

The VOICE

Nebraska State Education Association • April 2025

YOUR VOICE, OUR STRENGTH



• Retention Bonuses & Paid FMLA Legislation

• Guinan Announces Retirement

• 2025 Delegate Assembly Information



Nebraska State Education Association
 605 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
 www.nsea.org
 402-475-7611 • 1-800-742-0047
Volume 78, No. 7
 ISSN Number: 1085-0783
 USPS Number: 000-369

Executive Director	Trish Guinan
Assoc. Exec. Director	Isau Metes
Dir. of Public Affairs, Communications	Cassie Ivy
Asst. Dir. of Visual Communications	Kristi Capek
Multimedia Communications Specialist	Kelsey Foley

NSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Tim Royers, Millard tim.royers@nsea.org
Vice President	Paul Schulte, Millard paul.schulte@nsea.org
Sec./Treas.	Renae Noble, Chadron noble635@gmail.com
NEA Director	Edward Ventura, Jr., Omaha venturaomaha@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 9 times yearly according to this schedule: 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 9 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 necessarily imply NSEA endorsement of either the product being advertised or the views expressed.

**A Great Public School
for Every Child.**



www.fb.com/nsea.org



[@nsea_org](https://twitter.com/nsea_org)



[@nsea_org](https://www.instagram.com/nsea_org)



[NSEAMEDIA](https://www.youtube.com/NSEAMEDIA)



www.linkedin.com/company/nsea



NSEA Summer Conference Announced

Save the Date: July 15-16

Plans are already well underway for the 2025 NSEA Summer Conference, scheduled for July 15-16 at Kearney High School. This two-day event promises to be a great opportunity for members to connect, learn and grow through a wide variety of sessions.

The conference will focus on four key areas that are essential to the ongoing development of educators and their ability to foster student success.

The areas include local association leader training, collective bargaining, social and racial justice and educator professional development.

Details about the conference, including registration information, session schedules and other important updates, will be shared as the event date approaches.

Members are encouraged to mark their calendars and take full advantage of this opportunity to engage with colleagues.



**Time to Make Plans for Summer Class!
Summer Coursework Options Found Inside**

Nebraska colleges and universities offer the necessary summer classes to enable teachers to enhance their skill and knowledge base, add endorsements and to advance on their school district's salary schedule.

What is the best method for determining which courses might best meet your needs? Start by reviewing the informational

ads from Nebraska colleges and universities in this issue of *The Voice*.

Nebraska colleges and universities were invited to submit advertising. Those who chose to advertise offer details about programming, as well as contact details and information.

Let your college or university of choice know that you read about their course offerings in *The Voice*!

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: Burnout and shortages are putting our schools at risk, but teacher retention grants in LB411 could provide the support needed to keep educators in the classroom. Members are sharing with lawmakers the significant impact this grant would have on their careers. Read the full story and see photos on pages 7-8.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIM ROYERS

“We have accomplished great things this school year, and we still have so much more we can get done. I look forward to seeing hundreds of our members at the Delegate Assembly at the end of this month, when we will be able to do some of the most important work of the Association.”



Our Membership, Our Strength

Last month, I wrote to you about our theme for this year's NSEA Delegate Assembly, “Your Voice, Our Strength,” and as an example focused on the power of our members' voices in the ongoing effort to make sure the Legislature produces a retirement bill that puts the needs of our educators first. But that theme is not just about political action, it is true for all elements of our association.

Just One Campaign

At the end of February, we wrapped up our “Just One” membership campaign in which we challenged all of our local associations to try and recruit at least one additional member in the second half of the school year. I am pleased to share that it was our second-most successful campaign ever!

April is the start of our early enrollment period, during which any potential member can complete the process to join in the 2025-26 school year. Our ability to grow our membership, and the capacity of our Association, largely rests on those one-on-one interactions with your colleagues. They want to hear from people they know and trust on why it is important to be a member. By reading *The Voice*, you are already engaged and aware of many of the great things we are doing at a state and local level to advocate for members and public education. Make sure your colleagues know about these efforts! Talk about the difference we can make when we are unified through our collective actions.

While we already use the phrase “Just One” to talk about our winter membership campaign, I think the

sentiment is true as well for early enrollment. If all of our engaged members talked to just one colleague who has yet to join, I am confident we will have an incredibly successful Early Enrollment effort.

New Opportunities

As you have those conversations, I would also encourage you to share that we are always looking for how we can improve as an organization. “Your Voice, Our Strength” can only be true if we are providing members with as many opportunities as possible to use your voice! We have exciting plans in the works to expand member opportunities to get involved at the local, state and even the national level. For example, next year we will be bringing back our committee that focuses on early career educators, NewGen. We think it's important to provide that space for our younger members to get together, collaborate and help us understand what it means to be a young educator in 2025.

Our Strength

We have accomplished great things this school year, and we still have so much more we can get done. I look forward to seeing hundreds of our members at the Delegate Assembly at the end of this month, when we will be able to do some of the most important work of the Association. The window may have passed to run as a delegate for this year, but I would strongly encourage any of you who have not attended the Delegate Assembly before to run as a delegate for the 2026 Delegate Assembly. For those of you who are attending this year, I look forward to seeing you and listening to you use your voice!



Turn to the NSEA Children's Fund

Every NSEA member knows of children in heartbreaking conditions. Whether the child is in need of season-appropriate clothing, new eyeglasses or a good meal, the Children's Fund is here to help. Educators often give of their own cash to help, knowing that they can't help every child. That's why NSEA created the Children's Fund in 1994. As an NSEA member, you can use the Children's Fund, and you'll find it quite simple: just call NSEA. No red tape, no forms needed.

Contributions are tax deductible—and it's important to note that every penny contributed goes to help children. NSEA picks up the administrative expenses.

The generosity of Children's Fund donors has helped to pay for glasses, warm clothing and medical and dental needs of children; provide assistance to a family whose home and belongings were destroyed by fire; and more.

Rain or shine, turn to the NSEA Children's Fund for help. A call to Karen Hunt at the NSEA (800-742-0047) is usually all that is needed. For more information, visit nsea.org/childrensfund.

Remembering Herb Schimek, Legendary Lobbyist and Educator Advocate

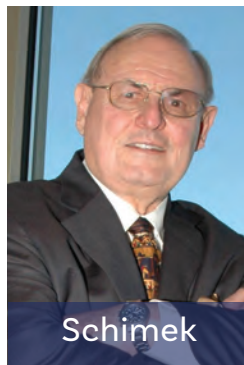
Whether you realize it or not, the NSEA we know today was profoundly shaped by Herbert "Herb" Schimek, a history teacher turned influential advocate for teachers. Schimek dedicated nearly 50 years to public education – 38 of those working for the association. He made a lasting impact as NSEA's first Director of Government Relations.

In the 1960s, Schimek played a pivotal role in shifting the NSEA from an administrator-dominated organization to one led by teachers themselves. His involvement in this transformation marked the beginning of a legacy that would forever change the landscape of education in Nebraska. In 1971, he joined NSEA's small staff as one of the first field staff directors, quickly becoming integral to the association's campaigns and election efforts.

