

The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association • September 2019



• **NSEA Members Advise
Senators on Discipline Bill**

• **Gala Event to Celebrate
Work of Children's Fund**



THE VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association
605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
nsea.org
402-475-7611 • 1-800-742-0047

Volume 73, No. 1
ISSN Number: 1085-0783
USPS Number: 000-369

Executive Director **Maddie Fennell, NBCT**
Associate Executive
Director & Comptroller **Sheri Jablonski**
Field/Spec Projects Mgr **Michelle Raphael**
Director of Public Affairs **Karen Kilgarin**
Assistant Comm. Director **Al Koontz**

NSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President **Jenni Benson, Lincoln**
jenni.benson@nsea.org
Vice President **Paul Schulte, Millard**
meapresident@hotmail.com
NEA Director **Tracy Hartman-Bradley, Omaha**
trhb1000@gmail.com
NEA Director **Linda Freye, Lincoln**
lfrey62@gmail.com

Official publication of the Nebraska State Education Association, 605 South 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to NSEA Voice, 605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Published 10 times yearly according to this schedule: September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May and August.

Payment of annual NSEA membership dues entitles Nebraska educators to receive The Voice. Total cost of producing 10 monthly issues of The Voice each year is less than \$2 per member.

Advertising rates available upon request. All advertisements and advertisers are screened prior to publication. Appearance of an advertisement in The Voice does not imply NSEA endorsement of either the product being advertised or the views expressed.



Find us on Facebook at:
facebook.com/nsea.org

Find us on Twitter at:
@nsea_org

Find us on Instagram at:
@nsea_org

Find us on YouTube at:
NSEAMEDIA

A Great Public School for Every Child.

Out-of-Network Hospital Opens in Millard Area

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Users Advised to Understand Cost Implications

A new medical facility has opened in Millard, and those metro-area educators who utilize the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska health care plan through the Educators Health Alliance program should know that the facility is not in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield network.

Millard Family Hospital, LLC and Millard Emergency Physicians, PLLC, have constructed a 24-hour hospital facility and emergency room (ER) at 144th Street and Stony Brook Boulevard in Omaha. The doctors and hospital/ER associated with the facility have requested to remain outside the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) network.

Their out-of-network status means there are no negotiated reimbursement rates with BCBSNE. The facility and doctors may bill BCBSNE members for any amount they choose.

BCBSNE members seeking non-emergency services at the facility will be responsible for the full amount charged by the hospital and doctors. Instead of reimbursing the

hospital or doctors, BCBSNE will reimburse members directly – at the out-of-network rate. Members are then responsible for paying the hospital or doctor the full amount they charge, which may be more than what BCBSNE reimburses the member.

It's a little different for emergency care.

The Affordable Care Act requires insurance carriers to cover emergency care as if it's in network, regardless of whether the emergency care is obtained at an in-network or an out-of-network facility. BCBSNE will reimburse members for emergency care received at Millard Family Hospital at the in-network level of benefits. The facility can still bill BCBSNE members for charges beyond the BCBSNE payment.

To find in-network providers, BCBSNE members may access their myNebraskaBlue.com account or visit NebraskaBlue.com/Find-a-Doctor. There are in-network hospitals and doctors within 10 minutes of the new out-of-network facility.

Have Your Contact Details Changed?

Have you moved? Have you changed your name by marriage? Are you planning to move? If so, you can update your NSEA membership information online.

How? Go to NSEA's website and click on 'For Members' at the top of the home page. Then click on the blue 'Member Update' button in the center of the next screen, and follow directions. Keep your issue of *The Voice* near, as the mailing label includes your membership number, used to access your information. NSEA's website is at:

www.nsea.org

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: You can tell by the smiles and by the crowd that the inaugural NSEA University was a success. From left, Katie Pacheco, North Platte; Josh McDougall, Omaha; and Taylor Ruzicka-Scheele, Superior; explain the success on page 14.

Tales of a Road Warrior



**NSEA President
Jenni Benson**

“

As I visit with members, stakeholders and the media, it is quite clear Nebraskans are proud of our public schools.

”

Summertime, and the living is easy... Was it an easy summer? Did you take time to relax? I hope so. We all need to rest and rejuvenate.

Between road trips criss-crossing the state, I was able to squeeze in a bit of quality time with my family. Seven grandkids keep this Gram busy and blessed.

Chances are you also spent time working, preparing and thinking about the school year ahead. NSEA staff and leaders were working ahead as well, on your behalf, this past summer.

I want to start this school year by sharing thoughts on some of the activities NSEA has undertaken and preparations we have made over the summer that will strengthen our leaders and assist our members in the work they do.

Executive Director Maddie Fennell and I attended, along with several staff and leaders, the Nebraska School Mental Health Conference in Kearney in June. NSEA will continue to work to develop and provide training to help members understand and build trauma sensitive schools. We will also continue to encourage policymakers to provide more mental health resources for students, families and educators. Check the story on page 9 to see some of our members at work in that regard.

Across the State

The NSEA Board of Directors met this summer, with one agenda item covering plans for the coming year. NSEA is divided into six governance districts, and each district has a board of directors. In June, July and August, I found time to attend district board meetings in Alliance, Valentine, Norfolk, Kearney and Lincoln.

More than 70 members from across Nebraska were in Houston in July for the National Education Association's annual NEA Representative Assembly. Nearly 8,000 NEA members gathered to discuss, debate and set the Association direction for the coming year. Nebraska delegates were an active, dedicated group. Maddie and I presented at the NEA conference on Racial and Social Justice and shared NSEA's work with Educators Rising chapters (see page 14) and Praxis preparation.

I attended NEA convenings on Disrupted Learning and Racial Justice. Our leadership team of Maddie, Vice President Paul Schulte and NEA Director Linda Freye led a team of members to a conference on ESSA implementation. Other members attended Challenging

Racism and Just Schools trainings. Our other NEA director, Tracy Hartman-Bradley, was an NEA delegate to Education International in Thailand.

Our very first NSEA University was incredibly successful and is highlighted on pages 12-13. At a pre-conference activity, I hosted an officer training for nearly 50 local association leaders at NSEA Headquarters.

That was a busy summer, but we are not resting. We plan to provide even more professional development and trainings across the state in the future!

Media Blitz

The past few weeks continued the annual “back to school” media and membership road tour. I have been to scores of membership events across the state, greeting new hires and new teachers with the message of the good work our Association does. We've had a highly successful start to the school year in that regard.

The amazing communications team at NSEA set up a media tour that put me through 18 media interviews in

eight communities in four days. As I write this article in the car (no, I am not driving!), I am on my way to Thedford. My schedule today will include a member event at Thedford, a Sandhills District Board meeting, a stop in my North Platte hometown, a Dr. Seuss reading at a Medicine Valley classroom, and three more media stops in McCook and Curtis.

In brief rest stops at home in Lincoln, I participated in our first ESP Task Force meeting, as directed by members at Delegate Assembly. We are working on a plan to better serve the Education Support Professional sector of membership. I also met recently with leadership teams from several local associations as they work to revise their bylaws.



A Helpful Hand: NSEA President Jenni Benson, right, gave away a half day of her services to a lucky attendee at a member meeting in Norfolk last month. The winner was Whitney Porn, right, a Norfolk Junior High science teacher and new Association member.

Pride in Our Schools

Finally, I serve on the EHA Board of Directors and the Educators Rising Board of Directors. An NSEA committee is planning a gala for the NSEA Children's Fund (page 7). Our New Educator Committee is planning year-round membership engagement and recruitment activities in local associations across Nebraska.

As I visit with members, stakeholders and the media, it is quite clear Nebraskans are proud of our public schools. With that knowledge in hand, I look forward to sharing more details this year of our continued work on your behalf. Thank you for all you do, please do not hesitate to contact me. Have a great year!

When it comes to something as **SERIOUS**
as your **FINANCIAL WELL-BEING**,
you want to **TRUST** who you're working with.

Why a Credit Union?

- Not-for-profit
- Local and member-owned
- Known for better rates and lower fees
- Full-service financial institution

Why First Nebraska Credit Union?

- Accessible to you anytime, anywhere (online & mobile)
- 87,000 ATM locations worldwide
- Motivated by service rather than profit
- The only credit union endorsed by the NSEA!

The credit union trusted by educators for more than 50 years!

