk in your living room!

Have a "hallway" chat on Twitter. Thousands of educators have taken to Twitter to exchange ideas about important topics—from Project

Based Learning (#pblchat) to Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (#pbischat), and more. And educators are one of the fastest growing groups on Twitter. According to Brett Baker, an account executive at Twitter.com, "Out of the half billion tweets that post every day, 4.2 million are related to education ..." To put this in perspective, while you read this sentence, over 3,000 edu-related tweets have flown across the Twittersverse. So join in the conversation!

For Student Learning

Use video chat. This gives students an opportunity to experience synchronous learning from their living rooms. That could mean attending office hours, asking questions, bouncing ideas around, or listening to live group discussions, rather than pre-recorded screencasts or webinars.

Arrange online intervention classes for after school. In my experience, some kids function more bravely online than in the classroom. If we are asking our students to think deeply and critically, maybe allowing them to do so from the comfort of home will give their brains more freedom to process.

Think about the methods of engagement that help you learn and ask yourself if they might work for your students too. After all, we are all learners.

Heather Wolpert-Gawron is a teacher at Jefferson Middle School in San Gabriel, CA., and the author of Just Ask Us: Kids Speak Out on Student Engagement.

What Members Should Know if They Have a Parking Lot Accident

While Most are Minor, Law will not Respond

Driving to a mall or shopping center can fray the nerves. You have to watch for other drivers changing lanes without signaling, speeding around you, or pedestrians walking in or near traffic without paying attention. When you reach the relative calm of the parking lot you can relax a bit, but still must be extra vigilant — there are more than 50,000 parking area accidents each year in the U.S.

Whether it's not seeing a car as you back out of a parking spot, coming around a corner and hitting another vehicle, or returning to your vehicle to find someone damaged it and left, parking lot wrecks happen more often than you might think.

While most are minor, they can be unsettling. In most cases, the police or other law

enforcement will not respond to accidents on private property unless there is serious damage, injuries, one or more drivers were under the influence, or a driver was in a stolen vehicle. Determining who is at fault in a parking lot crash can be a sticky situation.

Here are 10 important things to do if you're involved in a parking area accident:

■ Call for medical help if anyone is hurt.
■ Avoid getting into an argument and avoid admitting fault.

■ Take pictures before moving vehicles and document damage; whether the parking slots are slanted or perpendicular; direction of the lane — one way or two way; and any other important factors.

■ Write down the time of the crash and diagram where and how it occurred and any other important information (obstructed views, weather conditions, how fast your or the other car was going, arrows or other

markers showing direction of travel, etc.).

■ Exchange insurance and other important information (license plate and driver's license numbers, names and phone numbers).

■ Seek out and get contact information from any witnesses.

■ Don't negotiate with the other driver to work a deal without notifying insurance because they could still make a claim.

■ Leave a note under the wiper blade with your name, insurance and contact information if you hit an unoccupied vehicle and can't locate the driver.

■ Contact your insurance provider as soon as possible.

■ Make a police report.

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For more information or to apply, visit ecampus.unk.edu, call 1.800.865.6388, or email ecampus@unk.edu

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A Wish List for Education



**Executive Dir.
Maddie Fennell**

“

We need to offer movement on the salary schedule for micro-credentials, National Board Certification and other forms of learning that affect teacher efficacy. And we can do this without increasing student loan debt!

”

We were driving home from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln women's basketball game last month (Huskers won!) and our son Darek was telling us all the things he wanted for Christmas. Darek's room is already full of color. He has more than 100 balloons, windsocks and wind chimes he rotates. Of course that didn't stop him from asking for more!