Schimek was instrumental in the passage of Nebraska's first fair dismissal law in the 1970s, a statute that remains in effect today. This law ensures that teachers facing reduction-in-force or dismissal have the right to a hearing to determine whether their dismissal is justified.

Schimek's advocacy didn't stop there. He made it his mission to improve retirement benefits for Nebraska

teachers. His dedication was sparked by heartbreaking stories from members—stories like that of an elderly woman who had taught for 45 years and was struggling to survive on a mere \$20 monthly pension. Schimek's relentless efforts pushed the Legislature to make deliberate, gradual improvements to the state's teacher retirement system, ultimately benefiting generations of educators.



Throughout his career, Schimek was a tireless advocate for public office candidates who supported public education. He helped recruit hundreds of candidates, offering advice, assisting with yard signs, walking precincts and contributing to campaigns. His passion for the political process never waned.

Upon retiring from the NSEA in January 2009, Schimek continued his work as a lobbyist for the Omaha Westside School District, a position he held until January 2015.

Herb Schimek passed away on Feb. 25 at the age of 86. He is survived by his wife, former State Senator DiAnna Schimek; their two sons, Samuel and Saul; and Samuel's wife, Suzanne Grachek.

Herb's legacy lives on in the countless teachers whose lives were touched by his dedication and tireless advocacy.



Migrate to Better Banking!

Checking



Savings



eServices



Auto Loans



Mortgages



Credit Cards



**Do your banking wherever you are
with online banking and mobile signing!**



To learn more,
scan the QR code.



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

All loans subject to approval. Rates, terms and conditions vary based on creditworthiness, qualifications and collateral conditions.

NMLS# 416540
Federally insured by NCUA.

Executive Director Guinan Announces Retirement, Metes Appointed as Successor

The Nebraska State Education Association announced in March that Trish Guinan notified the Board of Directors of her intention to retire as NSEA Executive Director effective Dec. 31, 2025. Isau Metes, NSEA Associate Executive Director, has been named Executive Director effective Jan. 1, 2026.

Guinan has successfully served the Association and public education for nearly 50 years. She taught mathematics at the secondary and college levels and began her association work as a field representative for members in 1996, becoming Director of Member Rights in 2000, Director of Advocacy in 2012 and Executive Director in 2021.

While teaching, Guinan also served as the Fremont Public Schools Staff Development Coordinator. She also served as a building representative, negotiator, vice president and president of the Fremont Education Association, vice president of NSEA's Metro District Board of Directors and as a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly and the NSEA Delegate Assembly. Guinan earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics from Buena Vista College (Magna Cum Laude) and a Master of Arts for Teachers of Mathematics Degree from the University of Nebraska Omaha (Summa Cum Laude).

“On behalf of NSEA’s 26,000 members, I want to thank Trish for her many years of service to the Association and public education,” said Tim Royers, NSEA President. “Her contributions, leadership and the positive impact she has had on the Association is stellar and is very much appreciated.”

In announcing her decision to retire at the end of the year, Guinan said she wanted to ensure time for a smooth transition.

“Advocating for our members and our Nebraska public schools and students is an honor and privilege,” said Guinan. “My deep belief in servant leadership, proactive thinking and collaboration has guided me throughout my career. The support of the Board of Directors and our dedicated, talented NSEA members and staff have led to many rewarding accomplishments.”

Guinan said the NSEA Board of Directors' appointment of Metes as her successor ensures “continuity for our members” and means the Association “won’t miss a beat” in supporting members and advocating for Nebraska public schools.

“Isau and I have worked together on a daily basis for more than six years,” said

Guinan. “I have complete confidence in her leadership, and I am thrilled that the Board of Directors has selected her as my successor.”



Guinan



Metes

Metes, a U.S. Army veteran, was a Lincoln Public Schools teacher for 10 years before joining the NSEA as an Organizational Specialist in 2019. She added Assistant Director of Advocacy work to her duties in January 2020, and assumed the Teaching and Learning position duties in the fall of 2020. She was named Director of Advocacy in November 2021, and became the Associate Executive Director in July 2023. Metes earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in English Language and Literature from Wayne State College and a Master of Education Degree from Doane University.

“Isau is ideally prepared to assume the duties as our next Executive Director,” said Royers. “In addition to being knowledgeable and collaborative, Isau possesses high personal integrity and character. She will continue to well serve the Association in her new role.”

“I am grateful for the Board’s confidence in me, and I am honored to succeed Trish as NSEA’s Executive Director,” said Metes. “Trish has been and continues to be a mentor to me. Her leadership has put the Association on solid footing – and she has done so with humility, exceptional character and a servant mindset.”

Metes will be the 12th Executive Director in the Association’s 158-year history.



**MORE FACE TIME.
LESS WAIT TIME.**

Your EHA health benefits give you access to virtual visits with doctors and specialists.

So you can get the care you need — wherever you are, whenever you need it.

Visit NebraskaBlue.com/EHAPop to connect with a coach and schedule a screening today.

 BlueCross BlueShield Nebraska

Health benefits for EHA are provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.



EARN YOUR M.A. IN ENGLISH ONLINE

Experience Flexible Learning, Unwavering Support at UNK

As a language arts teacher, you know the power of writing, literature, and critical thinking. With UNK's **online Master of Arts in English**, you can deepen your expertise and advance your career – on your schedule.

- ✔ **Engaging, interactive courses** that feel like an in-person classroom
- ✔ **Flexible online format** designed for working professionals
- ✔ **Affordable tuition** with some of the lowest rates in the region
- ✔ **Choose coursework to fit your needs**, with four focus areas:
 - Literature
 - Creative Writing
 - Childhood and Youth Studies
 - Composition, Rhetoric, and Language



UNK
ONLINE

**Take the next step in your
career with a program
that blends flexibility and
connection!**

Visit: go.unk.edu/englishma

UNK UNIVERSITY
OF NEBRASKA
KEARNEY



Lee Perez



Ben Welsch



Jake Bogus

Nebraska Educators Have Earned It: Time to Reward Long Service with Pay

Across the country and in Nebraska, school districts are grappling with severe recruitment and retention challenges. The solution for many districts has been to offer signing bonuses and other incentives to attract new educators. While these recruitment bonuses are certainly part of the solution, standing alone they create a perception that the education system is only focused on attracting new talent rather than rewarding experienced teachers.

A Delicate Balance

Tri-Valley District President and Hastings Education Association President Ben Welsch explains that finding a balance of recruiting new teachers and retaining veteran educators can be difficult at the bargaining table.

“As a 20-year educator, I no longer receive longevity steps on my district’s salary schedule,” Welsch said. “Our local school district knew

we needed to help address teacher retention as well as recruitment. We agreed to adjust our salary schedule to front-load dollars for our new teachers in years one through three and increase our base salary to help with teacher recruitment. We also adjusted amounts on the final steps of our salary schedule for years 15-plus to help retain our more experienced teachers.”

