

NSEA-RETIRED ADVOCATE

www.nsea.org/retired

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Second Successful Petition Drive QUALIFIES FOR NOV. BALLOT



Top photos (left to right): NSEA-Retired member Karla Bachman. Retired member Rita Bennett with NSEA member Lori VandeHoef. Arlene Rea signs the petition. **Bottom (left to right):** NSEA-Retired member Rich Wergin at the Seward Farmers Market, NSEA-Retired President and petition sponsor John Heineman on turn-in day. Members Howard Gaffney and Mauren Nickels gather signatures in Broken Bow.

When Support Our Schools Nebraska launched its second petition drive to repeal LB1402's use of public funds to pay for private school schools, NSEA-Retired member Karla Bachman set a goal of gathering at least 1,000 signatures.

"I was motivated by two things," Bachman said. "I thought this was a place where I could personally impact a

bit of this year's election issues – and my second motivation was I thought it was a way to honor my daughter's life and the things she stood for."

Bachman's late daughter was active in politics, spending 10 years working at the Nebraska State Capitol.

"She taught me to see beyond the messy, imperfect side of the political

world,” Bachman said. “Through her I could see all the wonderful things it accomplishes.”

Bachman said her daughter loved working on the side of justice and if she had been alive to see the passage of LB1402 and its proponents’ attempt to subvert democracy, she would have been gathering signatures too.

“She inspired me and still does. So I made being where people were and educating them my priority for six weeks and the sheets just filled up,” she said.

Bachman exceeded her goal, gathering around 1,200 signatures.

The work of volunteers like Bachman culminated in a successful effort with more than 86,000 signatures submitted to put the repeal of LB1402 on the November ballot.

Certified for the Ballot

On Sept. 5, the Secretary of State’s Office announced it had verified more than enough petition signatures and certified the LB1402 referendum for the

November ballot.

Support Our Schools Nebraska gathered signatures from voters in every one of Nebraska’s 93 counties, and handily exceeded the requirement that 5% of voters in at least 38-counties sign the petition.

Since last summer, the Support Our Schools Nebraska coalition has collected more than 200,000 signatures from Nebraskans who believe voters should decide whether public funds should be used to pay for private schools.

Still Fighting

Even before Evnen announced the certification of the referendum petition, voucher proponents were trying to get the issue kicked off the ballot through a lawsuit. The lawsuit claims voters cannot revoke a law that appropriates state funds saying it is prohibited by Article III, Section 3 of the Nebraska Constitution.

Support Our Schools Nebraska is fighting back. Article III of the Nebraska Constitution clearly states that the

power of referendum is reserved for the people and can be used to repeal any act or part of an act of the Legislature, except those making appropriations for the expense of the state government or a state institution existing at the time of the passage of such act.

Specifically, legislation is excluded from referendum only if it appropriates funds for (1) expenses (2) of state government or existing state institutions. Both requirements must be satisfied to fall within the limited exception in Article III. Nebraska courts have never invalidated or withheld a referendum from the ballot under this narrow appropriations exception.

LB1402 does not satisfy either of the two requirements for the appropriations exception in Article III. SOSNE will continue our efforts to Repeal LB1402 and protect public funding for public education! Watch for updates at SOSNE.org, NSEA.org and in *The Voice*.

LEA-Retired hosts annual "Come and Get It" Event



Come and Get It: NSEA-Retired member Sheri Paden chaired the event and was assisted by Jane Nyffeler, Jolene Walker, Cheryl Svoboda, Norma Daberkow, Lesa Christiancy, Chris Martin, Barb Hetcko, Diane Lamb, Mary Dupuis, Shelley Clayburn, Pat Etherton and LEA-Retired President Joe Shandera.

Many teachers invest their own money to purchase classroom supplies, often stretching their personal finances to ensure their students have the resources they need. Lincoln Education Association-Retired members have offered a helping hand to get the basic essentials like paper and pencils to creative materials like art supplies to new teachers through their "Come and Get It" event.

