

The VOICE

State Education Association • September 2022

STUDENT BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

School psychologist Brandy Rose identifies steps to address issues in the classroom.

Also inside:

- **Teacher & Coach Shortage: We're in this together**
- **A win for Grand Island teachers**
- **Asking Good Questions**

JUST TAKE



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Tune in for Positive Public Education Buzz

This school year, Nebraska broadcasters and teachers are celebrating a 25-year partnership in support of children and public education.

With help from the Nebraska Broadcasters Association (NBA), educational and positive messages about public education reach people statewide.

Using NSEA-produced radio and television ads, this joint effort spotlights the importance of education to the health and well-being of our children and youth, our communities and our state. It also celebrates our public school educators and their great work with students.

More than 100 radio and television stations across Nebraska participate in the program, according to Jim Timm, Executive Director of the NBA.

“The Nebraska Broadcasters Association is pleased to continue this partnership with the NSEA to promote quality public education in Nebraska. This program enables the NSEA to undertake a media campaign of vast proportions at a minimal cost,” Timm said.

“Our goal is to continually highlight and strengthen the connection between public schools and the public,” said Karen Kilgarin, NSEA Director of Public Affairs and Communications. “We want to encourage the building of partnerships between schools and communities on behalf of students and educators.”

NSEA President Jenni Benson is featured in a number of the spots that will be aired this fall.

“Our schools are places of learning, intelligence and wonders,” Benson said. “These messages remind the majority of today’s citizens, who neither attend school nor have children in school, what vital, exciting and productive places our schools are and the importance of supporting public education and today’s students and educators.

“We value and thank our Nebraska broadcasters and their professional association, the NBA, for their support of public education.”

Would You Like to Write for The Voice?

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

thevoice@nsea.org

On the Cover: School psychologist Brandy Rose offers interventions and strategies to address behavior issues in the classroom. See more on pages 12 and 13.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JENNI BENSON



Have you asked any good questions today?

Did you ask any good questions today? Have you ever thought about how many questions you ask a day? How many questions have you answered today?

As educators starting another school year you are bombarded with information and questions. Some useful, some new, some necessary, some not.

Every day we are receiving messages. Phone, texts, news, social media, and more. How do we decipher all the information and messages?

When my son was younger, I would ask him, "How was your day at school?" He would respond, "Fine" or "Okay." So, I would probe asking, "What did you learn today?" And he would respond "Nothing."

I decided to change my tactic. I began asking, "Jacob, what good questions did you ask today?" Most days he would answer "None." But after I continued asking him that question day after day, he started coming home telling me what questions he had asked at school. One day, when he was in third grade, he answered my "Jacob, did you ask any questions today?" with this response: "I understood the math lesson today but I could tell the other kids didn't. So I asked good questions for them."

It was a proud mom day. Jacob had come to understand the reason to

ask questions, and had developed an awareness of those around him.

I went to El Paso to visit Jacob and his family in August. He is a Major in the Army, stationed at Ft. Bliss. I asked him if he remembered the questions story because I had been using it as I talked with members and at new hire meetings in school districts across Nebraska. We had a great discussion about the need for good questions. As the executive officer for the General who is the Senior Commander of Ft. Bliss, Jacob knows when to ask questions and when not to question.

It is our responsibility to ask good questions and answer questions factually. And right now, there is a great deal of blatantly false information being spread by anti-public school zealots regarding our public schools and public school educators.

It is clear that we must question the validity of a video entitled "Mind Polluters" that has been shown in a several towns across Nebraska. It is replete with false information and allegations disparaging our public schools and public school teachers.

NSEA members have been and must continue to respond to this video's spurious allegations and propaganda. I encourage you to review the sidebar on this page for additional information.

Q: How do I, as an educator, respond to the false allegations in the "Mind Polluters" video?

A: First, establish your personal credibility, e.g., "I taught for ## years and I assure you that our schools and teachers are focused on keeping children safe and helping them learn."

***Note that the video is pure propaganda and outline the true facts: This so-called movie is completely untrue and it is a distraction from the real issues our students, teachers and schools are facing.**

***Teachers believe all students must be provided the opportunity and resources to learn and achieve so they can unlock their dreams and become productive members of society.**

***Parents know their child's teachers and they know our Nebraska teachers are dedicated, caring professionals who have chosen this profession because they care about children and their education."**



Hastings Leader Selected as Fellow NSEA Tri-Valley President tapped for leadership role

NSEA Tri-Valley President Ben Welsch will be on sabbatical for the 2022-23 school year to participate in the National Education Association Teaching and Learning Policy Fellow program.

Welsch will organize and plan professional learning to build affiliate membership and capacity.

“I am eager to help advocate and serve students, teachers and schools districts across Nebraska through this fellowship program,” Welsch said.

In August, Welsch traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in NEA’s Teacher Quality program where he received access to mentoring, training and resources from NEA program staff as well as colleagues from other states that are participating in the program.

As part of the fellowship, Welsch will produce curriculum and develop training materials, reports and presentations that will benefit Association members as well as students.

Welsch is an 18-year teaching veteran and currently serves as president of the Hastings Education Association. He has also served as a delegate to the NSEA Delegate Assembly.

New NEA Director

Ventura will serve a three-year-term on the NEA Board of Directors beginning Sept 1.

Omaha Education Association member Edward Ventura Jr. began his term as the NEA Director on Sept 1. Ventura will serve a three-year-term on the NEA Board of Directors. He takes the reins from former NEA Director Tracy Hartman-Bradley. She has served two, three-year terms as a Nebraska representative on the NEA Board of Directors and was term limited.