Focus on Retention

Lincoln Education Association member Rebecca Mantonya said throughout her 30-year career as an EL teacher, she has witnessed firsthand both the incredible potential of our educators and the challenges that force many to leave the classroom.

“I have seen passionate, dedicated teachers walk away from a career they love simply because they cannot earn a livable wage,” she said. “These are individuals who bring heart, skill and invaluable experience to our schools.”

Omaha Education Association member and 2022 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Lee Perez said pay raises for all educators in his school district have shown those increases help keep educators in the classroom.

“From 2020 to 2024, Omaha Public Schools saw 1,779 teachers leave the profession with the average being 600 leaving in a three-year span. However, in 2024 significant pay raises were given and the average dropped from 600 teachers leaving to just under 130. It proves the point that paying teachers more and providing bonuses retains teachers long term,” Perez said. “While thank yous and teacher appreciation days are nice, they do not pay for a mortgage, food, utilities or a car payment.”

A Tiered Approach

State lawmakers have made strides in helping early educators by establishing the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act, which provides

1-6 Years

Educators in the first six years of their career would automatically receive \$2,500 annually.

7-15 Years

Educators would receive \$3,000 annually for educators in years seven to 15.

16+ Years

Educators from year 16 and beyond would receive \$4,000 annually.

\$2,500 retention grants to teachers in their second, fourth and sixth year of teaching. The issue is that these grants only focus on early educators, and they are only available on a first-come, first-served basis. Furthermore, NSEA heard from many educators who faced challenges during the online application process; some were incorrectly told they were ineligible due to code errors, while others struggled to submit their applications due to other problems with the online process. The common frustration was having to apply at all.

“If the goal is to incentivize teachers to stay in the profession, why were these obstacles created to access the promised incentive?” asked NSEA President Tim Royers.

State Sen. George Dungan of Lincoln is working with NSEA to amend the Nebraska Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act through LB411 to include veteran educators in a tiered approach and to simplify access.

The measure seeks to overhaul retention incentives with yearly grants that grow with an educator’s career: \$2,500 annually for the first six years, \$3,000 for years seven through 15 and \$4,000 from year 16 onward. The measure also proposes that the Nebraska Department of Education automatically administer these grants to school districts, streamlining the process and ensuring broader participation.

Eighth grade U.S. History teacher and Lincoln Education Association member Jake Bogus called the approach a win-win.

“If you provide financial incentives to retain teachers, it will also help with recruitment. With more teachers potentially entering and coming back to the field, more competition for teaching jobs will follow and with that often comes the best teachers,” Bogus explained.

Veteran Teachers

LB411 also provides high-need retention grants. Teachers who obtain endorsements in special education, math, science, technology, or dual-credit courses and commit to teaching these subjects in Nebraska for at least one year would be eligible

NSEA Priorities for 2025

- 1. Improve Working Conditions:** Ensure teachers have the resources, planning time, and administrative support necessary to create positive learning environments. Address burnout by reducing non-teaching duties and expanding support services.
- 2. Provide Paid Family Medical Leave:** Establish a program that provides every Nebraska educator with six weeks of paid FMLA leave.
- 3. Revise State Aid to Education Formula (TEEOSA):** Convene experts and stakeholders to propose substantive changes to ensure equitable and sustainable funding for public education across Nebraska.
- 4. Increase Teacher Salaries and Retention Support:** Advocate for retention grants for veteran educators. Simplify access to existing retention and recruitment grants for early-career educators by making them automatic, requiring no additional paperwork, to attract and retain top talent.
- 5. Strengthen Certification Pathways:** Ensure all student teachers in Nebraska receive compensation for their time. Develop alternative pathways for gaining initial certification through district programs and training.
- 6. Enhance Special Education Services:** Secure additional special education funding, hire paraprofessionals, provide training, and acquire assistive technology to address growing student needs.
- 7. Strengthen Early Childhood Education:** Expand access to early learning programs to ensure all children, regardless of background, are prepared for school.
- 8. Support Postsecondary Educators:** Address issues of low pay, job insecurity, and limited professional development opportunities to maintain high-quality instruction in colleges and universities.
- 9. Expand External Behavior Supports:** Advocate for increased state funding for critical programs that operate outside of schools but are vital to supporting student needs.
- 10. Protect the Diversity of Educators and Students:** Support equitable hiring, cultural competency, and inclusive policies to ensure all educators and students feel valued and empowered. In addition, build upon existing diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

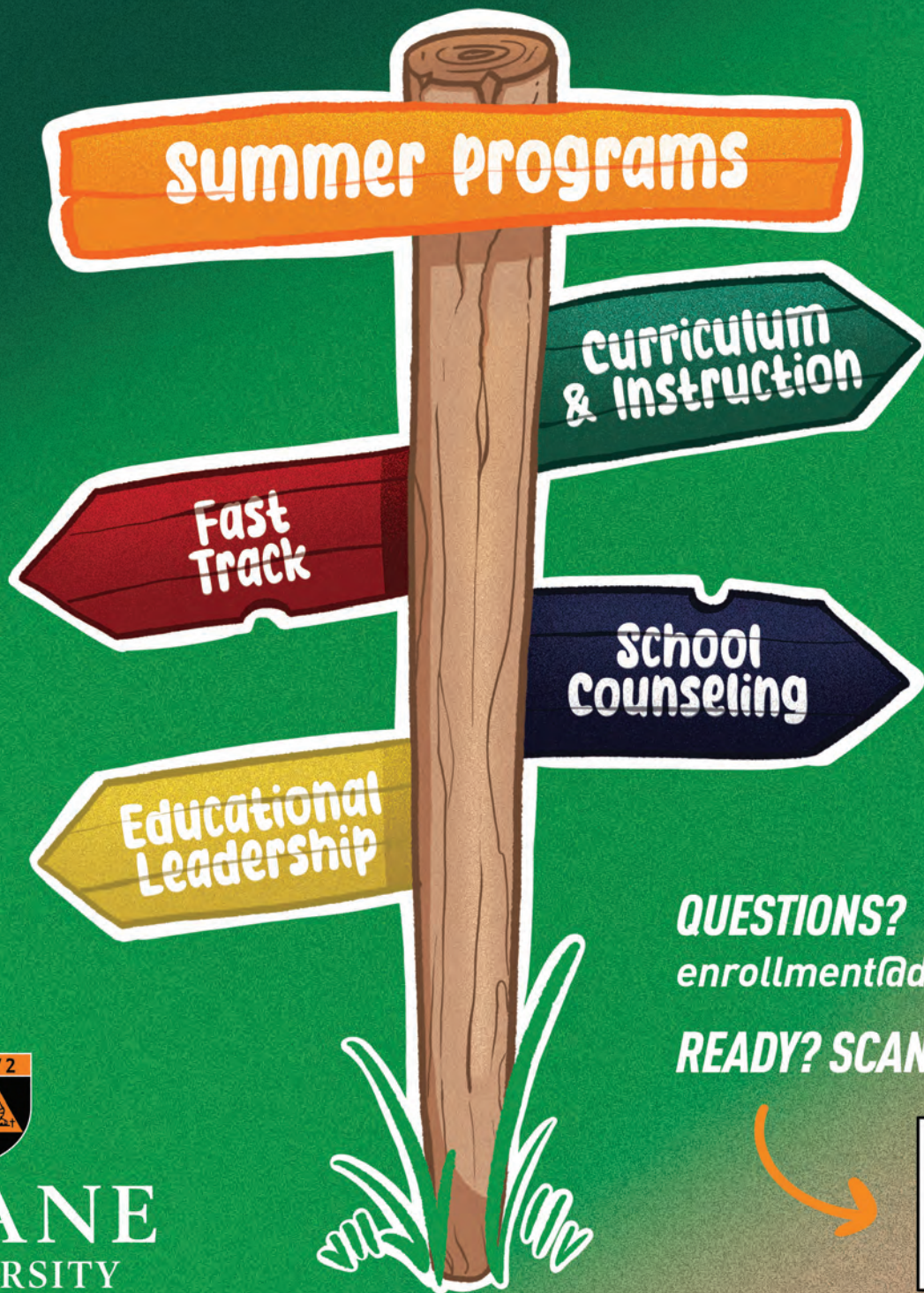
for a one-time \$5,000 “high-need retention grant.”