Kids are great about giving Santa "the list," but we don't think about that as much as we get older. I'm going to indulge a bit of my inner child and propose the Official NSEA Executive Director Christmas Wish List:

■ **Licensed Mental Health Therapists in every school that could be utilized by students and school personnel.** Last month my column talked about the tremendous pressure

that so many teachers are under right now. These are words our 2019 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Sydney Jensen shared in her recent and brilliant TED Talk:

"In my career, I've experienced the death by suicide of two students and one amazing teacher who loved his kids; countless students experiencing homelessness; and kids entering and exiting the justice system. When these events happen, protocol is to say, 'If you need someone to talk to, then ...' And I say that's not enough....Not only does every school need social and emotional support staff, trained professionals who can navigate the needs of the building – not just the students, not just the teachers, but both – we also need these trained professionals to intentionally seek out those closest to the trauma and check in with them. Many schools are doing what they can to fill in the gaps, starting with acknowledging that the work that we do is downright hard."

■ **More teachers of color.** Almost one third of Nebraska's children are students of color, but only 2 percent of educators are teachers of color. Research shows that teachers of color help close achievement gaps for students of color and are highly rated by students of all races. *"Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color*, by Learning Policy Institute researcher Desiree Carver Thomas, finds that while the population of teachers of color overall is growing, black and Native American teachers are a declining share of the teacher workforce and the gap between the percentage of Latinx teachers and students is larger than for any other racial or ethnic group. The report also examines how the lack of diversity in the teaching

workforce impacts students and offers district and state policy solutions."

■ **Develop a better system to pay teachers – and pay them more!** I taught for 17 years before I received my master's degree. I didn't pursue the degree earlier because I couldn't afford the tuition, and I couldn't afford the tuition because of decreased compensation since I didn't have a master's degree – a total Catch 22. Yes, teachers need to engage in continual professional development, but learning happens in a myriad of ways, not just in degree programs. We need to offer movement on the salary schedule for micro credentials, National Board Certification and other forms of learning that affect teacher efficacy. And we can do this without increasing student loan debt!

We also need to raise teacher salaries in Nebraska. In 2019-20, the average starting salary of a new teacher was \$35,910 and in 2017-18 the average salary for a Nebraska teacher was \$54,213.

■ **Student loan relief.** I can hear the AMEN on this one. I spoke with a colleague the other day who said that his kids are resigned to never owning a house and never being out of debt because of student loan debt. I know of a teacher who can't retire due to student loan debt.

■ **Real property tax reform.** We will be talking a lot about this in the upcoming legislative session, but this is a HUGE problem. Funding for our schools should be balanced among property, sales and income tax. In 2017-18, Nebraska ranked 45th in the country for state support of K-12 schools. To solve this problem, we must deal with the significant number of tax exemptions (things we don't tax such as massages, pop and candy) as well as the tax abatement programs (a reduction of taxes granted by a government to encourage economic development.) According to the website Good Jobs First, in 2018 Nebraska lost \$249.4 million to tax abatement programs.

■ **Finally, if I only get one wish, it would be for safe schools for everyone.** I don't want one more school shooting or one more teacher with a traumatic brain injury due to student violence. It breaks my heart to see kindergartners practicing active shooter drills and parents buying Kevlar backpacks.

I have to wonder – if we can harness our collective intellect to send people to the moon, why can't we find a way to make our schools and communities truly safe?

Nebraska Tax Revenue Lost

According to goodjobsfirst.org, in 2018 the State of Nebraska lost \$249.4 million in potential revenue to 9 state-approved tax abatement programs. Reports on two more programs, the Invest Nebraska Act and the Quality Jobs Act, were incomplete. The three largest programs were:

Nebraska Advantage Act.....	\$154.2 million
Employment/Investment Growth Act	\$69 million
New Market Job Growth Investment Credit	\$13.8 million

Lobby Day Event Scheduled for Feb. 4

Also Important: Dates Set for Filing for NSEA-Retired Office

The annual NSEA-Retired Lobby Day is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 4, at the NSEA Office, 605 S. 14th in Lincoln.

On that date, registration and refreshments begin at 8:45 a.m., with Lobby Day activities to begin at 9:30 a.m. with materials, information and discussion. This portion of the day will be followed by lobbying senators at the Legislature.

For a noon luncheon, members will return to NSEA Headquarters where they will hear remarks from Seward Sen. Mark Kolterman, chair of the Legislature's Retirement Committee.

Registration will be available online soon at:

nsea.org/retired

Election Deadlines Set

If you are interested in a leadership position, now is the time to get serious and consider filing for office!