Ventura is in his 23rd year of teaching and is currently a school librarian at Chandler View Elementary School at Omaha Public Schools. He has served on the NSEA Board of Directors as the elected representative of the Association’s Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, which he also chaired. His win left a vacancy for the EMAC Chair on the NSEA Board of Directors. Two candidates were nominated from the floor following Ventura’s win and delegates voted to appoint Nora Lenz to serve. Lenz was

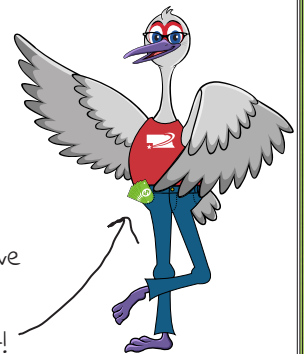


Edward T. Ventura, Jr.

EMAC Vice Chair prior to her election win for EMAC Chair.

Ventura is an active member of the Omaha Education Association and has previously served as a delegate at NSEA Delegates Assembly and NEA Representative Assembly. Ventura is involved as an NSEA Cyber Lobbyist and has testified before Nebraska lawmakers on several bills.

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Labor unions are having an incredible year

by Jim Begley

As the nation honors the incalculable contributions that organized labor has made to improve the lives of all Americans on Labor Day, there are encouraging signs that the labor movement has momentum on its side for the first time in decades. But can it be sustained to grow the labor movement, which has been in decline since its heyday in the 1950s?

Support of Unions

Fully 68% of Americans approve of labor unions according to a Gallup poll conducted in September 2021, the highest measured by Gallup since 1965. This positive sentiment is particularly evident among the surveyed 18- to 34-year-olds who delivered unions a whopping 77% approval rating.

One reason for the resurgence in labor's popularity is the ever-widening wage gap between CEOs and the average worker.

Data from the U.S. Commerce Department shows that corporate profit margins are the largest they have been in 70 years. A recent study of 300 top U.S. companies published this summer by the Institute for Policy Studies found that in 2021, the average gap between CEO and median worker pay jumped to 670-to-1. That is not a typo: The average CEO received \$670 in compensation for every \$1 the worker received. And that is an 11% increase from the 2020 ratio of 604-to-1!

Why now?

In addition, U.S. companies announced plans to buy back more than \$300 billion of their own shares in the first quarter of this year, and Goldman Sachs has estimated that buybacks could top \$1 trillion in 2022.

Simply put, the huge profits are going to CEOs and shareholders, not to the average worker.

As a result, exasperated workers are organizing throughout the United States, with successful union efforts



NSEA is the oldest professional association in Nebraska, founded in 1867. Our long history of activism is illustrated in this 1920s photograph.

at more than 200 Starbucks across the nation, the historic unionization victory at an Amazon warehouse on Staten Island, the first-ever unionization of an REI store, wins at two Google Fiber stores in Kansas City, a growing effort to organize video game companies and Apple Stores, and undergraduate student workers at Grinnell voting 327 to 6 to unionize, just to name a few.

New data from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) shows the number of filings for union elections is up 56% from October 2021 to June 2022. As of May 2022, petitions for elections for this fiscal year have surpassed 2021.

This flurry of union organizing, led mostly by a new generation of leaders, is a natural reaction to the prevailing economic model that mistakenly holds the maximization of short-term profits for investors/owners as critical to the nation's economic well-being.

Empowered Workers

Workers are choosing to unionize because organized labor is the most consistent voice for working people, union and non-union, in the nation.

Unions have fought to improve the rights and protections for everyone who sells his or her intelligence, ex-

perience, and strength to employers to earn a living.

Unions are the only institution in our economy whose purpose is to introduce meaningful democracy to the nation's workplaces and to help wage earners attain the American Dream.

Tragically, the American Dream, our aspiration that when we work hard and play by the rules, we can get ahead so that our children will be better off than we are, is in jeopardy.

As President John F. Kennedy said, "Those who would destroy or further limit the rights of organized labor – those who would cripple collective bargaining or prevent organization of the unorganized – do a disservice to the cause of democracy."

Our nation's best hope to empower workers, level the economic playing field, and improve the lives of the working families, is through unions.

As history has proven, we all do better when we all do better.



About the author:
Jim Begley, PHR, MPA, is the Director of UNO's William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies



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Staff Awarded Back Pay

GIEA Settles Dispute with District

After a months-long battle over the misclassification of several staff members dating back to the 2021-22 school year, the Grand Island Education Association (GIEA) has reached a settlement with the school district. The settlement is a big win for GIEA teachers and an indication of their commitment to their negotiated agreement.

Beginning in August 2021, GIEA building reps suspected the school district was misclassifying several staff members as long-term substitutes. The Association took action to protect its bargaining unit members. Nick Welding of Norby & Welding LLP, on behalf of GIEA, filed a petition with the CIR against the Grand Island Public Schools (GIPS) on Jan. 21, 2022, alleging a violation of the Industrial Relations Act. The petition alleged that those misclassified employees are, in fact, part of the GIEA bargaining unit and should be paid under GIEA's agreement with the district. The district was paying them as substitutes—which meant less pay and none of the bargaining unit's negotiated benefits. GIPS responded by filing a motion to dismiss the case

and on March 28, the CIR denied that motion. As the case inched closer to trial both parties continued to meet and, in August 2022, a settlement was reached.



Michelle Carter, GIEA President

Under the settlement, some GIEA teachers involved will be awarded \$45,000 in back pay. Other teachers who are still employed at the district will advance a step on the salary schedule under the 2022-23 Negotiated Agreement.

“The agreement reached by GIEA and GIPS reflects the work of meaningful conversations that took place throughout the summer,” GIEA and GIPS said in a joint statement. “The GIEA and GIPS recognize the tremendous value of the school

district's teaching staff as well as the challenging environment facing all schools. The agreement represents the mutual goal of the GIEA and GIPS to compensate the school district's teaching staff members who served students in critical positions during the 2021-2022 school year.”

The GIEA teachers involved were to receive back pay within a week of the settlement's approval.

“This case represents the importance of local associations staying vigilant in enforcing and protecting the integrity of their agreements with school districts,” said Welding. “The work does not end once an agreement is signed.”

NSEA has a long history of safeguarding the integrity of our local associations' negotiated agreements, negotiated benefits, and bargaining unit members. This continued vigilance from your association building reps and local leaders is essential to providing lasting benefits for all in public education and will help shape the future of the education profession. NSEA stands ready to help protect your rights.