LB411 is one of several initiatives that addresses the concerns and priorities of educators statewide, based on a fall 2024 NSEA survey of nearly 10,000 teachers. The survey revealed that veteran educators feel overlooked. While many programs focus on attracting and retaining new and young teachers, there is little recognition for veteran teachers who have dedicated decades to Nebraska students. This is crucial, as experienced teachers play a key role in shaping school culture, mentoring new educators and often serve as pillars of stability within their communities.

“Veteran teachers are not just educators; they are mentors who guide new teachers, share effective strategies and create a nurturing learning environment. Their continued presence builds stability, ensuring that students receive the high-quality instruction they deserve,” Mantonya said. “Without such support, our schools risk losing the very fabric that sustains excellence in education. LB411 is an investment in Nebraska’s future. It is a sustainable strategy to reduce turnover, cut the costs associated with recruiting and training new teachers and maintain a robust educational system that prepares our youth for the challenges of tomorrow.”

Choose Your Own Adventure

Classes all summer long starting in May.



QUESTIONS?
enrollment@doane.edu

READY? SCAN THE QR



DOANE
UNIVERSITY

LEGISLATURE

Protecting Public Education in Nebraska Members lend their voices to advocate for the future of education

In early March, NSEA-sponsored bill LB440 was heard in the Nebraska Legislature's Education Committee. LB440 aims to provide six weeks of paid FMLA for all Nebraska teachers alleviating financial burdens during critical life events. The paid leave would be funded through a modest 0.35% payroll fee matched by district contributions.

More than 20 NSEA members testified to support LB440 and LB411 which addresses critical issues in education. (See group photo, page 13).

These initiatives reflect Nebraska educators' concerns and priorities, as identified through an NSEA survey of nearly 10,000 teachers.

"We've brought forward several ideas in this legislative session, but none of them have generated the reaction from teachers like this one [LB440]," Royers testified. "I've had teachers in tears just knowing that the bill was even proposed."

Senator Ashlei Spivey, who represents Legislative District

13 in Omaha, designated LB440 as her personal priority bill. While a priority designation guarantees debate on a bill, one major hurdle remains – the bill must first be voted out of the Education Committee and onto the floor of the Legislature for full consideration.



Support for Paraeducator Pay: Papillion La Vista Education Association member Carrie George testified in support of retention bonuses for paraeducators working more than 28 hours a week.



Support for Paraeducator Pay: Norris Education Association member Jennifer Faz testified in support of LB524 to recognize paraeducators for their vital role in public education.

Retirement Advocacy Spotlight

LB645, introduced by Sen. Beau Ballard of Lincoln at the request of Gov. Jim Pillen, originally proposed eliminating the state's 2% contribution to the statewide school employees' retirement plan. However, after hearing from thousands of educators, as well as discussions between Sen. Ballard, Gov. Pillen and NSEA's Government Relations team, AM248 was introduced to revise LB645.

"I've been a member of the legislature for 11 years, and I'm not sure that there's probably a handful of issues that I can think about where I got as much feedback from Nebraska



Support for Paraeducator Pay: Lincoln Education Association member Nicole Lopez-Bettendorf testified in support of LB524 to authorize paraeducator grants under the Nebraska Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act.

citizens as I did on this measure. Hundreds would probably not be the right allocation in terms of emails, it was probably closer to thousands of emails that I received all across the state,” Sen. Danielle Conrad said during the hearing. “I truly believe, but for the advocacy of citizens speaking out and engaging, we wouldn’t see amendments like the one that was filed here to try and make this bad bill somewhat more palatable or move towards a kind of win-win situation.”

The amendment adjusts both the state’s contributions and employee retirement contributions based on the funding status of the plan. If adopted, beginning Jan. 1, 2026, employee contributions will adjust based on the fund’s actuarial funded ratio: if the fund is less than 96% funded, employees will continue contributing 9.78%, but if it is 96% or higher funded, employee contributions will decrease to 7.28%. Under the new proposal, school districts would continue contributing 9.88% of compensation.

The state’s transfers to the School Retirement Fund would also be adjusted. Beginning July 1, 2025, these state transfers would depend on the fund’s actuarial status: if the fund is less than 96% funded, the state will continue contributing 2%; if it is between 96% and 100% funded, the contribution will decrease to 0.7%; and if it exceeds 100%, no state transfer

will be required.

These changes have several implications. Employee contributions will decrease if the plan maintains a healthy financial status, employers will continue supporting employee contributions and the state’s obligations will be linked to the retirement fund’s financial status, incentivizing stable long-term funding. NSEA President Tim Royers testified in the neutral capacity on AM248.

“I think the prime reason we’re here in a neutral capacity is because in my mind the fact that there was a willingness to backtrack—even if I still think we have steps to go—should be honored because unfortunately that’s not the case in every instance, and I think that that’s an important thing to recognize,” Royers said.

The State of Nebraska is facing a \$432 million budget shortfall, and Governor Pillen and Senator Ballard originally sought to balance the budget by eliminating the state’s contribution to school employees’ pensions. The strong advocacy and thousands of emails and phone calls to state senators have had a resounding positive impact. By staying engaged and voicing support for policies that protect retirement security, Nebraska educators can continue to ensure a stable financial future for themselves and future



Protect the Diversity of Educators and Students: Omaha Education Association member and NEA Director Edward Ventura Jr. testified in opposition of LB552.

generations.