In late July, new teachers to Lincoln Public Schools were invited to stop by the LEA office to pick up supplies for their classroom. New supplies were donated by current LEA-Retired members and purchased with grant funds from NSEA-Retired and Delta Kappa Gamma sorority.

More than 60 new educators took advantage of the event. Attendees were also able to pick up gently used classroom items donated by retiring teachers including bulletin board materials, math manipulatives, games and various charts and posters.



Remembering Tom Black

Long-time NSEA-Retired member Tom Black, 88, of West Point, passed away on Aug. 1, 2024. For his extraordinary contributions to his association and his unwavering dedication to students and the cause of public education, we want to thank Tom on behalf of all NSEA-Retired members.

Tom's tireless efforts and deep commitment have left a lasting impact on our community. His passion for advocating for students' needs, supporting his fellow educators, and promoting the value of public education exemplified the highest standards of service and leadership. Tom's legacy is a testament to the positive change that one dedicated individual can bring to an entire educational community.

Tom was born August 2, 1935 in Shenandoah, Iowa, where he lived until graduating from high school. He went to college at Iowa State, then Tarkio, Missouri, graduating from Iowa University with a double major in English and History. Tom moved to West Point in 1962. Soon after joining the Cuming County Education Association (CCEA), Tom attended NSEA Delegate Assembly (DA) and began a DA attendance record made for the history books—representing members at 65 Delegate Assemblies.

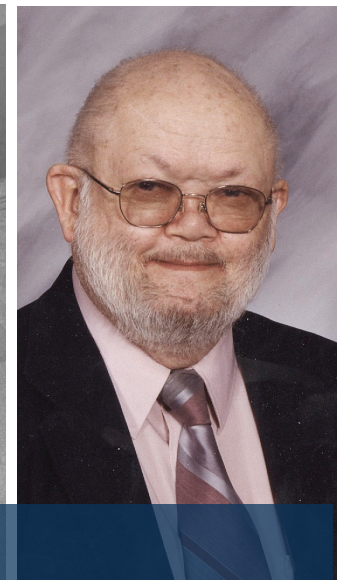
In 1964, Tom was elected President of CCEA and within the next year Wisner and West Point decided to form their own locals. Tom was President of WPEA for 10 years before he being elected to the NSEA Board of Directors in 1979. Tom served on the NSEA Board of Directors from 1979-1995 and 2000-2005. This position included Elkhorn District Director from 1979-1985, NSEA Vice President 1986-1990, NEA Board of Directors from 1990-1995.

Tom taught at West Point until 1996, finishing with 36 total years of teaching. According to his obituary, he was a great teacher with a heart for his students, listening to their problems as well as their joys. He taught them to think for themselves and he is remembered by many as the best teacher they ever had.

Tom's role for NSEA-Retired Board of Directors spanned from 1998 to the summer of 2023: Vice President 1998-2000; President 2000-2005; Elkhorn District Member 2005-2011; Vice President 2011-2017; Elkhorn District Member 2021-2023. During that time, Tom was chair of the SEAN/NSEA-Retired Scholarship Committee.

Tom was editor of the NSEA-Retired page for NSEA's publication *The Voice* from 1998-2012 and then editor of the *NSEA-Retired Advocate* from 2006 to 2014. In several of those years Tom garnered NEA Retired first place and runner up awards.

Tom will be dearly missed as a colleague, a friend and as an NSEA-Retired member.



Tom Black
1935-2024

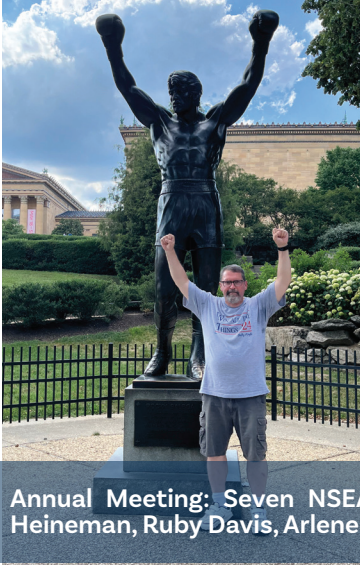


The **NSEA-Retired Fall Conference** will be held Oct. 17 at the Kearney Archway. This annual conference and will feature breakout sessions both in the morning and afternoon. Attendees will explore how artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are reshaping educational practices and delve into the potential benefits of AI in the classroom.