Becoming a member is easy! Open a Savings Account with a \$5 deposit, then you have access to all the other benefits of membership. We look forward to serving you!



Checking



Savings



eServices



Auto Loans



Mortgages



Credit Cards



Apply online at firstnebraska.org or call (402) 492-9100

NMLS# 416540
Federally insured by NCUA.



McGuire was Ardent Ally to Educators Fought for Teachers for Nearly 40 years

The attorney who represented NSEA members for nearly 40 years, breaking new ground for teacher rights and taking two dozen cases to the state supreme court, has died. Mark D. McGuire was 73.

McGuire began as an associate for the firm of Crosby, Guenzel, Davis, Kessner & Kuester, in 1976. When he retired from the firm of McGuire and Norby in 2013, he had pleaded 25 cases before the Nebraska Supreme Court, had dozens of successes before the state's Commission of Industrial Relations, and had set groundwork for the continuing contract law that has assisted Nebraska teachers for more than 30 years.



McGuire

"He was an advocate for Nebraska teachers, and thus for schoolchildren, in the truest sense of the word," said NSEA Executive Director Maddie Fennell.

Scott Norby was McGuire's law partner for more than 30 years.

"Mark was not just my law partner but a true friend and mentor," he said.

"It was Mark's passion for educational advocacy that drew me to him and the NSEA. Mark's calm demeanor, character and professionalism served to guide the NSEA, and me as his partner, through challenging times. I will miss him dearly."

McGuire began his advocacy for educators by representing NSEA members in rights and dismissal matters.

"Working closely with Member Rights Directors Gene Geisler and Jim Griess, he continued the systematic selection of cases to establish precedent for the development of fair dismissal rights for Nebraska's teachers," according to The History of NSEA. "Mark and Jim Griess were key participants in the drafting and adoption of LB259 (1982), which has come to be known as the Nebraska Continuing Contract Law. This landmark legislation established the legal basis of fair dismissal procedures and due process rights for Nebraska's teachers and is essentially unaltered to this day."

Once established, McGuire worked to enforce and further interpret the law with outcomes favoring teachers.

"For example, in *Irwin v. Board of Education* (1983), the Nebraska Supreme Court established minimum standards of procedural due process in tenured teacher dismissals," said the history. "In collective bargaining, Mark represented the Crete Education Association in the Supreme Court case of *Crete Education Association v. Saline County School District* (2002) where the Court held that the CIR had jurisdiction to consider prohibited labor practice charges and enjoin a school district from deviating from the negotiated agreement by paying hiring bonuses to certain teachers."

Each case he took to the state Supreme Court set legal precedent for the continued development of employment and collective bargaining rights.

He graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1968. After Army duty in Vietnam, he graduated from University of Nebraska College of Law in 1973.

McGuire died in Lincoln on Aug. 11. He is survived by his wife, three children and a grandson.

Challenging Racism Grant Renewed by NEA

Members to be Trained in Omaha, Lincoln

With the help of a second grant in two years from the NEA Center for Social Justice, NSEA will offer another year of the professional development for members on Challenging Racism.

There is still time to register for the series, which is focused on building stronger relationships with students of color and deepening an understanding of race, racism and equity. Sessions will be offered in Lincoln and possibly Omaha beginning later this month.

Challenging Racism: Learning How through Stories and Conversation offers participants a comprehensive study of race, racism, and equity through facilitated conversations built upon facts, stories, reflection and relationships. The sessions provide a safe space for normalizing conversations about race, practice in listening to people with whom one disagrees, and preparation for conducting difficult conversations for positive change.

In addition to the content, participants will build relationships

with other NSEA members, practice their active listening and conversation skills, and expand their perspective of the students and families with whom they work. Some of the NSEA members participating in this training will have the opportunity to become Challenging Racism facilitators in Nebraska through further training in Virginia in the summer of 2020.

The training is made possible through a \$98,400 grant from the NEA Great Public Schools Fund. A similar grant last year, for \$50,000, funded a cadre of NSEA members trained over 11 weeks in Lincoln.

The Lincoln sessions will begin on Thursday, Sept. 26, at the NSEA Headquarters in Lincoln. A second series will begin on Sunday, Oct. 6, at a site to be determined. To be accepted into the program, participants must agree to attend all nine sessions. Some reading and reflective writing is required. NSEA covers training and provides some travel stipends for those driving more than 30 miles.

For details, or to register, contact Dr. Cindy Copich at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

cindy.copich@nsea.org

First Nebraska Credit Union Pledges Donations to Children's Fund

First Nebraska Credit Union, a longtime support of educators and the NSEA, is now offering a \$50 donation to the NSEA Children's Fund in the name of customers who open a savings account.

As part of First Nebraska's "Local Giving, Local Banking"

campaign, the offer is good for clients who open a Share Savings Account at First Nebraska's newest branch at 40th and Yankee Hill Road in south Lincoln. The new office is the fifth location for the company and second in Lincoln.

For every dollar deposited into the new savings account, First Nebraska will match up to a \$50 donation, with a \$5 minimum balance. The campaign closes on Monday, Sept. 30.

First Nebraska Credit Union has long been a supporter of NSEA and educator activities.

The firm is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative, with many of the same services found at other financial institutions. However, the First Nebraska

goal is service rather than profit, with the aim of strengthening the financial well-being of members.

First Nebraska is owned and operated by members, with the benefits of membership returned to members through better rates and lower fees. Members are insured by the National Credit Union Administration to at least \$250,000 per account.

For more information, go to:

firstnebraska.org



**First
Nebraska**
CREDIT UNION

NEBRASKA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Costume Library

Partner with NWU's
Costume Library
to produce a
stunning show.

- > Heartland's largest costume collection
- > Vintage and period costumes
- > Props and furniture
- > High school discount

"I knew you all were amazing, but to get everything to fit so perfectly is beyond amazing! The designs, look and colors are wonderful—the students love how the costumes enhance the performances."

—Kaitlyn Clark
Musical director, Gothenburg Public Schools

Your unique needs have our full attention. Let's work together!

402.465.2390
costumelibrary@nebrwesleyan.edu

Hours: 3:30–5:30 p.m., Mon.–Fri.
when classes are in session



NEBRASKA
WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY

Gala to Benefit Children's Fund

Nov. 2 Fundraiser will also Recognize Association's LEARN Program

Sheri Jablonski has seen and heard plenty of heartbreaking stories in her dealings with the NSEA Children's Fund over the last 25 years.

Two high school-aged brothers began showing up at school on alternate days as winter weather set in. It turned out that they owned one pair of long pants between them and shared on an every-other-day basis. The NSEA Children's Fund was notified, and the brothers quickly had several extra pair of jeans.

In another case, a family's washing machine broke down. The children soon quit attending school, victims of teasing due to their smelly, unwashed clothes.

Again, NSEA was notified, and through the Children's Fund a basic washing machine was purchased and the children returned to school.

"A lot of these stories really pull at your heart strings," said Jablonski, NSEA's associate executive director/comptroller.

Founded in 1994, the Children's Fund has helped hundreds of Nebraska kids over the past quarter century. Now it's time to help the Children's Fund, and NSEA is planning the Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and Learn on Saturday, Nov. 2. The fundraiser will celebrate 25 years of the Children's Fund. Proceeds will also benefit LEARN, the Association's 501c3 non-profit that supports education through professional development for Nebraska educators.

The gala will be held Saturday evening, Nov. 2, at the A View on State meeting space, 13467 State St., Omaha. Entertainment will include student musicians and those helped by the fund.

Corporate sponsorships have been secured and more are being sought. Individual tickets are now available at \$100 per seat.

Proceeds will be split between the Children's Fund and LEARN.

Empower Professionals

LEARN (Leading Excellence and Robust Networks) was founded two years ago to provide ongoing professional development for all Nebraska educators, not just NSEA members. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska initially funded the program with a \$30,000 grant.

The goal of LEARN is to empower education professionals across Nebraska to provide an excellent education for every student.

"We have a profound obligation to be the quality control guardians of our profession," said NSEA President Jenni Benson. "It is the best way we can make sure that teachers have the tools they need to help every student reach his or her potential."

LEARN has funded a teacher leadership summit and has been tapped to assist with professional development offerings at NSEA Delegate Assembly 2018 and again in 2019, and with the first-ever NSEA University held this past July.

Corporate sponsorships to the gala are available at levels ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. For sponsorship details contact Martha Livingston at 1-800-742-0047, or reach her at martha.livingston@nsea.org.