SAVE THE DATE

NSEA U 2023

When: July 17-19

**Where: Younes
Conference Center
Kearney, Nebraska**

Professional Learning, Classroom Safety and Fun at NSEA U 2022

Educators from around the state gathered in July for the annual three-day, members-only professional development conference: NSEA University.

and Security, gave educators important information for the upcoming school year. Dr. Lawler presented trend data on how the coronavirus pandemic is expected to affect public schools.

The conference, held at Nebraska Innovation Campus in Lincoln, featured guest speakers and breakout sessions on a variety of topics to help educators grow professionally.

Learning and fun!

Participants selected from more than 70 breakout session covering collective bargaining strategies, organizing for power, EHA benefits, student debt management and technology in the classroom.

Professional development sessions also featured information on higher education issues and support for ESP members.

Special Guests

Members had the chance to hear remarks from special guests including the Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Matt Blomstedt, Scott Norby, of Norby and Welding Law Firm and members of the State Board of Education.

Dr. James Lawler, UNMC's Director of International Programs and Innovation at the Global Center for Health



From to right: NEA Director Edward Ventura, President Jenni Benson, Dr. Lawler and NEA Director Linda Freye.

His presentation focused on measures educators can take to keep themselves and their students healthy and safe this fall.

Dinner and Dinosaurs

NSEA members and their guests were treated to a social, including dinner, at Morrill Hall, the University of Nebraska State Museum. Morrill Hall hosts exhibits on Nebraska paleontology, early people of the plains, meteorites and wildlife. It

is home to the Mueller Planetarium. Members and their guests dined in Elephant Hall, where one of the largest mammoth skeletons ever discovered is displayed. Find more about this event on page 9.

NSEA U Heading to Kearney

President Jenni Benson announced that NSEA University 2023 will be held in Kearney at the Younes Conference Center. Watch *The Voice* and NSEA social media for details about the 2023 conference.

Dinner, Dinosaurs and Stars

NSEA U attendees and their guests enjoyed a fun and interesting social event at the Morrill Hall Museum & Planetarium



NSEA member Ashley Hoffman and guests stand in awe of the saber-toothed tiger on display on the fourth floor of Morrill Hall.



NSEA Board of Directors member Jenny Wood pokes her head through Morrill Hall's "Hidden Prairie" exhibit.



NSEA member Cynthia Piepenbrink and her son explore an interactive touch display within Morrill Hall.



NSEA-Retired Board member Pat Etherton (right) with her guests wait to catch a show at Mueller Planetarium.



EMAC member Christina Ellison and family pose inside the "First Peoples of the Plains" exhibit.



NSEA U attendees and their guests gather in Elephant Hall for dinner at the Dinner, Dinosaurs and Stars event in July.

Meet the coalition working to address Nebraska's educator shortage

The Nebraska Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NACTE) unveiled new research in July related to the educator shortage.

The NACTE is made up of the 16 institutions in Nebraska with teacher preparation programs. Data collected by the Nebraska Department of Education was compiled by NACTE to look for trends related to the shortage.

“Nationally as of 2017, there was a 38% decline in students enrolling in teacher prep programs and in Nebraska we can see now that we’re even higher than that, with a 48% decline in enrollment,” said Dr. April Buschelman, director of certification at Creighton University. “We’re also seeing that many of those enrolled are not completing these teacher prep programs. Nebraska has seen a steady decline in program completion since 2012.”

Educator Shortage Summit

Findings point to some of the underlying causes of the teacher shortage in the state and offer insight to what’s next for public schools. In October, NACTE hosted the Nebraska Educator Shortage Summit. NSEA and other education stakeholders met in Kearney to create a plan of action.

“We all agreed that unless we are on the same page and working in concert with each other, it will be very difficult to solve the teacher shortage in Nebraska,” said Dr. Sara Skretta, certification officer for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

There were four priorities that emerged from the summit to help combat the teacher shortage: expanding certi-

fication; adopting multiple assessment methods for basic skills competency in teacher prep programs; retention in the workforce; and collaborating to build support for the education profession. A complete report from the summit is expected later this fall. Watch a video of the NACTE presentation on the NSEA YouTube page at www.youtube.com/NSEAMedia.

KEY FINDINGS

<p>400</p> <p>unfilled positions reported in Neb. in the last 10 years</p>	<p>NEED</p> <p>All Nebraska regions reported the need for more school counselors</p>	<p>COST</p> <p>Students are abandoning the idea of higher education due to costs</p>
<p>48%</p> <p>decrease in teacher prep enrollment in Neb. over the last 10 years</p>	<p>SPED</p> <p>Top trending shortage area is Special Education</p>	<p>2026</p> <p>A “Great Enrollment Cliff” is predicted as soon as 2026</p>



Pictured: Nebraska Representative Assembly Delegates who traveled to Chicago in July 2022.

NEA Representative Assembly Back and Better than Ever

After two years of the pandemic, delegates to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly (RA) were finally back in person, with nearly 6,000 members from around the country convening on July 3 – 6 in Chicago, with some delegates choosing to attend through a virtual option. There was a feeling of renewal and celebration after another difficult year. As delegates gathered, they felt restored by the hope, energy, and determination of their union to come back better and stronger than ever.

The challenges facing educators, students, and communities today are real and many, NEA President Becky Pringle acknowledged. They include crippling educator shortages, a lack of professional pay, an ongoing assault on curricula that honestly confronts this nation's history of racism and openly celebrates LGBTQ+ people.

But NEA members continue to stand strong and embrace their role as the voice of education professionals, she told the RA delegates.

“You have found a way to resist, even as you hold onto joy. Courageous and creative,” she said. “Prepared and persistent. You stand in the power of NEA—and NEA stands in the power that is you!”

A message of hope

Pringle delivered a stirring message of hope, resiliency and commitment to the nearly 6,000 educators in attendance.