Special guest Nebraska Commissioner of Education Dr. Brian Maher will reflect on his first year at the helm of Nebraska public schools and his plan for the future of education in the state.

Members will take a tour of the Kearney Archway and learn about the rich history of the Oregon Trail, Mormon Trail, and California/'49-ers Trail which all converged at Fort Kearny.

Registration is available at www.nsea.org/retired. The event is free for all members and \$10 for guests. Registration and refreshments will begin at 8:30 a.m. **The deadline for registration is October 10.**



Annual Meeting: Seven NSEA-Retired members attended the annual meeting including: NSEA-Retired President John Heineman, Ruby Davis, Arlene Rea, Pat Etherton, Roger Rea, Dan Schiefelbein and Deb Gnuse.

NEA Retired Annual Meeting: A Memorable Gathering in Philadelphia

This summer, the National Education Association (NEA) Retired held its annual meeting in the vibrant city of Philadelphia, where delegates from across the nation convened to discuss vital issues and celebrate our shared commitment to education. The meeting was a resounding success, marked by inspiring speeches, spirited debates, and unforgettable experiences.

Keynote addresses from NEA President Becky Pringle, Vice President Princess Moss, and Secretary-Treasurer Noel Candelaria set the tone for the event. Each leader shared their vision for the future of education and the essential role of retired educators in shaping policy and advocacy efforts. Their insights resonated deeply with delegates, igniting passionate discussions on pressing topics affecting educators and students alike.

The meeting was not without its spirited debates, as Nebraska delegates passionately represented their state during discussions and posed critical questions to our national leaders. The exchanges were intense but constructive,

highlighting the importance of collaboration and dialogue within our organization. It was a powerful reminder that, even in retirement, our voices remain vital to the conversation about the future of education.

In addition to the business conducted, the generosity of the attendees shone through as over \$15,000 was raised for the NEA Political Action Committee (PAC). This amount was achieved through both silent and live auctions, showcasing the commitment of our members to support advocacy efforts that protect and promote the interests of educators and public education.

Beyond the formal agenda, delegates enjoyed the rich history and culture of Philadelphia. A highlight of the trip was a guided tour led by Roger Rea, who expertly showcased the city's historic landmarks and shared fascinating stories about its significance in American history. The camaraderie and shared experiences made the event not only informative but also a joyful reunion for many.

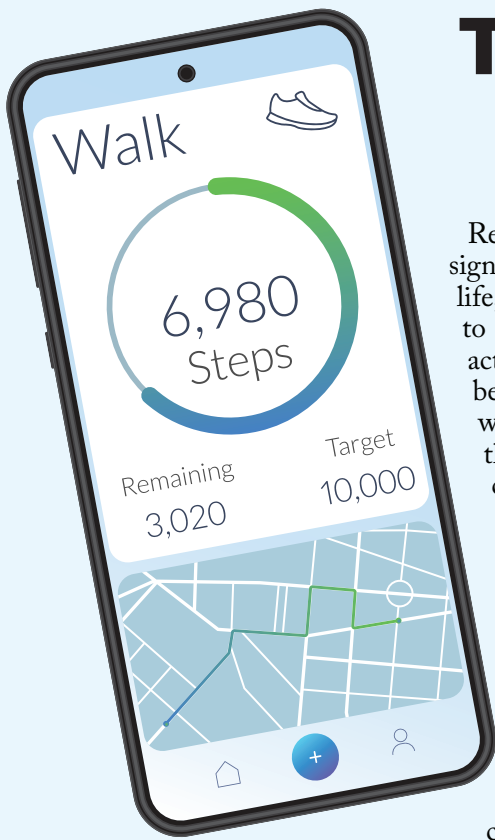
Overall, the NEA Retired Annual

Meeting in Philadelphia was a remarkable success. It provided a platform for meaningful discussions, raised significant funds for our advocacy efforts, and allowed delegates to reconnect with old friends while exploring the historic city. As we move forward, the passion and commitment displayed at this meeting will undoubtedly continue to inspire our work in support of education and the educators who shape our future.