To purchase gala tickets, and for more information, go to:

nsea.org/gala

What You Need to Know

What: A Gala to Benefit the NSEA Children's Fund and LEARN.

When: Saturday, Nov. 2.

Where: A View on State, 13467 State St., Omaha.

What: meal, cash bar, music, inspiring program.

Questions: Call NSEA at NSEA's Martha Livingston at 1-800-742-0047 or email her at martha.livingston@nsea.org.

Register: nsea.org/gala



Lincoln's Jorgensen Selected as NEA Foundation Fellow

Lincoln teacher and NSEA member April Jorgensen is one of 44 teachers nationwide to be selected by the NEA Foundation for the Foundation's international knowledge and skills development program, the Global Learning Fellowship.

The educators, from 43 states and a U.S. Defense of Department school, will spend a year in a peer learning network, building their comprehension of issues of global significance and ability to bring them into the classroom.

Jorgensen is a library media specialist at

Schoo Middle School. She is also an association representative at Schoo.

Over the next year, the NEA Foundation staff, partners and program alumni will support the fellows as they immerse themselves in online coursework, webinars and collegial study, including a two-day professional development workshop.

Jorgensen and her colleagues will also travel to Peru next summer, where a nine-day field study will bring the cohort together to investigate the historical and cultural context of the country as they interact with

local educators, students, administrators and policy-makers; make school visits; and hear from business and non-profit leaders.

The 2020 Fellows will use what they learn to prepare students for global citizenship. They will also share their methods for globalizing instructional practice and advocate in their communities and beyond for global education.

The Foundation will begin taking applications for the 2021 Global Learning Fellowship this fall. Learn more at:

neafoundation.org

WHAT'S NEXT? GRAD SCHOOL, YOUR WAY

Graduate Programs in Teacher Education,
Special Education & Communication Disorders,
Counseling, and Educational Leadership.

Our programs are designed to help you:

- Develop and enhance your teaching and leadership skills.
- Design engaging, authentic instruction for today's students using innovative technologies and applications.
- Embrace culturally responsive strategies and diverse perspectives.
- Learn through a variety of flexible course delivery formats: online, hybrid, and on-campus.
- Expand your professional connections with colleagues from other districts.

DEGREE PROGRAMS:

- » Doctorate in Educational Administration (Ed.D.)
- » Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.)

Master of Science degrees:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| » Educational Leadership | » Special Education |
| » Elementary & Secondary Education | » Speech-Language Pathology |
| » Literacy | » Clinical Mental Health Counseling* |
| » School Counseling | <small>* For those interested in school-based mental health careers</small> |

Find more programs and endorsements at
coe.unomaha.edu/graduate
or apply online at graduatestudies.unomaha.edu.





Harmed in the Line of Duty: Nine NSEA members met in July with members of the Nebraska Legislature's Education Committee to provide the educator's perspective on LB147, Sen. Mike Groene's student discipline bill. Seven hands went up when the nine were asked whether they had been hurt during the school day. From left are Jen Yoder, Lincoln; Amy Burns, Kearney; Deb Rasmussen, Lincoln; Tarina Cox-Jones, Omaha; Jane Walford, Tekamah-Herman; Carla Rohwer, Elkhorn; Rae Carbaugh, Niobrara (back row); and Kim Gardiner (front row) and Shirley Jakes, both of Omaha.

Advice Sought, Advice Given

Nine NSEA Members Get Audience with Ed Committee on Discipline Bill

Deb Rasmussen suffered a traumatic brain injury when an irate student pounded her head on a marble floor and tore her hair out.

Even so, she told members of the Legislature's Education Committee that she loves the students she teaches.



A Turn to Talk: Omaha principal and Association member Tarina Cox-Jones, left, makes a point to the Legislature's Education Committee as Jen Yoder and Deb Rasmussen, both of Lincoln, listen.

"I would not want to teach anywhere else," said the Lincoln middle school counselor.

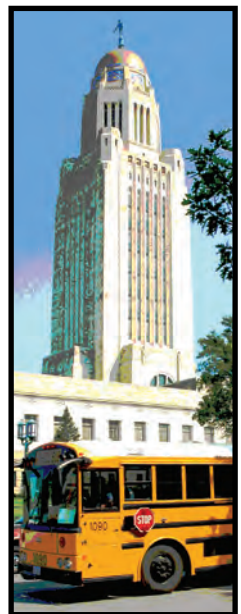
Like her colleagues, she does not want to work in fear. To reduce that fear, she said, teachers must be able to make decisions about the students who inhabit their classrooms.

"I've seen kids who have hit someone with a chair, have been removed from the classroom and have then been put back in the classroom," said Rasmussen.

Rasmussen and eight other NSEA members from around the state offered the Education Committee their ideas on school discipline and safety as part of an interim legislative study "to examine state and school district policies that relate to maintaining a safe and positive school learning environment."

The study will provide classroom perspective as committee members work to move LB147 to passage. Offered by Education Committee Chair Sen. Mike Groene in January, LB147 was pulled from committee in May and will be up for consideration by the full legislature during the 2020 session.

Broadly, LB147 would allow school personnel to use physical intervention to safely manage dangerous behavior of a student until he or she is no longer a danger to himself or



Nebraska Legislature '20

herself, school staff, students or others. It would also require school districts to have a publicly available policy on how and when a student can be removed from class and how and when a student returns to class following a clear and consistent discipline process.

NSEA's goal is to strengthen student discipline rules and protect the learning environment for all students. NSEA staff are working with Groene, the committee and others to finalize language that might enable LB147 to move forward.

Ultimately, the nine NSEA members said the issue boils down to resources. Training for teachers, more counselors and mental health professionals and, in some cases, structural changes are needed.

Bruises Accepted

Groene and five of the other eight members of the Education Committee met with the members at NSEA Headquarters in late July. Groene thanked the Association for hosting and made clear that the idea was to listen.

"We want good policy to protect students, teachers, administrators, cooks, bus drivers, etc., from violence when it occurs," he said.

He also made it clear that he understands the issues that face teachers.

"We always hear that teachers are managers, but we don't even let them manage their own classrooms," he said. "Why is this the only occupation where you can go home with bruises, and we accept that?"

Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks, Lincoln, agreed.

"We have heard the hue and cry that teachers are not being taught procedures to address disruptions. We are really trying to listen," she said.

Specific Training Needed

Two broken hands and a displaced kneecap are injuries Jen Yoder has sustained in her teaching career. Teachers need more training in de-escalation, she said.

"So many issues in the classroom could be de-escalated if a teacher knew these tactics," said Yoder.

During a psychotic break at school, a mentally ill student caused Yoder's rotator cuff to be torn, also damaging her shoulder's AC joint. She said that encounter only supports the contention that some kids need more than teachers — they need mental health practitioners.

Tarina Cox-Jones, the principal at Skinner Magnet School in Omaha, said dealing with mental illness has become common in public schools.

"We have kids who are significantly mentally ill in our schools," she said. "We need people specifically trained in how to work with these kids. I've been in schools with licensed mental health practitioners and they are a huge help, but few



Training Needed: Tekamah-Herman Education Association President Jane Walford, left, told the Legislature's Education Committee that teachers need effective training in order to deal with violent students. Listening are Amy Burns, Kearney, center; and Kim Gardiner, Omaha.

systems and money to do it."

Said Tekamah-Herman's Jane Walford: "Give me real, live training, with real professionals, with follow-through."

'A Jar of Tootsie Rolls'

Yoder said it was "incredibly sad" that LB998, a bill that would have provided some mental health support for K-12 schools, was vetoed a year ago.

"When we ask people with no training to work with our most vulnerable, most complex students, it is a recipe for disaster," she said.

Walford, too, pointed to funding, and noted that every district is different, as is access to funding.

"We don't have money for security guards or mental health workers. We have Michelle the secretary with a jar of Tootsie Rolls. Every school needs access to real solutions to discipline problems," she said.

Yoder said full funding of special education at the state level would be a start, particularly in the rural areas. Rae Carbaugh teaches at Niobrara, where a grant has assisted with hiring of counselors and mental health professionals.

"Funding is imperative," she said. "Without a grant, we would not have a mental health practitioner."

As a child, Groene said "we had boundaries by third grade. Does the focus need to be early, so it doesn't escalate?"