Open positions on the NSEA-Retired Board of Directors include three-year terms for one representative from the NSEA Capitol District, one from the Elkhorn District and one from the Sandhills District. The current board representatives from Elkhorn and Sandhills Districts are term-limited.

The offices of NSEA-Retired president and vice president are also open for election for three-year terms. The winners of these elections will assume office on Aug. 15, 2020.

Any NSEA-Retired member in good standing is eligible to seek election to these openings. Board members must live in the NSEA governance district they wish to represent.

Projected numbers for Delegate Assembly representation by NSEA-Retired members appears to continue at four delegates from Capitol District; five from Metro District; three from Tri-Valley and Elkhorn Districts; and one from Panhandle and Sandhills Districts. Two more delegates will be elected on an at-large basis.

The NSEA-Retired delegation to the NEA Representative Assembly will include two representatives from the Metro and Capitol Districts combined; two delegates from the remaining four NSEA districts, combined with out-of-state members; and one at-large representative. The NSEA-Retired president serves as a delegate to both Delegate As-



Assisting a Mentee: Jan Stamper, a Lincoln Education Association Retired member, stepped up to work with a mentee two years ago through an NSEA-Retired Intergenerational Program. Her mentee is now a substitute, and Stamper hoped to help the mentee in some way.

"I didn't want to part with my 'teacher jackets' but was on my way to donate them to the People's City Mission. I checked with my mentee. She was excited to get some clothes to wear in the classroom, and I was glad to find a good home for them."



Thanks Pat! Lincoln retiree Pat Etherton stays active through a variety of volunteer efforts, not the least of which is as a photographer for Association events. Etherton is pictured here with a "thank-you" gift from NSEA Retired. She received a gift coupon for her many photo-taking tasks plus a small quilted Dr. Seuss item in recognition of the countless hours and young students she visits in March to read Dr. Seuss stories. She arrives at those readings with props, books and dressed in a Cat-in-the-Hat outfit!

sembly and Representative Assembly by virtue of office. Final representation numbers for Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly will be calculated and assigned the middle of January. Delegates to both Delegate Assembly and Representative Assembly must live in the NSEA governance district they wish to represent.

Filing for NSEA-Retired elections will open online on Monday, Jan. 6. The filing deadline is February 7. A short 50-word biography must accompany self-nominations for the NSEA-Retired board positions and Representative Assembly delegates.

Ballots will be mailed by the end of the third week of February and must be returned by the March date indicated on the ballot. To register for election to NSEA-Retired office, go to:

nsea.org/retired

— De Tonack,
NSEA-Retired President



Teachers of the Year Past, Present: Welcoming 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Megan Helberg, right, into the fold during ceremonies at NSEA Headquarters were these past Teachers of the Year. From left are Kristi Bundy, Ashland-Greenwood, 2014; John Heineman, Lincoln, 2000; Amber Vlasnik, Lincoln, 2017; Michael Fryda, Omaha Westside, 2010; Sydney Jensen, Lincoln, 2019; Daniel McCarthy, Hastings, 2009; Susan McNeil, Loup County, 1995; Bob Feurer, North Bend, 2011; Maddie Fennell, Omaha, 2007; and Mary Jane Caffey, Valley, 2001. Present but not pictured is Patsy Koch John, Lincoln, 2006.

Helberg Cited as 2020 Teacher of the Year

Burwell Educator's Teaching Lineage Includes Another Teacher of the Year

A teacher for the Burwell Public Schools has followed in her mother's footsteps as Nebraska's Teacher of the Year.

Megan Helberg is an English teacher at Burwell Junior-Senior High School. Her mother, Susan McNeil, was a teacher for the Loup County Public Schools when she was named Nebraska's 1995 Teacher of the Year.

Along with Helberg, three other finalists for Teacher of the Year were honored with a luncheon at NSEA Headquarters in early November. They were Mark Gudgel, an English, humanities and world religions teacher at Omaha North Magnet School; Robert Kerr, a social studies teacher at Hastings High School; and Erin Meyer, a sixth grade reading and math teacher at West Elementary School in Sidney.