“I know that Nebraskans and Americans feel very dismayed about the state of our politics today but whenever I’m talking to community groups, I point to citizen engagement on this issue as exhibit A and making a positive difference,” said Senator Conrad. “The emails, the phone calls, the in-person visits, the texts, the letters to the editor, speaking out online. But for teachers organizing and advocating, we wouldn’t see the administration and Senator Ballard backtracking as they are with the filing of this amendment. I want to say thank you to all the citizens who took time to share their heart and the personal impacts that dangerous measures like this have, particularly when they aren’t carefully curated and orchestrated with all stakeholders.”

What Members Want

NSEA has worked closely with state senators to introduce a legislative package to strengthen public education by addressing teacher retention, compensation and working conditions. These initiatives reflect the concerns and priorities of educators across the state, as identified through an NSEA survey of nearly 10,000 teachers.

The survey results highlighted key challenges facing Nebraska educators, including concerns about workplace conditions, compensation, and the sustainability of their profession. Only a small percentage of respondents felt that the Legislature considers their perspectives when crafting education policy, and many expressed uncertainties about remaining in the profession without meaningful changes. These insights guided NSEA’s legislative agenda (see page 8) for 2025. NSEA has collaborated with lawmakers to introduce key bills that will support educators and enhance Nebraska’s public education system, including:

- **Paid Family and Medical Leave (LB440 – Sen. Ashlei Spivey):** Establishes a 0.35% payroll tax on teachers, matched by local districts, to provide six weeks of paid leave, ensuring teachers have the support they need for personal and family health matters.
- **Paraeducator Retention Bonuses (LB524 – Sen.**



Support for Paraeducator Pay: Millard Education Association member and paraprofessional Mary Reynold-East testified in support of LB524 before the Education Committee.



Pay Student Teachers: Aspiring educator and current paraeducator Penny Larson at Papillion La Vista Community Schools testified in support of the Student Teacher Compensation Act (LB523).

Margo Juarez): Provides \$1,000 retention bonuses for paraeducators working at least 28 hours per week, recognizing their critical role in schools.

- **Student Teacher Stipends (LB523 – Sen. Margo Juarez):** Creates a statewide stipend program awarding student teachers \$4,000 per semester, easing the financial burden of entering the profession.
- **Early Childhood Education Funding (LB161 – Sen. Margo Juarez):** Increases state funding for early childhood education, ensuring equitable support for Nebraska’s youngest learners.
- **Teacher Supply Reimbursement (LB282 – Sen. Jason Prokop):** Provides up to \$300 in reimbursements for classroom supplies, alleviating the personal financial burden on teachers.
- **Retention Grants (LB411 – Sen. George Dungan):** Establishes baseline retention grants starting at \$2,500 for early-career teachers and increasing to \$4,000 for those with 16+ years of service, incentivizing experienced educators to stay in the classroom.
- **Planning Time and Special Education Support (LB598 – Sen. Wendy DeBoer):** Increases state funding for schools providing teachers with at least 60 minutes of daily planning time and enhances funding for special education programs and Section 504 plan support.
- **Substitute Coverage for Special Education Teachers (LB589 – Sen. Danielle Conrad):** Allows districts to be reimbursed for substitute teachers when special education teachers take designated paperwork days, improving compliance and reducing burnout.

Voices in Education

See photos of members and other important voices in education who have testified during this legislative session on page 13.



Your Voice, Our Strength: More than 20 educators attended the Education Committee's legislative hearings in March to testify on LB440 and LB411, stressing the importance of paid family leave and teacher retention grants. Watch testimony on the NSEA YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@NSEAMedia.



Oppose Private School Vouchers: Norfolk Education Association member Alecia Amezcua and Northeast Community College student Ariana Amezcua testified in opposition to LB624, which gives public funds to private schools.



Support for Higher Education: University of Nebraska at Kearney Education Association member Jami Holbein-Swanson testified in opposition of LB551, which would prohibit tenure at certain postsecondary educational institutions.



Oppose Private School Vouchers: NSEA-Retired member Rita Bennett testified in opposition to LB633, which is yet another private school voucher bill that would violate the state constitution.



Oppose Private School Vouchers: NSEA-Retired President John Heineman testified in opposition to LB624, which mirrors the controversial and voter-repealed LB1402 in 2024.

Let's talk **FULLY ONLINE**

Graduate Degrees

Business

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Business, Marketing, IT Education (grades 6-12)
- Career & Technical Education (Secondary)
- Digital Marketing
- Healthcare Management

Education

- Early Childhood Special Education
- Educational Administration
- History Education (grades 7-12)
- General Education (Elementary)
- Language Arts (Elementary)
- Mathematics (Elementary & Secondary)
- Physical Education (Elementary & Secondary)
- Reading Specialist (PreK-12)
- Social Science (Elementary & Secondary)


Counseling

- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- School Counseling

Organizational Management

- Human Services Management
- Natural Resources Management
- Sports Management

**Advance your
with CSC's affordable
and flexible online
graduate programs**



career
affordable
online
programs



**CHADRON
STATE COLLEGE**

Let's talk
YOUR OPTIONS

Sessions start:
2025 Summer Dates

May 19 (4-week session)

June 16 (8-week session)

2025 Fall Dates

August 18 (16 or 8-week session)

October 20 (8-week session)

"My experience in the MBA program at CSC was truly transformative. The knowledgeable instructors provided real-world examples that enriched our learning, and their willingness to share their expertise was invaluable. The program taught me how to manage multiple responsibilities effectively, and my internships allowed me to apply my skills in meaningful ways. I was able to secure funding for a dog park in my town and help establish an online presence for a non-profit animal welfare group, enabling them to receive donations. CSC equipped me with the tools to make a significant impact in my community."

- Heather

Get Started
Apply Today



csc.edu



1-800-CHADRON



graduateadmissions@csc.edu

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY: Your Voice, Our Strength



TENTATIVE ORDER OF BUSINESS
NSEA President Tim Royers, Lincoln, Presiding
Grand Ballroom • Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

All times listed are Central Time.

Friday, April 25: Registration, Vendors and Special Meetings (5 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.)