“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world, and you have to do it all time,” said Pringle, quoting writer and educator Angela Davis.

Without hope for change, change is impossible. “We must share that view Professor Davis holds dear: Whether it is a mind, a heart, a school, a community, or our world: transformation is always possible!”

Hello, Dolly!

The Assembly honored country music legend Dolly Parton with NEA's Friend of Education Award.

“Dolly Parton is a national treasure,”

said NEA President Becky Pringle. “In distributing more than 2 million books each month, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has poured a cup of ambition for millions of young children.”

In a video thank-you to the NEA delegates gathered in Chicago, Parton said she knows how hard educators work to help every student succeed.

“I'm working to do my part as well,” Parton said. “My foundation offers college scholarships for local high school students, and my theme park, Dollywood, is covering college tuition and expenses for employees.”

But Parton says she is most excited about her Imagination Library.

“Together, let's continue to inspire kids to dream more, care more, learn more, and therefore, be more,” she said.

Thank you

for all you do for our students and for letting us be part of your story.

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Interventions to address behavior issues in the classroom

Brandy Rose has been a school psychologist for 11 years. In her role for ESU 7, she is responsible for schools in 19 Nebraska counties.

Standing in a room full of educators at NSEA U in July, Brandy casually listed the certifications and trainings that make her uniquely qualified to present on “Strategies for Understanding Student Behaviors.” The list included: Education Specialist, (EdS degree), Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Mandt Certification. Brandy works with students in a tier three behavior program while also helping teachers implement interventions in their own classrooms.

She shared a photo of a boy who she said has challenged her expertise in psychology more than anyone she’s worked with: her toddler-aged son.

“My little guy,” she explained to attendees. “I like to include him in my presentations because it’s truly humbling. I thought I knew everything. Then I become a mom and everything I thought I knew about children changes.”

Her point for attendees is that all children challenge us and we bring those life experiences to the classroom. Brandy understands the ever-evolving challenges of student behaviors in the classroom. The research and recom-

mendations on how to combat these behaviors is also a moving target for educators seeking answers. There isn’t a one-size fits all for interventions and implementing changes takes patience and support from everyone involved in public education.

“Part of my work is to talk through scenarios with educators. When I go into schools, I really try to help educators realize they’re not alone. These are challenges every school is facing. I have so many real life stories. I think I’ve heard it all—seen it all—and then something new happens. I think I could write a novel on the things that I’ve experienced so far.”

Brandy believes what these students need most is consistency and predictability.

“I think a lot of my ‘behavior’ students come from a difficult home life,” she said.

“Most often the reasons behind why students are exhibiting these behaviors in the classroom won’t make you angry. More than likely, it’s going to break your heart.”

“Most often the reasons behind why students are exhibiting these behaviors in the classroom won’t make you angry. More than likely, it’s going to break your heart.”

— Brandy Rose, EdS., BCBA

What Students Need

The first steps to successfully intervene in these behaviors is consistent communication among teams, building trust between staff and parents, and fostering a healthy relationship with your students. Students are going to test educators before they will trust them, she explained.

“Students will not give us their best until they know we can handle them at their worst,” Brandy said.

The ABCs of Behavior

Brandy points to the three common components of the most challenging behaviors: the “ABCs.” It stands for Antecedent, Behavior and Consequence. **Antecedent** is the “where and when.” What event occurred right before the behavior? **Behavior** is identifying the actions taken after the antecedent. **Consequence** is any observable reactions immediately following the behavior. Lastly, consequences get the root of “why” the behavior occurs. Identifying the

ABCs is the first step before implementing interventions. Brandy offers examples of ABCs in action and some strategies to reduce any unwanted behaviors, outlined on page 13.



ABCs in action!

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Hypothesized Function
Math Lesson	Miranda throws a book on the floor	Students laugh and the teacher continues to teach	If Miranda's book throwing behavior continues to occur during math after her peers have responded by laughing (the consequence) and there is a pattern of this response, it is likely that attention from her peers is maintaining the behavior.

Strategies to reduce attention seeking behaviors:

- Preferential seating
- Hallway buddy
- Call on often
- Group contingencies
- Repeat directions back
- Planned Ignoring
- 8:1 Positive Negative ratio
- Praise student frequently
- Talk tickets
- Nonverbal cues
- Visual directions/Supports
- Proximity control
- Remove class to alternative setting

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Hypothesized Function
Ms. Jones asks her students to get ready for reading groups and centers	Allison gets under her desk and screams "I hate centers!"	The teacher calls for the assistant principal to remove Allison from the classroom	If Allison's problem behavior persists every time Ms. Jones transitions to centers and small reading groups, the behavior is likely escape maintained as Allison is being removed from the classroom after the behavior occurs going from a less preferred to more preferred environment

Strategies to reduce escape maintained behaviors:

- Make sure task follows student
- Contingency plans
- Ex. Do 2 problems, then you get a drink
- Premack principal
- First ____, then ____
- Choices
- Lessen the demand/reduce assignment
- Timer
- Frequent breaks
- Give them a job/errand
- Help start the assignment
- Behavior momentum
- Break cards
- 1:1 help

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Hypothesized Function
Partner work for social studies	Sylvia begins rocking in her chair	Sylvia and her partner are moved to a separate location	Whenever the environment becomes loud, Sylvia engages in sensory seeking behaviors

Strategies to reduce sensory seeking behaviors:

STIMMING BEHAVIORS:

- Stimming behaviors may be used as a coping mechanism, it does not help to try and redirect that behavior
- If stimming behaviors be-

come problematic, you may want to reduce them. Self-monitoring "sitting nice" is required for her to earn her breaks or other reinforcers may be effective.

STRATEGIES:

- Flexible seating
- Providing choices of how the work gets completed
- Music
- Stress ball/fidgets
- Stand up desk
- Sensory supports/room
- Social stories
- Stress baskets/tension releasing activities

Sack Lunch Program Teaches Ag, Feeds Students



The popular Ag Sack Lunch Program is returning for its 13th school year in 2022-2023, continuing its offerings which include both in-person and virtual presentations designed to increase agricultural awareness among Nebraska fourth-grade students and their families.