Representative Assembly

Retired delegates are proud to highlight their contributions to the National Education Association (NEA) Representative Assembly (RA). NSEA-Retired delegate have left a lasting impact on the assembly, even in the face of unexpected challenges.

This year's RA was notably abbreviated, cut short by three days due to a strike between NEA and its staff union, NEASO. Despite the abbreviated schedule, Nebraska's caucus actively engaged in discussions and worked diligently to ensure that our members' voices were represented.



The Importance of Walking

Enhancing Health and Well-being

Article By: Linda Kenedy, M.A., EHA Wellness Program

Retirement marks a significant transition in life, offering the freedom to pursue interests and activities that may have been sidelined during working years. Among the various activities that can fill this newfound time, walking stands out as a simple yet highly effective way to enhance both physical and mental well-being. For retired individuals, incorporating regular walking into daily routines can bring about

numerous health benefits, contribute to a better quality of life, and foster a sense of community and purpose.

One of the most compelling reasons for retirees to embrace walking is its profound impact on physical health. As we age, maintaining mobility and preventing chronic diseases become increasingly important. Walking, a low-impact exercise, is particularly suited for older adults as it reduces the risk of injury while still providing significant cardiovascular benefits.

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Regular walking strengthens the heart and improves circulation, reducing the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. It helps in maintaining healthy cholesterol levels and managing weight, both of which are critical factors in cardiovascular health.
- **Bone and Joint Health:** Walking helps maintain bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures. It also keeps joints flexible and can alleviate symptoms of arthritis, which is common in older adults.
- **Muscle Strength and Balance:** As we age, muscle mass naturally decreases, leading to a higher risk of falls and related injuries. Walking helps build and maintain muscle strength, particularly in the legs and core, improving balance and stability.
- **Mental and Emotional Well-being:** Retirement can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, or depression, as the daily structure of work life falls away. Walking offers a powerful antidote to these challenges, providing both mental and emotional benefits.
- **Cognitive Function:** Studies have shown that regular physical activity, including walking, can slow cognitive decline and lower the risk of dementia. The increased blood flow to the brain during exercise helps improve memory, focus, and overall mental sharpness.

- **Mood Enhancement:** Walking stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood lifters, which can help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety. Additionally, spending time outdoors, especially in green spaces, has been linked to reduced stress and improved mental well-being.

- **Social Interaction:** Walking can also be a social activity. Joining a walking group or simply walking with a friend or family member can foster social connections, reducing feelings of loneliness and contributing to a sense of community and belonging.

For many retirees, the idea of starting a new exercise regimen can be daunting, especially if they've been inactive for a while. Walking, however, is accessible and requires no special equipment or training. It can be done almost anywhere, from neighborhood streets to local parks, making it an ideal entry point into a more active lifestyle.

- **Flexibility:** Walking can be easily adapted to an individual's fitness level. It can be as gentle or as vigorous as desired, making it a versatile option for people with varying health conditions or physical abilities.

- **Routine and Structure:** Establishing a daily walking routine can bring a sense of structure to the day, providing a purpose and a reason to get up and get moving. This routine can also create opportunities to explore new places, meet new people, and experience different aspects of the local environment.

In addition to the personal health benefits, walking is also environmentally friendly and cost-effective. It reduces reliance on vehicles, thereby decreasing carbon emissions and contributing to a cleaner environment. For retirees on a fixed income, walking is a cost-free activity that requires no gym membership or expensive equipment, making it an economical way to stay healthy and active.

Whether it's a brisk walk through the neighborhood, a leisurely stroll in a park, or a social outing with friends, walking offers endless opportunities to enrich life during retirement.

COMING SOON!