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. — EMAC, NSEA-Retired, Higher Ed, ESP, and New Delegates Sessions

6:15 p.m. — Audit Committee

7 p.m. — Call to Order

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Report of Credentials Committee
- Adoption of Standing/Procedural Rules
- Adoption of Order of Business
- State of the Association Annual Report: Trish Guinan, Executive Director
- Political Update
- President's Report: Tim Royers, NSEA President
- Adjournment
- Reception: Hotel Atrium

Parliamentarian Ryan Foor

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

6:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. — Breakfast: Cornhusker Marriott Lower Lobby

7:30 a.m. — Elections Committee

8:30 a.m. — Call to Order

- Legislative Update
- Credentials Committee Report
- Candidates' Remarks (NSEA Sec/Treas, NEA Director and ESP At-Large)
- Report and Debate on Proposed Bylaws Amendments
- Voting on Candidates and Bylaws
- Keynote: Princess Moss, NEA Vice President
- Horace Mann Awards Luncheon
- Report of the Auditing Review Committee
- Budget Presentation for 2025-2026
- Elections Committee Report (when available)
- Report and Actions on Resolutions
- Committee Reports to the Assembly
- Action on New Business Items
- Action on the Dues Proposal for 2025-2026
- Adjournment

2025-26 Dues Recommendation

NSEA Active, Certificated Full-Time Staff Dues Summary

The NSEA Budget Committee has recommended a \$2 dues increase for 2025-26. NSEA dues and assessments for the current year and the proposal for next year are summarized below:

	2024-25	2025-26	Change	%
General Fund Dues	\$412	\$414	\$2	.48%
Ballot Contingency Fund	\$10	\$10	\$0	0%
State PAC	\$15	\$15	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$437	\$439	\$2	.46%

Dues for Educational Support Professionals

The 2001 Delegate Assembly approved a separate dues structure for Educational Support Professionals (ESP). The ESP dues structure is motivated by an effort to establish equity between the wide range of ESP salaries, while taking into consideration the fact that beginning teachers or teachers in lower-paid school districts pay full NSEA dues. In this model, the ESP member's total base salary, regardless of the hours or number of days worked, establishes the state dues for that member. The NSEA Board of Directors voted to increase ESP dues for 2025-26. ESP dues are summarized below:

ESP Dues Tier	NSEA Dues	% of teacher dues
Active ESP (Salary of \$37,000+)	\$434.00	98.9%
Active ESP (\$29,600 to \$36,999)	\$390.60	90%
Active ESP (\$22,200 to \$29,599)	\$303.80	70%
Active ESP (\$14,800 to \$22,199)	\$217.00	50%
Active ESP (\$7,400 to \$14,799)	\$130.20	30%
Active ESP (\$7,399 or less)	\$43.40	10%

Dues for Certificated Staff

The NSEA Board of Directors has recommended the following annual fee structure for association membership by certificated staff. Delegates to the NSEA Delegate Assembly on April 26 will consider and act on this proposal. For the 2025-26 association year, the NSEA Board of Directors recommends the dues for certificated classes of NSEA membership as outlined below:

Certificated Class	Dues
Active	\$439.00
Half-Time Active	\$219.50
Substitute	\$109.25

State Dues

All amounts listed are for state dues only. NEA dues increase for 2025-26 have been proposed as a \$6 increase.

As noted, the 2025-26 dues amount for full-time, active members of NSEA includes a voluntary contribution of \$15 to NSEA's Political Action Fund and \$7.50 for half-time active members and active substitute members. This contribution is refundable upon receipt of a written, individually composed request.

A reminder of the opportunity to seek a refund is published in the January issue of the NSEA *The Voice*.



NSEA Dues History

Budget Year	Dues	Increase
2025-26	\$439	.48%
2024-25	\$437	1.16%
2023-24	\$432	1.41%
2022-23	\$426	1.19%
2021-22	\$421	1.20%
2020-21	\$416	0.73%
2019-20	\$413	1.47%
2018-19	\$407	0.25%
2017-18	\$406	1.75%
2016-17	\$399	3.10%
2015-16	\$387	0.78%
2014-15	\$384	1.05%
2013-14	\$380	1.06%
2012-13	\$376	1.08%

2025-26 Proposed Bylaws Revisions

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1

■ Article II: Officers

SECTION 4. Any Active member is eligible to hold NSEA office of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer or NEA Director. No fewer than 90 days prior to the regular Delegate Assembly at which elections shall occur, NSEA shall notify Active members of vacancies to be filled by publishing a notice in NSEA's magazine, *The Voice*.

Nominations for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and NEA Director must be filed in writing with the NSEA Executive Director no later than February 15 of the year in which the election is to take place. All candidates who file during the nominations window will be provided the NSEA Elections Guidelines. Any candidate who wishes to have campaign information included in the Delegate Assembly digital packet must submit the information to the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director no fewer than **45 21 days** prior to Delegate Assembly. To have their name placed on the ballot, the candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, or NEA Director must be nominated by February 15.

If a vacancy occurs after February 15, **or if no nominations are submitted prior to the filing deadline**, candidates for General Officer positions must be nominated from the floor during the Delegate Assembly to have their names placed on the ballot.

The number of votes cast for each nominee for each office shall be announced to the Delegate Assembly by the Chair of the Elections Committee, and the candidate receiving a majority of votes cast shall be elected. Should no candidate receive a majority vote in the first ballot, a run-off election shall be held immediately between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes.

■ Article V: Delegate Assembly

SECTION 6. The Delegate Assembly shall elect the General Officers of NSEA and the at-large representative of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), the Higher Education Academy and the Education Support Professionals (ESPs). All elections shall be by ballot except when there is only one candidate for the position. In this case, the Chair shall declare such candidate elected.

Nominations for General Officers and the at-large Board representative positions must be filed in writing with the NSEA Executive Director no later than February 15 of the year in which the election is to take place. All candidates who file during the nominations window will be provided the NSEA Election Guidelines. Any candidate who wishes to have campaign information included in the Delegate Assembly digital packet must submit the information to the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director no fewer than **45 21 days** prior to Delegate Assembly. To have their name placed on the ballot, the candidates for General Officers and the at-large Board representatives must be nominated by February 15.

If a vacancy occurs after February 15, **or if no nominations are submitted prior to the filing deadline**, candidates for General Officers and at-large Board representative positions must be nominated from the floor during the Delegate Assembly to have their name placed on the ballot.

Proposed Bylaws Rationale

***Rationale:** Forty-five (45) days prior to Delegate Assembly is six-and-a-half weeks prior; many people are still debating whether they are going to run for office forty-five (45) days in advance. Historically, many people have missed this deadline, so they have no option to have their campaign information submitted. Additionally, the twenty-one (21) day deadline will match the deadline for New Business Item (NBI) submission.*

Sections 4 and 6 wording change for vacancy and no submission: Currently, NSEA's bylaws allow for floor nominations if there is a vacancy in any candidate position. Practice has been to include floor nominations for any position that has no names submitted for elections. By changing the wording, all vacancies, including when there is no name on the election ballot, will have the opportunity to nominate candidates from the floor.

Find Article II and Article V on pages 4 and 6 in the **2024-25 Bylaws & Resolutions** booklet or scan the QR code below:





TRISH GUINAN

Message from the Executive Director

As this column is being written, we are getting through the “madness” of March – and continuing the activities whirlwind that this time of year brings. From finishing out the winter season with state athletic and speech tournaments, to beginning new spring seasons, it’s a busy time to keep up with. Especially as extracurricular pursuits are a large focus for many participants and their communities outside of the classroom. And this year has not been any different.

Our public schools of all sizes have celebrated large achievements this entire school year, let alone in the past few weeks. Even as this edition is being mailed out, students are making their rounds at State Speech. And District Music contests will quickly be coming up later in April, as spring sports have taken off. All in time for end-of-the-year celebrations and events to take place.