In-person Program

The in-person program provides a free lunch and an ag-focused learning experience to fourth-grade students who visit Lincoln each year 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 gain an appreciation for where their food comes from. Students also receive a deck of cards containing many agriculture facts including the games "Crazy Soybean" and "Old Corn Maid" to take home.

Virtual Presentation

The virtual presentations include a lively presentation on the importance of agriculture in Nebraska, connecting the food we eat every day with Nebraska farmers. Students also receive the fact-filled card games that feature Nebraska agriculture facts.

Register Today!

Registrations are now being accepted for fall and spring presentations for both virtual and in-person visits to the State Capitol.

"It is important teachers make their reservations as soon as possible to ensure availability," said program contact Karen Brokaw. Reservations can be made at www.agsacklunchprogram.com

"Over the last 12 years, the Ag Sack Lunch Program has been successful in helping fourth-grade students understand where their food comes from," said Kelly Brunkhorst, Nebraska Corn Board executive director. "We teach how Nebraska's farming methods help protect the environment while ensuring food safety and animal health."

The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Corn Board, the Nebraska Soybean Board, the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, Nebraska Beef Council, Midwest Dairy, Nebraska Poultry Industries and Nebraska Wheat Board.

For more information, call Karen Brokaw at 1.402.432.2299.



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Get Ready to Bargain!

At the Table: NSEA has worked with our local associations to increase teacher salaries from 45th in the nation in 2001, to 31st in the nation in 2022. We also work to increase state aid to education.



Collective bargaining gives educators a voice

Collective bargaining gives educators a voice in their workplace. It helps secure fair wages and benefits, improving not only teacher recruitment, but also retention. Negotiating as a group helps teachers improve compensation, benefits and working conditions. Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. Addressing these issues at the table benefits everyone.

Topics like salary, health insurance, class size, plan time and retirement can all be negotiated. To make that happen, your local association must be recognized by the employer as the bargaining agent for the year or certified as the permanent bargaining agent for your school.

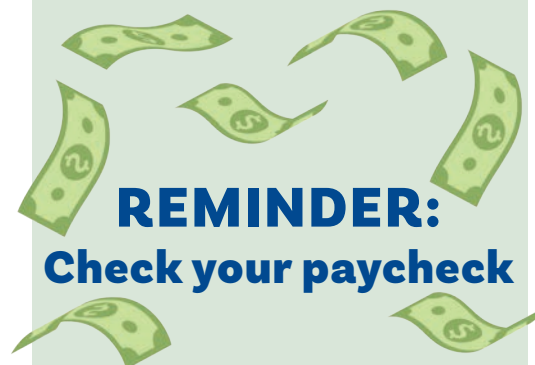
NSEA's Collective Bargaining Specialist Jen Dubas offers the following tips for local associations as the bargaining window approaches this fall:

1. Stay in touch with your NSEA organizational specialist about upcoming bargaining opportunities and available resources, including the bargaining calendar and updated sample negotiated agreement.
2. Community college and K-12 locals should prepare and submit their 2024-25 recognition

request letter now so the board can act on recognizing the local as the bargaining agent for next fall's negotiations of the 2024-25 agreement. (Certified locals, prepare your notification letter for the board.)

3. Survey association members about issues and priorities before you head to the bargaining table.
4. Access NSEA's microsearch database of agreements at www.nsea.org/collective-bargaining.
5. Organize your negotiations team so roles and responsibilities are clear during both preparation and bargaining.
6. Be ready to begin negotiations by Nov. 1 for K-12 and community college locals and by Sept. 1 for state employee groups.
7. Stay in touch with your organizational specialist throughout the process. They can help you comply with the bargaining calendar, learn more about area settlements and be aware of trending language proposals being offered by other district boards.

Remember, educators have more strength in numbers and never is that truer than at the bargaining table.



Employees and employers both have a responsibility for confirming their paychecks are correct. It's not a common problem, but it is an issue for which members have turned to NSEA for help. Sometimes it's a clerical error that causes an overpayment or underpayment of salary to a school employee. When it happens, it can cause economic hardship for a teacher or school employee. NSEA Director of Advocacy Isau Metes says reparations in such instances may have to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Metes suggests that local associations remind or help members to review their first paycheck of each school year for accuracy.

"We recommend that each local assist its members, and new members in particular, with the computations to determine whether that first check of the year is correct," she said. "Many of these problems could be avoided with such a service."

If a discrepancy is discovered, members should notify NSEA immediately. Each month the issue goes unresolved adds to the amount the member will have to repay – or to the income lost if the member is being underpaid. The matter is further complicated when considering tax and retirement implications.

If you find a paycheck discrepancy, contact your NSEA Organizational Specialist at 1-800-742-0047.



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NSEA Staff Changes



Wergin



Faripour



Matthews



Kucera



Lassen



Gordon



Dubas



Fielder



Dingwell



Garabrandt



Grafton



Snurr

Two retirements and three departures lead to new faces, staff changes at NSEA.

Longtime NSEA Organizational Specialist Rich Wergin and Network Administrator Roger Kucera retired on August 31. Collective Bargaining Specialist Randy Gordon, Collective Bargaining Associate Emme Grafton and Omaha Education Association Organizational Specialist Becca Dingwell resigned their posts this summer. These departures resulted in five new hires and a rearrangement of staff assignments.

Rich Wergin joined NSEA staff in 2010 as a UniServ Director, now known as Organizational Specialists. Prior to his time at NSEA, Wergin was a local leader in Seward and a member of the NSEA Board of Directors. NSEA Organizational Specialist Mandy Faripour will now serve the Higher Education Unit covering locals statewide, including SCATA and DCYC. Faripour was previously assigned to the Lincoln Education Association. That position has been filled by new hire and former Westside Education Association President Teresa Matthews. Matthews is 27-year veteran teacher, serving the last 10 years as an art teacher at Hillside Elementary School at Westside Community Schools.