"We have students who have not heard the word 'no' in our schools," said Elkhorn's Carla Rohwer. "It comes down to mental health because they can't handle 'no.' Our training works for most kids, but not those with mental health issues."

Pansing Brooks said kids must be protected, and said administrators need to better communicate what educators can legally do in that regard.

"I don't think most teachers know what their rights are," said Carbaugh.

"That was our goal with LB147," said Groene. "You need to know that these are the rules and no matter who your administrators is, no matter where your school building is, you can manage your classroom."

'Why is this the only occupation where you can go home with bruises, and we accept that?'

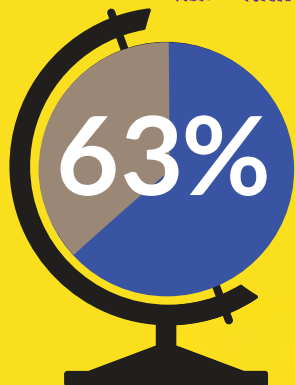
— Sen. Mike Groene, North Platte

WE ASKED.
YOU
ANSWERED.
WE HEARD!
and delivered!

Data compiled
from the
2018-19
New Educator
project.

The 2019-20
campaign is
currently in
progress.

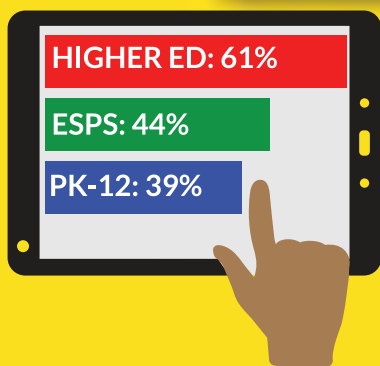
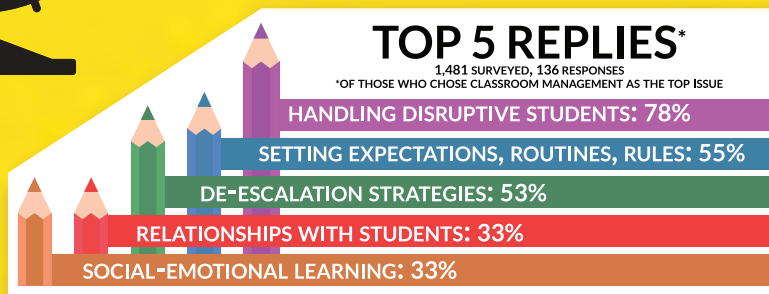
WE WANT MORE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT!



of PK-12 and ESPs responded they
wanted more information about
classroom management.

So we asked:

What specifically about classroom
management issues? (Check all that apply)



EDUCATION POLICY
ranked as an important topic
for educators at all levels.



These topics - and
more - were presented
at NSEA U.

Mark your calendars
for NSEA U 2020:
July 14-16.

NSEA Lineup of Professional Development is Wide, Varied

Are you looking for real professional development? Not the 'old hat' or 'run of the mill' professional development carted into your building each year before the opening day of school?

If so, turn to your professional association for the very best of such programming.

Over the last two years, NSEA has increasingly provided professional development for members as an added value of membership. At the Delegate Assembly in April, more than 30 sessions were offered. At the first-ever NSEA University at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Innovation Campus in July, more than 180 sessions were provided (see pages 12-13 for details).

Those sessions are in addition to all other benefits of membership, ranging from the 18 field staff assisting members across the state with day-to-day classroom or job issues; supporting your negotiations for your salary and benefits; the unsurpassed liability insurance; the work with policymakers on legislation that is favorable to public education; and so much more.

Here is a sample of professional development offered by NSEA recently:

■ **Compassion Fatigue:** Ree Reimers, Project Harmony.

■ **Safety in Nebraska Schools:** Jolene Palmer, Nebraska State School Security director, Nebraska Dept. of Education.

■ **Institutional Racism:** Mako Jacobs, Vincent Gregorio, Katrina Jacobberger, Omaha Public Schools.

■ **Crafting Effective & Measurable Student Learning Objectives:** Rich Middlestedt, So. Dakota Education Association.

■ **Dyslexia — What & Why:** Dr. Eileen Vautravers.

■ **Bargaining Timeline Strategies:** NSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Randy Gordon.

■ **Relationships Drive Student Attendance:** Lisa Utterback, Omaha Public Schools.

■ **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Dr. Abby Burke, Millard Public Schools.

■ **Strategies for Understanding Student Behaviors for K-12 Early Educators:** Brandy Rose, ESU No. 7.





Att
the
mic
Bro
less
ten
a q
are
erin
Day
Bea

Professional Development POTLUCK!

First-Ever NSEA University Delivers; Planning Begins on 2020 Encore

The inaugural attempt at NSEA University offered a little something for everyone. Like a church potluck, there was plenty to choose from, given the nearly 180 sessions of professional development and Association leadership options.

Omaha teacher Josh McDougall gained vital organizing skills.

North Platte Education Association Vice President Katie Pacheco and three of her NPEA Executive Committee colleagues soaked up details about negotiations and bargaining.

Superior teacher Taylor Ruzicka-Scheele began to lay a foundation for leadership.

The three-day NSEA University event combined the Association's long-running summer Leadership Institute, the every-fall Advocacy Conference and dozens of small membership meetings previously held across the state in August each year.

Over the course of 72 hours at NSEA U, more than 300 members enjoyed the professional development and association leadership programming at Innovation Campus, a gem of a location near the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The three days featured speakers of national acclaim, including Gerry Brooks, the principal of fun, who mixes humor in his message of instructional improvement. Dr. Tina Boogren, gave a luncheon message on self-care and offered a breakout on avoiding burnout and support for beginning teachers. U.S. Army Maj. Jacob Absalon, an instructor at the

United States Military Academy at West Point – and son of NSEA President Jenni Benson – offered a keynote session on Leadership from the Trenches: Your Story of Self.

Attendees also had the opportunity to tour the University of Nebraska's Memorial Stadium one evening, and to enjoy a slice of Lincoln's Haymarket area night-life on another.

"This was a spectacular initial event," said Benson.

"We touched on so many professional development topics, so many association capacity-building issues and even self-help issues. It was amazing," she said.

Burning the Midnight Oil

McDougall has a desire to be a leader, whether in an Association-wide position, his building or other professional organizations.

"I just want to help advance the causes of the groups that I'm in," he said. NSEA U helped McDougall get started down that road.

"The best part of the conference for me was learning how to start an organizing project," he said.

McDougall said colleagues have talked to him in the past about issues that may have benefited from organizing skills "but I didn't have any knowledge about how to do that," he said.

For Pacheco and three of her NPEA officer colleagues, NSEA University was a chance to study up on skills and knowledge they will need in the coming year. The 2019-20 NPEA officers are all new to Association leadership.

"We knew we needed to come because we knew there would be a lot of things we didn't know," she said.

Their biggest concern, she said, centered on negotiations and bargaining,



The Graduate: Sutton Education Association member Robin Griess accepted her NSEA Leadership Institute diploma from NEA Director Linda Freye, NSEA President Jenni Benson and NSEA Vice President Paul Schulte. The Institute had 28 graduates.

NSEA University Scenes:

Attendees, at left, laugh during luncheon presentation by middle school Principal Gerry Brooks, who mixed humor with lessons on learning. At right, attendees raise hand in answer to question by Brooks. From left: Jake Barry, Elkhorn; Katherine Lederer, Fremont; Molly Davies, Omaha; and Denton Lacom, Logan View.



From North Platte, Kearney: Members of the North Platte Education Association's Executive Committee, left, attended NSEA University as a team. From left are Jake Jolliffe, Elizabeth Rasmussen, Katie Pacheco and Angela Soelberg. At right, Kearney Education Association's Amy Burns listens during a session at NSEA University.



"so we spent a lot of time in those classes together." She said her team determined there is a need for a salary and benefits comparability study, among other projects, that kept the team up late one night.

"We worked probably till midnight just putting some information together, collecting and organizing it," she said.

Leadership Knowledge

Ruzicka-Scheele had been at Superior just a few months when she was asked to consider seeking Association office. She was not yet acquainted with all her teaching colleagues, much less ready to serve in a leadership capacity, she said. While the "ask" to serve was

nice, the nomination to attend the Leadership Institute segment of NSEA University was flattering.

"It was nice that someone believed I have the potential to be a leader," she said. Now, she's taken a first step toward leadership.