Helberg began teaching at Papillion-LaVista Public, and has been at Burwell since 2010. She has served as a Teacher Fellow for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. In that role, she has coordinated and presented a Teaching the Holocaust workshop at Educational Service Units in Kearney and LaVista.

She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Chadron State College, attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and earned a teaching certificate via the Transition to Teach program.

Gudgel has a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, a master's in theology from Grace University, and a doctoral degree in character education from Regent University.

Gudgel has been a member of the International Association of Genocide Scholars since 2012. In 2017 he joined the Middle East Outreach Commission. He has been at Omaha North since 2014, and has also taught at Lincoln Southwest and in Rwanda. He is a



Gudgel

Kerr

Meyer

member of the Omaha Education Association.

Kerr has a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and a master's degree in teaching history and literature from Hastings College. He has been a member of the National Council of History Education since 2000. His 2006 lesson plan, *If Pictures Could Speak: Berlin in Photographs*, was selected to be displayed on the Trans-Atlantic Outreach Program website.

Kerr also received the 2019 Excellence in Teaching Award from History Nebraska, formerly the Nebraska State Historical Society. He is a member of the Hastings Education Association.

Meyer has a bachelor's degree from Chadron State College and a master's education in elementary administration, also from Chadron State. She is a member of the Nebraska Educators Technology Association and the International Society of Technology in Education. She is chair of the Math Curriculum Committee for ISTE.

Meyer is a member of the Sidney Education Association.

NDE Opens Learning Center Grant Process

Proposals Sought for Competitive Grants to Qualifying Schools

The Nebraska Department of Education is now seeking proposals for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) 2020 grant competition.

Approximately \$500,000 is available to successful Nebraska applicants who offer services to eligible school buildings where at least 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced priced meals, as reported on the 2018-19 Nebraska Education Profile.

Two types of 21st CCLC grants are available:

- **First-Time Grants** for applicants proposing to serve eligible school building populations that have never been served by a 21st CCLC grant;

- **Continuation Grants** for applicants who have successfully implemented 21st CCLC programs for five years and who propose continuing those programs to the same eligible school building populations.

The goal of the 21st CCLC program is to establish or expand community learning centers that provide students with academic enrichment opportunities as well as activities that complement the students' regular academic programs.

Proposals for the grant competition must be postmarked no later than Feb. 3, 2020. The grant application, eligibility requirements, and funding priorities are available on the NDE website at:

www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/

Speaking of Education

"We merely want to live in peace with all the world, to trade with them, to commune with them, to learn from their culture as they may learn from ours, so that the products of our toil may be used for our schools and our roads and our churches and not for guns and planes and tanks and ships of war."

— *President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1890-1969*

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

Getting in the Spirit of Thanksgiving

From Alison Murphy, a sixth-grade language arts teacher in New Jersey:

"I have a great writing activity for the week before winter break that can be used for any holiday celebrated around that time. My kids love listening to and reading stories from the popular Chicken Soup series. So, I explain to them that they are going to make their own books designed to be a holiday gift for a family member.

"The book is titled Chicken Soup for the Holiday Soul, and the students make a cover just like the Chicken Soup books, along with a table of contents and a dedication page. Stories that I have them include are:

- Best Holiday Gift I Received.
- Best Holiday Gift I Ever Gave.
- Favorite Holiday Family Tradition.
- What the Holidays Mean to Me, and so on.

"I also have the students include some fun poetry, like acrostics about Christmas, winter, or a dreidel. Students also have fun making silly lists like Top 10 Best Things to Get in Your Holiday Stocking. The kids have a great time decorating and writing these stories, and the best part about these gifts is that they are from the heart and free."

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



A Generous Gift: When NSEA President Jenni Benson stopped by to visit a meeting of the Columbus Education Association recently, she was surprised with a check for the NSEA Children's Fund. CEA members kindly gave \$800 to the Fund, which assists children in need. From left are CEA members Samantha Forney, Benson, Jane Dodson and Chris Sander. Forney, Dodson and Sander are CEA co-presidents.