As a Retiree, you are still eligible for the EHA Wellness program if you are under 65 and insured by the EHA BCBS Medical Plan or the EHA BCBS (Direct Bill) Retiree Medical Plan. **Here is what is coming up for October: Pack a Snack**

Pack a Snack, the October challenge offered by EHA Wellness will focus on choosing healthy snacks that work for you. Daily emails will provide you with tips, healthy recipes, and videos to help you stretch safely. Just for signing up, you'll receive a set of Snap Pack reusable bags!

Check out all of the opportunities by logging into your account at www.ehawellness.org.

LEA-Retired Educators Celebrate and Network at HUDL

LEA-Retired members and recently retired teachers from Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) met for a celebration and networking opportunity on Aug. 8. The day kicked off with a one-hour tour of HUDL's offices in downtown Lincoln's Haymarket area. HUDL, a company that started in a University of Nebraska-Lincoln dorm room in 2006, now boasts a global presence, offering sports teams tools to capture, organize, and analyze game footage. With over 230,000 teams using HUDL's products across more than 40 sports, the expansive and dynamic work environment left attendees intrigued and impressed. Following the tour, attendees enjoyed a chance to reconnect and engage in discussions about future LEA-Retired events and activities, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among retired educators. The event was spearheaded by Lesa Christiancy and Shelley Clayburn.



Growing WCEA-Retired Through Engagement



The Wilber-Clatonia Education Association-Retired meets 4-5 times a year, usually within the Wilber-Clatonia school district thanks, in part, to a membership grant from the NSEA-Retired. Established in 2021, the WCEA-Retired continues to gain new members and welcomes pre-retired members as they retire, regardless of whether they were teachers, ESPs or administration.

Rotating times and days, the WCEA-Retired strive to engage members and potential members at coffee, for lunch or dinner, and with announcements of state events such as Spring and Fall conferences, Lobby Day, and with opportunities for participation throughout the year. Members have a small "meeting" at every event with comments from President Sarah Brown or from Vice-President Nancy Fulton on political concerns and/or news from the NEA/NSEA.

During the WCEA-Retired summer membership event, members enjoyed coffee or energy drinks, homemade apple fritters and fellowship in Ambition Coffee, located in the historic Wilber Hotel.



Legacy Educators Advocacy Development

NSEA-Retired members who wish to become more active and engaged in the Association are encouraged to attend this inaugural event. Attendees will receive detailed information on NSEA-Retired membership and leadership opportunities. Travel expenses, including mileage, hotel accommodations, and meals, will be covered. Further details will be communicated via email and at the NSEA-Retired Fall Conference in Kearney.



Medicare Insurance Seminars coming this fall!

Article By: Roger Rea, NSEA-Retired Vice President

Medicare is the core insurance for individuals over age 65 and those with disabilities. The coverage can be a bit daunting for those who are new to Medicare, so NSEA-Retired has partnered with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska to provide information seminars across the state to help answer questions members have about Medicare and its coverage.

This year you can either attend an in-person seminar at one of four locations across the state, or participate in a Zoom webinar. Both the in-person and zoom sessions will cover the same material. You will learn the basics of Medicare (how to sign up, when to sign up, and what Medicare covers); how to make the transition from retiree insurance to Medicare at age 65; information about Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit for Medicare; and the benefits offered by Educators' Medicare Supplement plan. Educators' Medicare Supplement is a supplement that is only available to EHA subscribers, NSEA-Retired members, and their respective eligible spouses.

The list of dates and times for the meetings. The same information will be

covered in each session, so you only need to register for one. A recorded version will be available for viewing in mid-December on the Educators Health Alliance (EHA) website at ehaplan.org/retiree-info.

Registration for the seminars or Zoom webinars is required. At the time this issue of the Advocate went to the printer, the registration details were not available. The registration link will be in a letter that will be sent to members by BCBSNE announcing the events, and will be available on the NSEA-Retired website, www.nsea.org/retired.

NSEA-Retired members as well as subscribers to an Educators Health Alliance (EHA) insurance plan and their spouses qualify for enrollment in Educators' Medicare Supplement. Enrollment in Educators' Medicare Supplement brings you specific benefits that are not available to the general public. Please know that our supplement is not available to the general public – only to our members, EHA subscribers, and their spouses. Plan to attend one of the seminars to get complete information.