"Those of us at Leadership Institute gained knowledge we will use to begin to gain the power to be more confident in accepting positions and leadership roles within our locals and schools," she said.

Dates Set for 2020

The planning has already begun for NSEA University 2020. The Innovation Campus space is booked for July 14-16, 2020.

"NSEA University was an astonishing success," said Benson. "Our Board of Directors approved the concept in December, and it was pulled together in seven months. We owe thanks to all those who collaborated on this, but especially to Michelle Raphael and Jan Anderson who led the committee."

On the conference's last day, Ruzicka-Scheele may have said it best. "There are so many different topics that we are able to learn from."

"It has been really amazing," she said.



'Star' Moment: As NSEA University attendees line up for a photo with keynote speaker Gerry Brooks (background), Blue River Education Association President Lynne Henkel displays her public school pride.



Nebraska Educators are on the Rise!

NSEA assistance to Educators Rising was notable this past summer.

Above, NSEA President Jenni Benson poses with the 2019-20 Educators Rising Nebraska chapter officers. From left are President Kiley Johnson, Millard West High, who will become an elementary teacher; Vice President for Communications Noemi Rodriguez, Omaha South High, who looks forward to a career as an English as a second language teacher; Benson; Vice President of Membership Agustin Roman, Omaha Bryan High School, who will teach middle school math; and Secretary Nathan Herrera, Omaha Burke High, who will teach secondary math.

At right, Lesly Lopez, Omaha Bryan High School, and Emily Lorenzen, Omaha Burke High, received certificates from NSEA President Jenni Benson, center, for \$1,000 college scholarships to pursue teaching degrees. Lopez is enrolled at Metropolitan Community College; Lorenzen at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Also receiving scholarships were Michelle Menendez, Lincoln Career Academy, and Amanda Peister, Scotts-



bluff High School.

Below, 10 Nebraska members of Educators Rising placed in competition at the national Educators Rising conference in Dallas in June.

A grant from the NEA Great Public Schools Fund financed the scholarships and helped with travel to nationals.



'Think F1rst' First Amendment Campaign Goes National

Media of Nebraska's "Think F1rst" public awareness campaign about the First Amendment of the United States Constitution is spreading across America. "Think F1rst" is designed to educate Americans about the five freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment.

More than 20 state broadcast associations and state press associations have now asked their respective members to consider supporting the "Think F1rst" campaign on a pro bono basis. The

campaign will air on radio and television stations, in newspapers, and the websites and social media platforms of those same entities that opt to carry the messages, through December 31.

The original "Think F1rst" Nebraska campaign was created last year after Media of Nebraska members noted polls showing that many Americans lacked even a basic knowledge of the First Amendment, particularly in articulating the five freedoms that it guarantees. A

survey taken by the Annenberg Public Policy Center found that nearly 4 in 10 students couldn't name even one of the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment. Media of Nebraska members worked together to outline a campaign to combat these disturbing statistics.

After "Think F1rst" debuted in Nebraska in 2018, more than 400,000 page views were recorded over the first 60 days at the dedicated website at:

ThinkFirstAmendment.org

Nurses & ADs: Medical Liability Forms are Due Oct. 1

**Nurses, Trainers, ADs
Eligible for Coverage;
Rate Steady 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: Becky Fisher, 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 2019-20 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.



Speaking of Mentoring: NSEA Organizational Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich, left, visits with Ted Schroeder, president of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association, at the Nebraska Coaches Association clinic in July. At center is Hastings Education Association member Peggy Johnson.

Mentoring Project Partnership will Benefit Coaches and Teachers

National Coaching Leader Says Program Worth Emulating Elsewhere

The Nebraska Coaches Association has entered a partnership with the Nebraska State Education Association to offer a New Teacher/New Coach Virtual Mentoring Program to early-in-their-career teachers and coaches.

The president of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association believes the program is a wise idea that should be emulated in other states.

Ted Schroeder is a longtime track and field coach at Rock Springs, WY, and a four-time Wyoming state coach of the year. He applauded the NCA and NSEA for creating an opportunity for coaches and teachers to improve their skills. He noted that too many coaches, like teachers, are leaving the profession far too soon.

"The essence of the mentorship program is to help teachers and coaches understand how to deal with today's issues," he said. "I'm sure that the mentee will prove to be as valuable to the mentor as the mentor is to the mentee."

Through the program, participating teachers and coaches must complete a minimum of 25 hours of program time and a time log/reflection that includes aspects of teaching and coaching. Those mentors and mentees who complete the requirements by June 2020, and who are members of the NSEA, are eligible for a \$500 stipend.

The goals of the program, made possible through a grant from the Great Public

Schools Fund of the National Education Association include:

- Raising the standard of professionalism and skills for beginning teachers and coaches.

- Increasing retention of coaches and teachers in the education profession.

- Decreasing the number of infractions and issues teachers and coaches encounter in the classroom and athletic arena.

- Embedding professional development and engagement in both organizations.

- Further enriching the collaboration between the two organizations and their members.

NSEA Organizational Specialist Dr. Cindy Copich manages the program for NSEA, coordinating with NCA Executive Director Darin Boysen.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for NSEA and NCA to partner and support the success of beginning teachers and coaches," said Copich. "We're proud to partner with the NCA to provide an innovative program to demonstrate the value of membership in both organizations."

Schroeder hopes other state education associations and state coaches' associations will take note.

"In the future, it is my sincere hope that we can bring this idea forward to the National High School Athletic Coaches Association and 'mentor' other states around the country," he said. "In the meantime, I am watching and learning from the Nebraska model."

For more details, or to participate, reach Copich at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

cindy.copich@nsea.org



Quiet Moment: Pausing during the hubbub of the annual NEA Representative Assembly in Houston in July were Michelle Hulsing, Ralston; Julie Adams, Bellevue; and Maureen Nickels, Chapman. They were among 75 NSEA members and more than 7,000 NEA members to attend.

NEA Leaders: Progress Made

Stocks, Eskelsen Garcia Urge More Action on Behalf of Public Education

In his final address to an NEA Representative Assembly (RA), outgoing NEA Executive Director John Stocks exhorted delegates to “come together and make this country whole,” and, most of all, “to embrace [their] power.”

Stocks cited the NEA member-led #RedforEd campaigns in recent years as evidence of that power. He spoke to more than 7,000 NEA members at the annual meeting, held this year during the first week of July, in Houston. More than 70 NSEA/NEA members attended.

“Our members were active, engaged and vocal on issues that matter to all educators,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “I am proud of the way our members represented Nebraska.”

For Stocks, the message was to continue to advocate for public education.

“We demanded and we fought,” said Stocks. And, in many places, “we won,” he said.

After historic #RedforEd strikes, walkouts and rallies in places such as Los Angeles, Denver, and elsewhere,

educators won salary raises, smaller class sizes, and investments in school nurses, librarians, counselors, and more. Additional states have seen historic increases in education funding, minimum salaries for educators, and new legislation that respects educators.

“We’re living proof that progress is possible,” said Stocks. “But we’re not finished yet. We can’t afford to be.”

He had one more thought before departing the stage.

“Let’s be perfectly honest: an educator can do more for our democracy in five minutes than some lawmakers can do over their entire career,” said Stocks.

Never Apologize

NEA President Lily Eskelsen García told delegates that stakes in 2020 are too high for any educator to disengage from the political process. Now more than ever, the nation needs its educators to take up the call. “The moral arc of the universe needs us now to put our backs into education justice,” Eskelsen García told delegates.

Educators should never apologize, never shy away from being “political,” Eskelsen García said.

“Political action isn’t subversive.

It’s the essence of democracy. Showing up informed and engaged, prepared to make a difference is exactly what democracy looks like.”

Community Allies Admitted

Delegates also took action on scores of business items, including one action that will open up membership to non-educator “public education allies.”

Needing a two-third majority to pass, 68.9 percent of delegates voted to amend the NEA constitution to establish the new category of membership.

The community allies will not be able to vote, nominate candidates for elected office, or hold governance positions within the union. They will, however, be able to donate to the NEA’s political action committee, something only members are currently able to do. Advocates said it would also open up lines of communication between the community allies and the union, especially in the political advocacy arena.

NEA leaders said they are prepared to begin offering the new membership option to the community allies in the 2019-20 membership year.