Roger Kucera served as the Network Administrator at

NSEA for 17 years, beginning in 2005. Kucera's expertise and guidance helped NSEA seamlessly transition to remote work during the height of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, and then again as staff transitioned back to the office. Taking over Kucera's duties will be Tim Lassen. Lassen was hired in June as NSEA Director of Information Technology. He was previously employed by Infinite Systems in Lincoln.

Jen Dubas, who formerly served as the Organizational Specialist for the South Central Unit, took over for Gordon in July as NSEA's Collective Bargaining Specialist. Patrick Fielder has been hired as the Organizational Specialist for the South Central Unit. Fielder is a 20-year veteran teacher and long-time Lincoln Education Association member. Fielder spent the last three years teaching computer science at Irving Middle School.

Kathie Garabrandt takes over for Dingwell as an OEA Organizational Specialist. Garabrandt has served as a Metro Representative on the NSEA Board of Directors. She has also served on the MEA and Metro Boards. Garabrandt is a 29-year classroom veteran.

Noah Snurr will fill the role of Collective Bargaining Associate. Snurr is a University of Nebraska graduate and comes from a family of teachers.

Thank you for staying Communication Must Carry the Day

S.E.E.D

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Dr. Kim Snyder,
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**Dr. Julie
Downing,**
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Effectiveness
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Ryan Ricenbaw,
NDE Leadership
and Learning
Network
Specialist

One cannot escape hearing stories of teacher shortages across the state of Nebraska. Sprinkled throughout the stories about teachers leaving the profession, are stories of those who have chosen to stay. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) sends a big “thank you” to those teachers who continue to dedicate their careers to impacting the growth of Nebraska children.

The 2022 State of the U.S. Teacher Survey Report published by the RAND Foundation found 70% of the teachers surveyed nationally are glad they selected teaching as a career and 60% continue to look forward to teaching in the future. Almost 60% feel valued at school and 52% feel involved in making decisions about what happens in their school. While these numbers aren’t abysmal, it should raise concern to see more than 40% of teachers do not feel valued at school and 48% do not feel involved in decision-making. The solutions to these problems cannot begin until the right questions are asked.

In the July 2022 *Education Week* article “Returning to ‘Normal’ Won’t Be Enough This Fall,” authors Goldhaber, McEachin and Morton state: “Key to recovery efforts will be district leaders’ clear communication with their school communities about the urgency and scale of the challenges students are facing.” The NDE’s S.E.E.D. Team agrees with this quote, but posits that equally important are clear communication lines to address the challenges teachers and school leaders are facing. Without a better understanding of these challenges, and the perspectives surrounding them, communication is typically one way, and can be received as less than sincere.

Educators deserve work environments that foster trust, authentic dialogue, and respectful exchanges. This requires teachers and school leaders to enter this year with the mindset that they all have a voice, are valued. They need to have the opportunity to contribute to the environment in which they work to

have a positive impact on the students they teach.

One of the indicators from the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS) states that effective teachers “develop and sustain productive and appropriate relationships through communication with students, colleagues, administrators, families, and the larger community in an effort to support and enhance each student’s academic success and well-being.” Clear and consistent communication amongst the educational community will impact the success and well-being of students.

Each new school year brings new experiences and fresh perspectives. Clear communication allows all educators the opportunity to share their perspectives and feel that they are a part of an educational community that values what they bring to the table. Clear communication can also add an extra level of support for new staff members who do not necessarily know all the ins and outs of the school. When new and veteran staff share collegial conversations, trust and respect become the foundation of the culture of the educational community.

The S.E.E.D. Team encourages teachers and school leaders to look for new ways to open communication between staff members, identify the challenges, and provide opportunities for deepening relationships. Deepening the understanding of each other’s perspectives and mindsets alleviates the miscommunication that occurs when assumptions are left unexamined. Effective communication allows those assumptions to be broken down and examined, leading to new perspectives and broader collective efficacy.

The NDE and its partners are committed to leading and supporting all Nebraskans in learning, earning, and living. The NTPPS demonstrate necessary shifts toward teacher voice, efficacy, and leadership.



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Fremont Education Association Member Earns 2022 Christa McAuliffe Prize

Mary Trehearn, an NSEA member and English teacher at Fremont High School in Fremont, is the recipient of the 2022 Christa McAuliffe Prize for Courage and Excellence in Education.

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln College of Education and Human Sciences presents the annual award to a Nebraska teacher who exemplifies the character of McAuliffe, the first teacher in space, who died in the 1986 Challenger space shuttle disaster.

According to nominators, Trehearn is known as a dedicated, caring and creative teacher. She is committed to making her classroom a safe place for all students to explore, ask questions,

contribute and grow. She has created a positive environment for more than 3,000 students to make the transition from middle school to high school.

“I am humbled to be named the recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Prize and am grateful for the affirmation it has given me,” Trehearn said. “It truly does take an army to mold our youth, and I count myself blessed to be one among many in the strongest, bravest army known to humanity: the Army that Molds the Future, otherwise known as educators.”



Trehearn

Trehearn helps her students learn and understand challenging subject matter through creative practices. She’s been

known to transform the walls of her classroom, have students act out the scenes of a play, or dissect the lyrics of a well-known song to make every lesson she teaches relevant, and show how it matters in the present and future.

“Mary’s commitment to excellence has always been on full display in her classroom and around the school,” said one nominator. “Parents have requested that Mary teach their children because they know the type of instruction, caring spirit and high-expectations their children will experience.”

Trehearn earned her bachelor’s degree in education from Buena Vista University, a master’s degree from Wayne State College, and a doctorate from the College of Saint Mary.

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TRISH GUINAN

Message from the Executive Director

I'm from a very sports-minded family. Growing up, my dad played baseball and our summer vacations often centered around going to Kansas City or St. Louis for Royals or Cardinals baseball games. When I was six years old, I joined a swim team and continued to compete until I graduated high school. In my first two years of college, I played on the softball team.