Dreams and Goals

It’s exciting to see the students—and our members—in Nebraska public schools excel with their dreams and goals. And it’s heartwarming to see our communities rally behind these bonding moments.

However, I want to note that these experiences, and the support behind them, also provide classroom gains. I recently came across some statistics from data collector Gitnux stating:

- Extracurricular activities can reduce the likelihood of dropping out by 14%, while students involved in extracurricular activities are 15% more likely to graduate high school.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities is associated with an 11% increase in overall academic achievement.
- Extracurricular participation is

linked to an 18% improvement in overall mental health.

And these are just a few of the benefits that were mentioned. At the end of the day, extracurricular activities of all varieties often provide a large victory in many ways.

Lifelong Lessons

The lessons that youth learn by participating in extracurricular activities will stay with them long after the awards have been put away and the praise quiets down. At the time, participating and coaching may be about wins and losses, but those involved in these various activities are learning far more than that. Valuable life lessons in time management, communication, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, perseverance, sportsmanship, responsibility, stress management and more are all part of the game plan’s rewards. And as a retired high school volleyball and girls basketball coach, I can tell you that seeing a youth grow into a more mature person is possibly the most rewarding honor you will receive. Coaching will always be near and dear to my heart.

Thank You

While we often focus here at the NSEA on the political side to benefit our educators, please know that we are also cheering for you in all aspects that make up our public school system. We appreciate the extra time you put in to serve not only as a teacher, but as a mentor in other needed areas and activities. The positive influence you provide is unmeasurable. So, to each of our members who are part of teaching outside of the classroom, congratulations. Enjoy the wins – big and small. We are proud to have you part of our Nebraska State Education Association team.

“
We appreciate the extra time you put in to serve not only as a teacher, but as a mentor in other needed areas and activities. The positive influence you provide is unmeasurable. So, to each of our members who are part of teaching outside of the classroom, congratulations.

”

Graduate degrees at a

PRICE YOU CAN AFFORD

Wayne State College offers several online programs for additional certification, as well as professional development options for continuing education. Wayne State's education master's degrees are nationally ranked and continually recognized for incredible value, successful graduates, and innovative learning.

The endorsements below can be incorporated into a master's degree.

- **High Ability Education K-12** (endorsement only)
(new cohort starts June 3, 2024)
- **Early Childhood Education PK-3**
(must be Elementary Education certified)
- **English as a Second Language (ESL)** PK-12
- **Information Technology** PK-12
- **Reading Specialist** PK-12
- **School Administration** PK-8, 7-12, PK-12
- **Special Education** K-6, 7-12, K-12
- **Special Education Supervisor**
(must be SPD certified)



Top 50 in the U.S.

Best Online Master's Degree
in Special Education 2025



No. 9 in the U.S.

Most Affordable Online
Master's Degree 2025



No. 1 in Nebraska

No. 6 in the U.S. Best Master's
Degree in School Administration
2025

Apply today!



Visit www.wsc.edu/mse to learn more about our MSE programs.



402-375-7389



jegriff1@wsc.edu

For professional development options, visit www.wsc.edu/continuing-education

One degree can make a difference.



Our programs are affordable, convenient, and accredited.

ONLINE CLASSES START SUMMER AND FALL 2025

Master of Science in Education: School Administration (Online)

The online master's degree in school administration is designed to prepare you for a career in an administrative position, such as principal, director, department head, or supervisor, and may include an extra focus area in Athletic Administration or Special Education Supervision. If you already have an MSE, you may be eligible to add this as an endorsement to your existing degree.

Master of Science in Education: Special Education (Online)

The master's degree in special education is designed to help professionals and districts meet the needs of students with exceptionalities and their families. This program also offers options for those with a bachelor's degree to earn certification or add an endorsement to their existing degree.

Other Online MSE Options:

We offer several fully online emphasis areas in our Curriculum and Instruction-Instructional Leadership program. They include Business Education, Elementary Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Skilled and Technical Sciences Education, Mathematics Education, Music Education, and Social Science Education.

MSE Community of Learning (hybrid, one Saturday per month and online)

Take your teaching to the next level through this unique, community-focused program. Spend five Saturdays per semester collaborating and learning with others while driving your own professional development to directly impact your students. ***Two-year cohort begins this fall in South Sioux City. For information: www.wsc.edu/mse-community-learning.***

We offer a variety of graduate, content-specific courses that will qualify you to teach dual credit. Please contact us for more information.

Apply today!



Visit **www.wsc.edu/mse** to learn more about our MSE programs.



402-375-7389



jeff1@wsc.edu



LEAD: Engaging Retired Educators Across Nebraska

Retired educators build a legacy of collaboration and lifelong learning

The Legacy Educators Advocacy Development (LEAD) Conference, proudly sponsored by the Nebraska State Education Association-Retired and generously funded by an NEA Grant, took place this March. The only conference of its kind in the nation brought together 30 retired educators from all walks of life for an inspiring day filled with learning, connection and collaboration.

The day began with a warm welcome by John Heineman, president of NSEA-Retired, who kicked off the event with an engaging icebreaker session to help everyone explore their leadership style. The atmosphere was lively, setting the tone for a day full of meaningful exchanges.

Throughout the day, attendees had the chance to participate in insightful sessions led by experts in their fields. NSEA Assistant Director of Visual Communication and Digital Engagement Kristi Capek explored the world of social media, while NSEA organizational specialists Matt Pittman and Kristen Sedlacek shared valuable information on NEA Member Benefits. Kristen and NSEA Organization Specialist Mike Wiesen also led an energizing session on recruiting and organizing retired members, providing practical tips and new ideas for fostering community.

A highlight of the day was the Board Member Roundtable discussion, in which NSEA-Retired officers and board

members facilitated an open conversation about the future of education and the vital role that retired educators continue to play. This was followed by an engaging session on NSEA-Retired Committee Charges and Meetings, offering opportunities for deeper involvement in ongoing efforts.

The day wrapped up with closing remarks from John Heineman, followed by a chance for attendees to observe the NSEA-Retired Board Meeting, in which real-time decisions were made that directly impact the future of the association and its members.

The LEAD conference was more than just an event – it was a celebration of the wisdom, experience and dedication that retired educators bring to the table. The carefully crafted agenda provided a wealth of knowledge, while the networking opportunities allowed for authentic connections and the sharing of experiences. It was an empowering and encouraging experience for all who attended, reinforcing the continued importance of staying engaged and active in the field of education.

This conference is a shining example of how retired educators can continue to make a meaningful impact, fostering collaboration, advocacy and lifelong learning within the education community.

Don't Forget to Register for the NSEA-Retired Spring Conference

This year, NSEA-Retired members will gather at the renowned Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum in Ashland for the Spring Conference. The museum provides a fascinating and immersive experience, preserving and showcasing a collection of historic aircraft, missiles and space

vehicles. NSEA-Retired members will be able to explore the history of aerospace technology and its significant role in both military and space exploration.