Ag Sack Lunch Program to Feed Fourth-Graders Again

State's Producers Join to Feed, Teach Students

The popular Ag Sack Lunch program, designed to increase agricultural awareness among Nebraska young people and their families, is back for a 10th year.

The program provides a free lunch and an ag-focused learning experience to fourth-graders who come to tour the State Capitol Building as part of their educational curriculum. While they eat their lunches, students hear a presentation about the important role agriculture plays in Nebraska's economy, as well as the crops and livestock species that are raised in the state.

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

Since the first Ag Sack Lunch program during the 2010-2011 school year, more than 45,000 students have participated in the event. Last year the program provided 5,250 lunches.

The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB), the Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA), the

Nebraska Corn Board (NCB), Nebraska Beef Council (NBC), and Midwest Dairy.

"Over the last nine years, the Ag Sack Lunch Program has been successful in helping our fourth-graders understand where their food comes from and how Nebraska's farm production methods help protect the

environment while ensuring food safety and promoting animal health," says Vic Bohuslavsky, NSB executive director. "Participating teachers continue to tell us how their students learn so much from the presentations."

Dianne L'Heureux, an NSEA member and teacher at High Plains Community School, said she was impressed with the way student presenters control the audience and engage them while they are eating.

"The students are hungry and enjoy the lunch, but they start appreciating where the lunch comes from. So many students are not connected to farms anymore, they don't think where this food is produced," she said.

Ag Sack Lunch invitations have been sent to fourth-grade teachers at 540 elementary schools in 44 eastern Nebraska counties. Reservations for the 2019-20 school year are limited to 5,250 students on a first-come, first-served basis. These spots fill up quickly, so teachers are urged to sign up as soon as possible—even if their state capitol tour dates have not been finalized yet. Reservations can be placed online at:

agsacklunchprogram.com



NSEA-Retired Offers Professional Learning

NSEA-Retired leadership is interested in starting a book club approach to advance professional learning.

The organization has purchased copies of the paperbacks "Fostering Resilient Learners" (elementary focused) and "Trauma-Sensitive Schools for the Adolescent Years: Promoting Resiliency and Healing," as well as resources on Managing Your Classroom with Restorative Practices.

NSEA-Retired would like to put the materials in use to support current teachers in the classroom.

According to Dr. De Tonack, NSEA-Retired president, a book club approach will be taken with the two paperbacks. The plan is to distribute groups of the books to volunteers from a school building, with those volunteers later coming together for a 90-minute discussion led by a retired volunteer and an active volunteer working together, with snacks provided by NSEA-Retired. After the discussion, participants would be asked to return to the classroom, try a new method and discuss what seemed to work, etc., and then offer reflections in an EdCommunities group.

Tonack also proposes brief workshop sessions with the classroom management/restorative practice materials, bringing the Student Education Association of Nebraska into active involvement. Participants would receive resources to support continued learning and conversation. If you would like to participate, contact Tonack at:

dtonack@neb.rr.com



WEBINAR SERIES

REGISTER ONLINE AT:
WWW.NSEA.ORG/WEBINARS

NSEA Webinar Series will Focus on the Classroom

Educators searching for quality professional development will now be able to fulfill that need each month through a webinar series offered by NSEA.

Teaching professionals will guide the discussion on classroom topics on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 6:30 p.m. CT.

The offerings are part of NSEA's commitment to provide more professional learning for Nebraska educators.

The first webinar is set for Thursday, Sept. 12 (see registration link above). The topic is Getting a Good Start: Setting Clear Expectations, Classroom Procedures and Routines.

The session promises to get educators to "start the school year by setting the right course! Learn new techniques and strategies for establishing clear expectations, classroom procedures and routines that best support student learning. Join this live webinar and learn from one another. Come with ideas to share and ready to learn new tips that fine tune your techniques."

Future second Tuesday topics include:

- Building Positive Relationships with Students
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Preventing Burnout
- Working with Disruptive Students
- De-escalation Strategies
- Trauma-informed Classrooms
- Restorative Practices

For more information, call or email Dr. Cindy Copich at 1-800-742-0047, or:
cindy.copich@nsea.org

Coverage you can depend on for the ones you love.



As an eligible NEA member,* you've got the protection of **NEA Complimentary Life Insurance**, issued by **The Prudential Insurance Company of America** — but you should name a beneficiary to make sure your loved ones are covered. Go to **neamb.com/free-tote** and register your beneficiary to get this **FREE** tote. Or call **1-855-NEA-LIFE (632-5433)** and mention offer code: TOTEBAG

Visit **neamb.com/protect** to learn about all the solutions available to help meet your insurance needs.

nea *Members*
Insurance Trust

*Visit us online or call for eligibility requirements.
NEA Members Insurance Trust is a registered trademark of the NEA Members Insurance Trust.
NEA Complimentary Life Insurance is issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ.
0302614-00002-00



DT300919

Student Loans Help, Mortgage Refinance Possible via NEAMB

Summer is over and you're back in the classroom. We at NEA Member Benefits know you want to make sure you get the new school year off to the right start, ensuring success for the year. Whether you're trying to figure out how to balance being back at school and taking care of things at home or you're struggling to stretch your Back to School dollars, NEAMB.com has solutions that can help! Consider these offerings:

■ Did you know that September is Life Insurance Awareness Month? We have all the information you need to figure out what kind of policy you need to protect your family. While on our site, you can also update your **no-cost, Complimentary Life Insurance** information to make sure you're protecting Moments that Matter. Learn more at:

www.neamb.com/protect

■ Whether you're shopping for you, your family or your classroom, we have insider tips and tricks for stretching your back-to-school budget even further. We also offer exclusive bargains for educators. For, for those of you with **student loans**, have you looked into how Savi can help you with debt relief? Find out more at:

www.neamb.com/finance

■ Are you trying to figure out what to do for fall break? We can help you find the best deals to travel the world on a budget, whether you're looking to find the most gorgeous fall foliage or want to head to Europe, we have information on how to do it, and how to afford it. Read up on our top money-saving tips and ideas for the perfect **fall getaway** at:

www.neamb.com/travel

■ New school year, new car? Learn how to do your research the right way before you hit the car dealership. We also have advice on what kind of **car loan** may work best for you and plenty of information on the NEA Auto Buying Program at:

www.neamb.com/car

■ Thinking about refinancing your **mortgage**? We have a checklist to help you create a winning plan to do so, as well as a calculator to help you determine if it's the right time for you. Learn more at:

www.neamb.com/yourhome

Details, Details

Tips for a Strong School Year Start

Include This: Take a Detailed Approach

Dr. Harry Wong, educator, speaker and author, shares strategies to help ease you through the important first days of school. Courtesy of NEA Member Benefits.

At the start of the year, many educators are as nervous as their students, especially in their first year teaching. Why do so many teachers struggle with first-day jitters? It can be difficult to feel prepared — in fact, can you ever really be ready for a class of students you have never met? Or maybe last year was rough, or you've heard rumors about your new class, and that stress gets carried over to the new year.

Experts agree that the best antidote for a bad case of back-to-school butterflies is a detailed classroom management plan — one that outlines your every move from the first day of school until the last bell rings for summer. We asked for advice from the experts' experts: Harry and Rosemary Wong, authors of "The First Days of School" and "THE Classroom Management Book."

"Just as a pilot has a flight plan and a coach has a game plan, effective teachers have a classroom management plan that students learn and understand," say the Wongs.

The plan is more than a list of teaching strategies. It's a way of operating in the classroom that allows teachers to be proactive rather than reactive. Do it right, they say, and you never have to waste time repeating what students should be doing or reprimanding them for misbehaving.

Establish Ground Rules

Procedures govern all we do, from boarding a plane to ordering food at a drive-thru. Without procedures, these orderly activities would create mayhem. Students require similar constructs. They learn best when they know what to expect.

In an observational study by Douglas Brooks, teachers who began the first day of school by diving right into the subject matter spent the school year reacting to student behavior. Those who started by explaining how the classroom was organized had a more enjoyable experience.

The Wongs recommend starting the first day with a script, or better yet, a PowerPoint, that explains procedures, walks students through their responsibilities and ensures every student understands how to be successful. In fact, say the Wongs, successful teachers have procedures for everything from selecting seats to exiting the classroom at the end of the day.

Consistency is Key

Students thrive in a safe classroom environment that is predictable, reliable and consistent. "One of the most important gifts we can give our students is to be consistent," say the Wongs. "Students need to feel that someone is responsible for their environment — someone who not only sets limits, but maintains them."