Medicare open enrollment begins October 15!

October 15 to December 7 is a key time each year when all Medicare subscribers can switch their Medicare drug plan coverage (Medicare Part D coverage) without any penalty. It is also the time when insurance companies increase their sales pressure to promote their specific Part D products, and to encourage you to switch Medicare coverage. Don't fall for that scheme!

Once you enroll in Medicare, you are guaranteed coverage for the rest of your life. But, if you leave your current Medicare supplement provider, no insurance company is required to allow you to enroll in their supplemental insurance. But there is no penalty for dropping your current Part D drug plan and enrolling in a different plan. In fact, Medicare encourages you to check the pricing for plans that cover the drugs that you actually take every year. The list of drugs that you take can change from year to year, and those changes will affect what you pay for coverage.

Each year the Part D providers also can change their formularies (the list of drugs that they cover), the tiers the drugs are on (which determines the cost of the drugs), and the pharmacies that are given preferential pricing for the Part D plan. The same drugs filled by two different pharmacies may have substantially different out-of-pocket costs for you, the subscriber. Choosing a drug plan that is best for you is not intuitive! The lowest premium is not necessarily the cheapest plan; the highest premium is not necessarily the best coverage; the lowest deductible is not necessarily the best plan for you; the cost of a drug will not be the same at all pharmacies.

The only way to choose a plan that is right for you is to go to the Medicare website, www.medicare.gov, enter your ZIP code and the drugs that you actually use, and select five pharmacies that you can access. The website will return the results of plans that are available in Nebraska along with the total cost of the plans for the drugs that you actually use, and will allow you to compare drug pricing at up to five pharmacies for up to three drug plans. The deadline for changing Part D plans is December 7.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Nebraska In-Person Sessions

Morning sessions: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (check in at 9 a.m.)

Afternoon sessions: 1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. (check in at 1 p.m.)

Kearney	Monday, Oct. 28 Educational Service Unit 10 – Room B, (76 Plaza Boulevard, Kearney)
Lincoln	Monday, Nov. 4 Jack J. Huck Continuing Education Center – Rooms 303 and 304, (301 South 68th Street Place)
Norfolk	Thursday, Nov. 7 Northeast Community College – Lifelong Learning Center, Suites F and G, (701 East Benjamin Avenue)
Omaha	Monday, Nov. 11 Omaha Public Schools Teacher Admin. Center (TAC) Board Room, (3215 Cuming Street)

Webinars:

Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 6, at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 5 p.m.



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Make a Plan to Vote on November 5

From your local school board to the state legislature, the decisions made by elected officials and their appointees shape public education in Nebraska.

Make a Plan

To ensure that your voice is heard and your vote is counted, plan ahead. A well-thought-out plan includes understanding your polling location, researching the candidates and issues thoroughly and being aware of any required identification. Find a list of NSEA Recommended candidates for the 2024 General Election at www.nsea.org/2024General. The candidates listed here have earned the recommendation by NSEA members—your colleagues. Each candidate was interviewed by a panel of members about their positions on education issues. They deserve your vote.

Vote to Repeal LB1402

Using public funds to pay for private schools—like in LB1402—will mean cuts to public school programs. Our public schools serve 9 of every 10 children in Nebraska, and we must

prioritize fully staffing and funding our public schools. This November vote to REPEAL LB1402.

Remember Your ID

In 2023, Nebraska established voter identification requirements for elections. When voting early you'll need to write your driver's license or state ID number on the ballot return envelope or enclose a photocopy of acceptable form of ID. Acceptable IDs must have your name and photo. Valid photo IDs include:

- Nebraska driver's license/state ID
- U.S. passport
- Military ID
- Tribal ID
- Hospital, assisted-living facility, or nursing home record
- Nebraska political subdivision ID (state, county, city, school, etc.)
- Nebraska college or university ID
- Expired documents will be accepted. You can get a free state ID for voting from the DMV.

Find more information at www.sos.nebraska.gov/elections/voter-id