

NSEA Government Relations Committee Report to the 2009 NSEA Delegate Assembly

Lisa Fricke, Lexington, Chair

The NSEA Government Relations Committee and the NSEA Government Relations staff members have been actively involved in the political scene this year. Seeking quality education candidates (local, district, state, national) and monitoring education bills have been priorities.

By revising the candidate questionnaires this year, interview teams have had a better understanding of candidates' positions on public education. With a balance of Republicans and Democrats on the interview teams, GRC/LCT members interviewed candidates who took the time to fill out the questionnaires.

The 25 Government Relations Committee members and the Legislative Contact Team have continued to lobby state senators in Lincoln and in their home districts. NSEA has also networked with other professional education organizations to make sure that quality education for every child remains a priority in the legislature. With NSEA as the umbrella, the GRC and LCT members worked together to prove the need for increased public education funding.

The successes of NSEA in the political arena can only be attributed to active NSEA members. That's why the GRC is continually encouraging members to get involved in the political process. Every major decision in public education is a political decision. Because of this, GRC/LCT and other NSEA members need to be proactive: recruiting candidates, campaigning, developing networks, training, volunteering, e-mailing leaders, informing members, and writing letters. If members don't stay proactive, they will deal with negative consequences that could affect all of us.

When GRC/LCT members ask teachers to make short-term commitments for the advancement of education, they hope that teachers will continue to say, "Yes!" If all NSEA members contributed a little time, everyone would reap the benefits. As John Steinbeck wrote in his novel *In Dubious Battle*, "...a community {as a} whole is greater than its parts." A few individuals can't accomplish what all of us as a whole can do for public education.