This year's NSEA-Retired Spring Conference is scheduled for April 24. The event is free for all NSEA-Retired members, and guests are

welcome to attend for just \$10. Don't miss out on the opportunity to connect with fellow retirees, learn from insightful speakers and immerse yourself in the history and innovation showcased at the SAC Museum. To register, visit nsea.org/retired under Calendars, Events & Registrations.



State Literacy Project and NDE Partnership Empower School Leadership for Literacy Success

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has secured a \$55 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education as part of its Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) program. This funding, marking the largest federal discretionary award in the NDE's history, will be allocated over five years to improve literacy for students from birth through grade 12, particularly targeting underserved populations such as children in poverty, English learners, and students with disabilities. Nebraska is one of 23 states selected to receive the award, with an initial \$11 million in funding for the first year.

The CLSD grant will enable the NDE to assist school districts in improving literacy through evidence-based reading and professional learning for educators, expand family literacy programs, provide implementation support for high-quality instructional materials, and offer extended learning opportunities such as literacy tutoring. The funding also aims to reduce chronic absenteeism and improve reading and writing proficiency. The grant will also enhance the NebraskaREADS initiative, which was introduced in 2018 in support of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act. The NDE will establish a competitive sub-grant process to ensure all activities align with the state's vision for a coherent literacy system. A robust evaluation process will provide high-quality services and the ability to scale them across diverse schools throughout Nebraska.

Literacy Goals

Effective leadership is crucial to the success of effective literacy programs. School leaders, particularly principals, play a central role in creating a collaborative culture for literacy improvement. Research shows that principals have the second-largest impact on student achievement after teachers. Their leadership in setting clear literacy goals, promoting a deep understanding of the science of reading, and fostering trust and collaboration is vital for improving literacy outcomes.

- 1. Set Clear Literacy Goals:** Establish a vision for literacy aligned with the broader mission of the district. Communicate this vision clearly to all staff and stakeholders.
- 2. Select High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM):** Choose evidence-based materials aligned with the science of reading and Nebraska's college and career-ready standards, ensuring consistent implementation.
- 3. Focus on High-Quality Teaching:** Provide professional learning for teachers to enhance their literacy instruction skills, and maintain high standards in teaching practices.
- 4. Engage in Instructional Support:** Observe literacy instruction regularly, provide feedback, and create opportunities for teacher collaboration to share ideas and best practices.
- 5. Implement the NeMTSS Framework:** Use the Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NeMTSS)

framework to guide continuous improvement in literacy across school and district teams.

- 6. Foster a Culture of Trust and Teamwork:** Promote open communication and mutual respect to help achieve shared literacy goals among staff, students, and families.
- 7. Stay Informed and Embrace Diversity:** Ensure teachers and leaders have access to evidence-based research and resources.
- 8. Support Literacy Specialists:** Work with literacy specialists to improve instructional practices and outcomes for all students.

Collaboration and Support

The NDE Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development (S.E.E.D.) Team has been working together with the NDE's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Office to plan and coordinate efforts to support educators. The NDE's partnership with literacy leaders is key to ensuring sustainability and success. Together, they will work to implement research-backed practices that will enhance literacy instruction in Nebraska classrooms. The collective commitment of educators, families and communities will make significant strides toward improving literacy skills for all students in the state. For support in implementing literacy strategies for school improvement, the NDE's SEED team is available:

- Dr. Ryan Ricenbaw, Director of Statewide Teacher and Principal Support: ryan.ricenbaw@nebraska.gov
- Dr. Julie Downing, NDE Educator Effectiveness Specialist: jdowning@esu13.org
- Mr. Jeff Gilbertson, NDE School Leadership Specialist: jeff.gilbertson@nebraska.gov
- Ms. Allyson DenBeste, Academic Officer & Office Administrator: allyson.denbeste@nebraska.gov
- Dr. Marissa Pyzant, Content Area Standards & Instruction, Director: marissa.pyzant@nebraska.gov

Research and Implementation

Studies consistently highlight the crucial role of instructional leadership in driving improvements. Research by *Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008)* and others emphasizes that principals' leadership is the second most significant factor influencing student achievement. Principals play a vital role in supporting effective teaching practices and implementing evidence-based literacy instruction, which are key to improving literacy outcomes.

With federal funding and a coherent approach from educators, families, and the community, Nebraska is poised to make substantial progress in meeting its literacy goal of 75% of third-grade students reading proficiently by 2030.

The NDE's coordinated efforts with educators and various partners will ensure that every student in Nebraska has the literacy skills needed to succeed in their education and beyond.

In Memory

We recognize these members whom we've lost recently.

Herb Schimek, 86, Lincoln

Ruth Lake, 86, Hastings

James Halferty, 80, Norfolk

Phillip "Ron" Wolvin, 87, McCook

Leonard Hartman, 76, Alliance

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

What to Do if You Receive a RIF Notice: **Call NSEA.**

APRIL

15

It happens every year: Some K-12 Nebraska teachers receive Reduction in Force (RIF) notices informing them that their teaching contract may not be renewed for the coming year. The statutory deadline for school districts to hand out RIF notices is April 15.

The best way to deal with a RIF notice is to be prepared. The moment you receive a RIF notice, a countdown begins. To preserve your rights when facing a RIF, you must always request a hearing. The hearing must be requested within seven days of receiving the RIF notice (five days for community college faculty). While your situation may never reach an actual hearing, immediately calling NSEA will give you and NSEA's Advocacy Department time to determine what steps are in your best interest.

Email a copy of the notice to your NSEA Organizational Specialist. Once a copy of the RIF notice is received at NSEA headquarters, members will be encouraged to request a hearing to preserve their rights.

If you have questions concerning the RIF process, contact your NSEA Organizational Specialist or NSEA Director of Advocacy Jason Wiese by calling 1-800-742-0047.

Apply for Certificate Renewal in Advance



Each year, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) sends certificate renewal reminders to thousands of Nebraska educators. The teaching certificate is valid for teaching in all Nebraska school systems and must be renewed every five years. Certificates expire on Aug. 31 each year. This year, the department is encouraging certificated teachers who will need to renew in 2025 to apply between the months of January and March.

Teachers who are unsure if their certificate expires this year can log in to the Nebraska TEACH portal and check the expiration date at <https://teach.education.ne.gov/#/verifylicense>

To renew, log on to <https://teach.education.ne.gov/#/> and start an application. The application can be found at the top of the account portal.

NSEA 150 Presents **Family of teachers**

Teaching isn't just a profession—it's a legacy. Whether it's a family of educators spanning generations or a new tradition in the making, "Family of Teachers" celebrates those who dedicate their lives to shaping young minds.

If teaching runs in your family, we want to hear your story! Submit a photo of you and your fellow educators—parents, siblings, grandparents or

even aunts and uncles—who share this incredible calling. Let's honor the passion, dedication and impact of families who make a difference in the classroom every day.

Submit your photos today and be featured in "Family of Teachers" at www.nsea.org/Family.



Your
"Family of
Teachers"
photo here