If you're a regular customer, you can go into any Starbucks and you know what to do. The environment is familiar (even if you've never visited a particular location) and the baristas all speak the same language. Plus, the menu is always readily visible from the back wall.

Students need a similar roadmap for your classroom. The best path: Post an agenda on the board so they know what's going to happen during the day. A consistent list of daily activities helps students stay on task — and it facilitates transitional periods to boot.

The Wongs cite a special education teacher in Ohio who posts pictures of the sequence of events for the day and uses songs as transitions. "The kids all know the plan. They know what's going to happen next," say the Wongs.

While the agenda may change daily, classroom procedures and transitions remain the same. It's an ideal construct for learning — and retaining —

new information since kids don't have to waste brainpower wondering what's next.

Be Positive!

Saying, "hello" or "welcome," can have a dramatic effect on learning. Research shows simply greeting students can raise the level of engagement in your class by a whopping 32 percent!

Take that morning greeting and build on it. When students meet your expectations, call attention to their actions with specific praise. It's not enough to say "Good job, Nicole," or "Nice work, Johnny." You have to identify the specific behavior you want to encourage. The bonus: Students who weren't paying attention have another opportunity to learn what's expected of them.

When a classroom is well-managed, students stay motivated and on task; the school year will flow flawlessly from the first day to the last. Perhaps most importantly, students succeed and achieve! A structured classroom also improves your attitude and leadership, which projects outward. If you view your glass (and class) as half-full, your kids will, too.

'Research shows simply greeting students can raise the level of engagement in your class by a whopping 32 percent!'

Today is the day learning turns into leading.

**Choose from more than 50
online education programs.**

- Administration
- Early Childhood
- Library Science
- PK-12
- Special Education

**Application deadlines
approaching.**

online.nebraska.edu

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Online

KEARNEY | LINCOLN | OMAHA | MEDICAL CENTER

Joanna Utecht

Science/Math Education, MS Ed
University of Nebraska at Kearney

Bloom with Grace



**Executive Dir.
Maddie Fennell**

“

Teachers become
the nutrients —
and sometimes
the soil — for
those kids who
need sustenance.

We provide
coats, and glasses
and food, and
in particular we
provide food for
the mind.

”

For Christmas 2018 my godchild Katie gave me a postcard-sized piece of art she had made that says “Wherever life plants you bloom with grace.” On the back, she wrote “Merry Christmas! I hope you enjoy this little piece of art to help you live your best self.”

I have that very special gift under my bathroom mirror. I look at it every day. What is interesting is how that little 4x6-inch artwork says different things to me on different days.

On some days I’m drawn to thoughts of grace, those moments when I have been forgiven for not being my best self. I think of the times I was teaching and ran out of patience, my voice becoming too loud or terse. I think of the times my lessons tanked and nobody learned.

My thoughts sometimes make me wince and wish I could turn back the clock for a do-over. But when I talk to my former students about this, they tell me no one is perfect, and share what they did learn in my class. Those are timely little gifts of grace.

Some are Planted in Fertile Soil...

Wherever life plants you... Everyone is not created equal, or with equal opportunities. Sometimes — like my sister — it’s because those little brains or bodies didn’t develop correctly. Sometimes it’s because of a lack of family resources — financial or emotional. Some kids are planted in fertile soil and then something happens — they lose someone, or they become ill or experience some other life trauma that hampers development.

I think of a young man I know who has a strong, loving family that is financially stable. He’s had great academic achievement, is incredibly talented and has a heart of gold. During his high school years, he lost several friends to suicide. Those were storms that shook him to the core and caused him to struggle. But because his roots were strong, and he was able to get help, he has continued to grow.

So many of our kids find a way to *bloom*. I think of a former student who came to me and said “Ms. Fennell, can I live with you this summer?” When I asked him why, he said “Because otherwise I may get shot.” There were two drive-by shootings at his mom’s home while he lived with us. Today he has a wife and a beautiful daughter.

This makes me think of a popular and unattributed quote I saw on a t-shirt recently: “They tried to bury us, but they didn’t realize we were seeds!”

Teachers become the nutrients — and sometimes

the soil — for those kids who need sustenance. We provide coats, and glasses and food, and in particular we provide food for the mind. We come in early to tutor or stay late to talk to a kid who may have been really struggling that day. We collaborate with parents, working to become a team to help that child achieve.

The Marigold Effect

Teachers need to help each other *bloom* also! This summer my teaching colleague Pam taught me about The Marigold Effect. Marigolds are considered one of the best companion plants. Companion plants are often planted to help improve the growth of other nearby plants.

Pam urges new teachers to find their marigolds — those other teachers that will encourage, support and nurture them in the profession. She even gives out marigold plants to every new teacher — what a great reminder! I’m blessed to have worked with lots of marigolds in teaching and now at NSEA.



Take Time for You

Living your best self... our problem as educators is that we are tremendous gardeners who too often forget to take care of ourselves. We are so busy with our students, colleagues, second jobs (ugh — I know!), families, community activities and more, that we forget to eat well, or sleep enough or just take time to rejuvenate.

About 300 of you got to hear great tips on self-care from Dr. Tina Boogren at NSEA University this summer. She taught us that we need to apply Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to ourselves as educators. Some simple ideas she shared:

- Drink more water (I’m trying to cut down on coffee too).
- Find a photo that makes you feel calm, centered and safe and make that your screen saver.
- Remove all electronics from your bedroom and set a reminder to go to bed earlier.
- Wash your hands regularly to prevent illness.

If you weren’t at her presentation, I encourage you to read her book *Take Time for You: Self-Care Action Plans for Educators*.

It’s the start of a new school year where everything is filled with opportunity. I hope that wherever you find yourself planted, this will be your year to bloom with grace and live your very best self!

New: Apple Wishes, Retirement Seminars!

'Apple Wishes' Program Gets Boost with NSEA-Retired Grant

North Platte Education Association member Kelly Smith has created a project called Apple Wishes and NSEA-Retired has reached out with a small grant to help in her project and thank educators.

Apple Wishes is a pay-it-forward project that honors and pays tribute to any teacher who has been nominated by anyone. Smith, a teacher of 38 years who previously taught at Maywood, is the project founder. She has researched the burnout rate of teachers and is on a mission to honor and reward any teacher, no matter their degree or years of experience.

Smith purchases fun teacher items like post-it notes, clip boards, coffee mugs, note pads, markers, highlighters and fills a gratitude gift bag. Each teacher is also credited for making a difference in the lives of his or her students as they are surprised with their Apple Wishes gift bag, either in front of their class or after school. Such personal interaction is far better than receiving something in the mail.

To date, Smith has mailed teacher gratitude gifts to four different states and has purchased most of the gifts and supplies herself. There have been a few private donations of \$20 here and there. Moving from Maywood to North Platte, Smith hopes for more contacts and resources in a larger district. She also has plans for a 5K Apple run/walk in the spring of 2020 to honor teachers and staff from schools in the area.

Smith feels her mission is of vital importance to the field of education and with more funding, her outreach can be expanded. With increasing demands on educators, Smith says the health and wellness of those great teachers are at stake. Thank you to Kelly and to other educators for reaching out to their colleagues.

NSEA-Retired Retirement Seminars Freshened

Last spring, the NSEA Board of Directors asked the NSEA president and executive director to update the Retirement Seminar presentations previously offered to local association members by NSEA-Retired. Also part of the ask: development of a cadre of members to deliver the training materials.

NSEA-Retired President De Tonack headed the committee tasked with that work, assisted by NSEA-Retired members Roger Rea, John Heineman, Jan Elliot and Ed Ankrom, with support from NSEA staff.

The committee reviewed and updated the presentation materials to assist members in understanding the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Plan for school employees. Tonack and Mike Wiesen, NSEA organizational specialist and liaison to NSEA-Retired, did a "trial run" of the new presentation with a small group at Burwell in April. At the conclusion, participants briefly visited both the npera.org and the ehaplan.org/retiree websites for information on the NPERS retirement plan and the Educators Health Alliance-endorsed Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska direct bill plan for EHA participants between ages 50-64 who are retired.

Any local association wishing to have similar presentations on NPERS for your members should contact their NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047, or NSEA-Retired Staff Associate Rebecca Smith at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

NSEA-Retired Delegates Assist with Passage of NBI

Members of the NSEA-Retired gave a lift to teachers entering the profession in April with unanimous support of a New Business Item introduced by delegates from the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN).