We want you to coach

For all my time in athletics nothing prepared me for the moment I was told, "We want you to be the head volleyball coach." It was only my second teaching job – I was headed to Spencer, Nebraska. I'd played intramural volleyball in high school but I'd acquired no technique or strategy.

The volleyball season began in August and, clearly, I had work to do! I set high expectations for myself—being from a sports-minded family the last thing I wanted to do was to look stupid. Fortunately, I learned about the Nebraska Coaches Association (NCA). I joined immediately and, within a few weeks, I was in Lincoln attending my first Coaches Clinic. Sessions covering the basic fundamentals of volleyball were being taught by some of the best Nebraska coaches of their time. Attending the clinic gave me the confidence I needed to get through those first years as head volleyball coach.

I got very lucky with the players I had at Spencer. I hadn't been a volleyball coach long when our team made it to districts. We ended up being rated in our class that year. It was a huge accomplishment, and it never would have been possible without NCA.

Times have changed

In my previous role as NSEA Director

of Advocacy, I've seen firsthand how times have changed for coaches. I've worked with members who have come to NSEA for help. Whether it was a parent who felt their child wasn't playing enough or a community of unhappy fans lodging criticisms to a local school board, complaints against coaches can have serious consequences for career educators. It has shown me the need for educators who coach to belong to both associations. The support NSEA and NCA offers its members is unmatched, I know this from my own experience but also from members who have benefited from their dual memberships. I recently met with NCA Executive Director Darin Boysen. He shared a concern among NCA members: A teacher shortage means there is also a coaches shortage. Ultimately, the ones who lose the most in both scenarios are students. Without enough teachers, classroom sizes grow, workloads become unmanageable, and students pay the price. Without enough coaches, programs are cut. For students who can't afford to participate in club teams it means missing out on invaluable team-based learning.

We're in this together

The Nebraska Coaches Association made me a better coach. In turn, coaching provided me with new ways to connect with students and made me a better teacher. The NCA and NSEA are committed to a common goal and that is to our students and to public education. As Darin said to me, "Now, more than ever, we need everybody in the education world supporting each other." I am pleased with the renewed commitment between our respective associations. This partnership will continue to evolve and NSEA will work to update our members on the ongoing efforts to strengthen our coalition of support for teachers and coaches.

“

A teacher shortage means there's a coaches shortage. Now, more than ever, we need everybody in the education world supporting each other.

”

- Darin Boysen, Nebraska Coaches Association

Celebrating the profession across Nebraska

This summer, retired members, new retirees and active members gathered across the state to celebrate the profession while enjoying conversation, food and prizes. On June 3, at ESU2, several members from the Columbus area gathered for refreshments, prizes and conversation.

Cunningham's By the Lake in Kearney proved to be a great, fun place for local retirees to visit while welcoming and thanking new retiring educators on June 14. Several similar celebrations were held in Chadron, Ogallala, and Scottsbluff in conjunction with NSEA Organizational Specialist Andrea Longoria's summer meetings for active NSEA members in the Panhandle.

NSEA-Retired hopes to continue offering similar gatherings for retired members throughout the coming year across the state while encouraging other retirees to join. Please contact De Tonack, NSEA-Retired President, if you would like to help host such an event.

Early Childhood Project

Buffalo County Early Childhood Workforce Project's Tana Miller presented at an event in Kearney. The collaborative group is working to bring all early childhood stakeholders together to galvanize efforts toward one common goal. The vision is that all children and families in Buffalo County will have access to affordable, quality care and education; that caregivers and child care providers will be supported; and that children will have the resources to develop and grow to their fullest potential.

Project leaders are still in the planning stages. They are looking to recruit and



Tana Miller presents information about the Buffalo County Early Childhood Workforce Project during an event in Kearney.



Back row, left to right: Terri Jelinek, NSEA OS Mike Wiesen, Tracy Dodson, Dick Luebbe, George McConnon, Jayne (Sipes) Fredrickson, Donna Krumbach, Dan Schiefelbein. Front: Jenni Erhart, Mary Gillespie, Nancy Johannes, NSEA-Retired President De Tonack, and Roxanne Page.

retain a workforce. Attendees were encouraged to follow the project as it continues to develop and watch for volunteer opportunities.

Membership winner!

Jane Tepy, a long-time Kearney resident who retired from Elm Creek Schools, was the winner of a one-year annual membership to NSEA/NEA-Retired. Congratulations, Tepy!

Special Offer

If you have just become a Nebraska educator and were an Aspiring Educator member last year, please contact Heather.Fritz@nsea.org to seek a \$200

grant for state NSEA dues. NSEA-Retired is providing limited rebates to thank those entering the profession! Find more at www.nsea.org/retired

Have you just retired?

We note in our records members who have transitioned from NSEA/NEA pre-retired lifetime membership to retired lifetime membership. Many join before retirement in the pre-retired lifetime subscription category, but we may have missed some who have now just retired. Please contact De at dtonack@neb.rr.com if we missed your transition. We always need and welcome updated email addresses.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The **NSEA-Retired Fall Conference** will be Oct. 18 at the Grand Island Ramada Inn, and will feature music and breakout options, including an insurance

Q&A with CASA volunteers, and a session on biking across the U.S. The afternoon will include a presentation on strategies to enhance your cyber security. Registration will soon be available at www.nsea.org/retired.

Join in conversation and light refreshments Monday evening, Oct. 17 at the Ramada Inn Hospitality room. Quilt raffle tickets will be available at the conference. All donations will go to the NSEA Children's Fund.

BlueCross BlueShield information sessions will be held in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney and Norfolk in late October and early November. A webinar will be made available after the in-person presentations. Details will be posted on www.nsea.org/retired and in the October Voice.

Retired Governance/Lobby Day will be held on Feb. 21, 2023 in Lincoln.

“Shenanigans”

by Mark Gudgel

The median listing price for a house in Millard, Nebraska, is somewhere between \$250K and \$300K, though that may be a small price to pay if you have a student entering the seventh grade anytime soon. If you can find a home near Millard Central Middle School, then there’s a fair chance your child could wind up in the World Studies, Law and Public Service, or Creative Writing classroom of Mr. Jerrold Warren.

Jerrold Warren is one of those teachers you want your own children to have. Intelligent, compassionate and relatable, he has a ready smile and a sense of humor that endears him to the middle schoolers he teaches at Millard Central Middle School and their parents alike. Never taking himself too seriously, Mr. Warren embraces the opportunity to support young people on their journey to becoming educated citizens with modesty and enthusiasm. Currently working on his second master’s degree, Mr. Warren models being a lifelong learner for his students and instills in them a passion for learning. He knows that if he can make it fun, then he can make it stick.

“My shenanigans have a purpose,” says Warren with a knowing smile. “It’s almost like I am tricking my students into learning. One example of this is my geography aerobics lesson where I created hand motions to around twenty vocabular words. I blast 80’s Jazzercise workout music and call out vocabulary words. We all do the hand motions for the vocabulary words and have a great time. The students at first are horrified and put up the 7th grade front of “this is dumb, I’m not doing this,” but after a few days the whole class is up and moving.” But does this sort of thing really work? “I will even sometimes have students in high school email me saying that they started doing the hand motions in their high school geography classes!” responds Warren.

Of course, teaching isn’t all fun and Jazzercise. But Mr. Warren’s respect for his students is evident in the way he manages his classroom. Warren gives agency to his students from the start, inviting them to have a say in how the room is going to run. “At the beginning of each semester we develop a classroom charter as a class, where students create, debate, and accept classroom expectations that will be followed,” he explains. “Each month we revisit the classroom charter during a classroom meeting and I always start the meeting off by celebrating accomplishments in the classroom.”



About the author: Mark Gudgel spent 18 years teaching high school English in Nebraska, and currently serves as an assistant professor of education at the College of Saint Mary. He had the great pleasure of having Jerrold as a graduate student at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

“Asking students ‘What can I be doing better to help you learn more’ (and actually following through) is one of the most powerful things I can do as a teacher,” says Warren, who combines humor and pragmatism in the way he manages his classroom. “My number one classroom expectation is, ‘If it involves Mr. Warren doing paperwork, avoid doing it,’” he quips. “I have had students call out other students by saying ‘Dude, knock it off, you’re going to make Warren do paperwork!’ to get other students to redirect!”

And like every great teacher, when all else fails Warren has a secret weapon. That secret weapon? Dad jokes. “A well-timed dad joke and the groaning of students after them really ties everything together,” laughs Warren. “I have had students’ fathers send me emails to congratulate me on my execution of puns,” he says proudly.

Most of all, Mr. Warren prides himself on forming strong relationships, relationships that last. “I light up whenever I see an email from a former student telling me that they got into the college of their dreams or made it onto the varsity sports team they worked hard to get onto,” he says. Like so many of his fellow teachers across the state of Nebraska, Warren is invested not only in the present but equally in the future. He knows that his seventh-grade classroom is but one rung on the ladder his students are climbing, and he takes full advantage of the time he has with every student to help prepare them for the next leg of the journey. Do they appreciate him for it? “I keep every single note or trinket that a student gives me in a bin under my desk,” recalls Mr. Warren. And on those especially tough days? “I just have to look at the overflowing bin of notes.”

Whether you’re in the market for a house in Millard or not, you can rest easier knowing that the students of Millard Central are in the care of Mr. Warren and teachers who share his passion children and education all across our state. Thank you, Mr. Jerrold Warren!



Featured educator: Jerrold Warren is entering his eighth year of teaching, his sixth in Millard Public Schools. He sponsors Photography Club, Boys & Girls Intramural Basketball, Garden Club, and Foods Club, and moonlights as the school mascot (Go Stormy!) Fan mail, and good tea, can be sent to him at Millard Central Middle School all year long.

In Memory

We recognize these members whom we've lost recently.

Angie Miller, 45, Broken Bow
Rodney L. Koch, 89, Cozad
Harold E. Bennett, 89, McCook
Bernice E. Cain, 84, Lincoln
Loxi L. Wolf, 72, Hartington
Lester H. Miller, 82, Beatrice
David Mabon 73, Phillips
Michael P. Pangman, 83, Lincoln
Larry Pfeiffer, 90, Burwell
Debra Hall, 63, Omaha
Amy Murray, 46, Blair

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Public School Proud Campaign Highlights Success

Thanks to a grant from the NEA, a diverse group of Nebraska public school graduates will be featured in an outreach campaign to share how teachers and their public school education laid the foundation for their success—and how that success benefits their communities.

Launching this fall, the five-week television, radio and digital campaign entitled “Public School Proud” will also encourage the audience to visit NSEA social media channels to show their support for public education by sharing their own success stories.

The goal is to build support for public education and increase public awareness of the individual, societal and economic benefits of a diverse and successful public education system.

“NSEA is a leader in promoting and protecting quality education for all students in Nebraska,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “Sharing these public school success stories serves to emphasize NSEA and its members’ dedication to providing all students with access to a great public education.

“Promoting the support Nebraskans have for public schools is of growing importance given an increased push by private school advocates in Nebraska to denigrate public education and divert state tax dollars away from public schools and into private schools,” noted Benson.



Iggy Machuca, Norfolk
Owner of I&P Construction

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nsea.org/proud



PUBLIC SCHOOL PROUD
Nebraska State Education Association

Nebraska is a “no-excuse” state, meaning any registered voter may request an early-voting (absentee) ballot, and is not required to provide a reason.

You can print an online early-voting application, complete the form, and then mail, fax or scan/take a picture of your application and email it to your county election office. The last day for an early-voting application to be received is 6 p.m. on the second Friday preceding the election.

Find a county-specific form at:
www.nsea.org/EarlyVoter



www.nsea.org/EarlyVoter