The NBI passed, and will assist more prospective teachers in their efforts to pass the Praxis Core tests required to enter colleges of edu-



Burwell Session: Providing the audience for the test run of a new NSEA-Retired seminar on retirement in April were these Burwell-area participants. Seated is Mike May. Standing, from left, are Rita Snyder, Nancy Swett and Nancy Jeffers. Not pictured is Barb Freouf.

cation in Nebraska.

Efforts will be made to expand tutoring efforts, research opportunities to reduce the Praxis cost, and work with the Nebraska State Board of Education and other elected officials and policymakers to reduce the barriers to successful Praxis completion.

SEAN members London Bercey and Kaylee Prenosil worked on this effort with State Board of Education and NSEA-Retired members Lisa Fricke and Patsy Koch-Johns during the April 25 NSEA-Retired Spring Conference and the SEAN Board meeting the following day.

Mark Your Calendars: Fall Conference is Oct. 15

The 2019 NSEA-Retired fall conference will be Tuesday, Oct. 15, at the Ramada Inn in Kearney. Registration and refreshments begin at 8:15 a.m., with the program beginning at 9 a.m. Participation is free to members and \$10 for guests.

An optional evening gathering will be Monday, Oct. 14, 7 p.m., at McCue's Taproom, 2008 Avenue A, with pizza provided.

The conference will feature "Nebraska's Musical Smorgasbord: Music from Various Ethnic Groups in Nebraska" and "Nebraska Game and Parks: Its Stories, Challenges and Educational Efforts." Breakout sessions include travel tips, investment wisdom, common sense self-defense, working with trauma sensitive students, and EHA & BCBS insurance discussions.

In early September, registration will be available online at nsea.org/retired, selecting Calendar and Events.

For details, contact Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

The deadline for registration is Tuesday, Oct. 8.

— De Tonack, President
NSEA-Retired



New Assignments: Michelle Raphael, left, and Sheri Jablonski, right, will take on new duties with the Sept. 1 start of the new Association year. With Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn's retirement, Raphael will become NSEA's field and special projects manager. Jablonski's title will change from comptroller to associate executive director/comptroller.

Clayburn Closes 30-Year Career; Jablonski, Raphael Promoted

Retirement Results in Management Shuffle; Dubas Accepts OS Post

The retirement of long-time NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn has resulted in promotions for two at NSEA, and the hiring of Fullerton High School mathematics teacher Jen Dubas.

Clayburn closed his teaching and association career on Aug. 31, ending 30 years of Association field work and leadership. Clayburn taught at Gering and Grand Island, and was a UniServ director — equivalent to today's NSEA organizational specialist — in the Nebraska panhandle from 1989 to 1992. He was executive director of the Lincoln Education Association from 1992 until he joined NSEA in January 2007.

Clayburn managed NSEA's staff of 18 organizational specialists. He also managed the NSEA building, and steered the \$4.6 million remodel of the 45-year-old NSEA Headquarters building that began in 2008.

"Neal's record of service to students, teachers and public education in Nebraska is stellar. We are grateful for his leadership," said NSEA Executive Director Mad-die Fennell.

Clayburn's retirement plans include mentoring high ability students for the Lincoln Public Schools, and his campaign as a candidate for election to the Nebraska Legislature from District 29, or south Lincoln.

Clayburn's duties will be split between Comptroller Sheri Jablonski, who will become the associate executive director/comptroller, and organizational specialist Michelle Raphael, who will become field



Clayburn



Dubas

and special projects manager.

Jablonski has been NSEA comptroller since September 1992. A CPA, she initiated the NSEA Children's Fund and led computerization of the Association's membership database and accounting procedures.

Raphael joined NSEA in 2015, and served 44 local associations in central Nebraska. She has previous management experience in the state treasurer's office and with the Lancaster County treasurer, and is past president of the Nebraska Association of Financial Professionals. She has taught finance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dubas taught math at Fullerton for 21 years. She was head negotiator for the Fullerton Education Association for the past 15 years and served as FEA president for the last three years. A native of Palmer, she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

She will follow Raphael as organizational specialist for the 44 local associations in central and south central Nebraska.

Deanna Freitag

Former Fremont Education Association President Deanna Jean Freitag died July 13, 2019, at her home. She was 81.

Born in Homer she graduated from Blair High School. She earned a bachelor's degree from Midland University and a master's from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She taught English at Fremont High for 27 years, and took on many roles, including FEA president.

She was a busy volunteer after retirement, with time for Meals on Wheels, the Louis May Museum, a church tutoring program and more, earning her Fremont's Volunteer of the Year status.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Orin. She is survived by three children and seven grandchildren.

Tom Carman

Tom Carman, longtime teacher and past president of the Westside Education Association, died July 9, 2019. He was 70.

Carman attended multiple NSEA Delegate Assemblies and the annual NSEA Bargaining Conference. He was also a building representative for the WEA. He retired from Westside High School after teaching social sciences for 38 years.

He is survived by his wife, Jan; three children and eight grandchildren.

Colleen K. Street

Colleen K. Street, a retired Grand Island Education Association member, died on July 4, 2019. She was 64.

She graduated from Kearney State College and worked at ESU No. 9 in Hastings before joining the staff at the Grand Island Public Schools as a special education teacher and consultant. She was a building representative and served on the Executive Committee of the GIEA. She retired in 2012.

She is survived by husband John, two children and two grandchildren.

Marlene Thelen

Marlene Thelen, 69, taught for 25 years at Grand Island's Stolley Park Elementary School. She was a longtime member of the GIEA. She died on July 23, 2019.

She had a love for cooking, dogs and the Huskers. A constant theme of her life was "caring for others."

She is survived by her husband, Pat, two children and four grandchildren.

Literacy, Book Grants Offered by Motor Club

Up to \$2,000 Available Through AAA Support

The Cornhusker Motor Club Foundation will again offer grant opportunities to assist Nebraska K-12 educators during this school year. Through this program, the Foundation has awarded nearly \$170,000 to support teachers representing Nebraska's public, private and parochial schools.

Funding opportunities include traditional grants in amounts up to \$2,000, and literacy/book grants up to \$500. The traditional grants are designed to fund innovative programs or projects that will significantly enhance the students' classroom experience. Literacy/book grants may be used for classroom or library reading materials that will challenge and excite students.

Any school employee, grades K-12 in Nebraska, may apply for a grant through the Cornhusker Motor Club Foundation's online application process. This year's submission deadline is Tuesday, Oct. 1. Grants will be awarded no later than Dec. 15.

Details, including a list of the most recent grant award winning schools, can be found at:

www.CornhuskerFoundation.org

The Cornhusker Motor Club Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Nebraska.

Funded largely by AAA – The Auto Club Group and its members – the Foundation's mission is to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Nebraska by identifying and addressing current needs and anticipating their future needs in the areas of highway safety, state tourism, education.

Speaking of Education

"I tell my students, 'When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game.'"

— **Toni Morrison,**
American author, teacher
1931-2019

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

Getting Parents to Conferences

From Julie Woletz, a business teacher in Wisconsin:

"Parents are not required to attend conferences in our school, so I developed an incentive: I offer the students a free assignment coupon if their parent comes to see me. I give the parents the coupon to take home and give to their child. I've found that kids will go home and beg their mom or dad to come in, even if it is just to talk to me. The coupon can be used for an assignment that students have not completed, don't want to complete, or to replace their lowest grade of the quarter with full points. I have many graded assignments so the coupons don't affect their grades much, but students sure do work hard to get parents to see me!"



Homework Tip

From Barbara Keihle, a language arts teacher in Oregon:

"We have phones in our classrooms with a voice mail system. When school starts, I send a letter to all parents letting them know I will enter each day's assignments into my voice mailbox when school is over. Now, whether students are absent or forget their assignments by the time they get home, they can easily be informed or reminded by calling. Many parents mention how handy it is. It's a wonderful tool to encourage parents to communicate with me."

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



Coolin' It: There is nothing better than ice cream on a hot day in July, and the NSEA supplied the cooling treats for an ice cream social during an afternoon break at the annual Nebraska Coaches Association Clinic at Lincoln North Star High School. Enjoying ice cream bars were Emilie Powell, left, and Alex Reiners, both members of the Bennington Education Association.