

Thank you to all who participated in the NRCSA Joe Toczek Memorial Golf Tournament on July 28 in Kearney. We received many positive comments from participants on having the tournament. A great portion of the proceeds from the tournament go to the NRCSA Scholarship Fund. NRCSA annually provides 16 \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors from NRCSA-member school districts. This year's champions were the team of Rex Schultze, Ryan Terwilliger, Greg Adams, and Jon Dolliver.

NRCSA has made a series of vendor presentations available for our members. The vendors highlighted in the presentations all provide services and/or products dealing with curriculum or instruction. They are vendors who would have connected with those attending the NRCSA Spring Conference in March. The vendors and Zoom meeting times are:

BETTERLESSON

As an international leader in innovative professional learning, BetterLesson is committed to supporting teachers, leaders, and instructional coaches to thrive despite the uncertainty of the year ahead. We have deep expertise in models of teaching and learning that are unfamiliar to many leaders and teachers, including remote learning and hybrid learning, as well as excellent face-to-face teaching in a traditional brick-and-mortar setting.

As part of our larger commitment to equity of opportunity and outcomes, we have been partners with the National Rural Education Association for the last few years as well as a number of rural schools and systems across the country. Whether you need high quality workshops and coaching support for teachers or coaching for your school and district leaders in these complex times, we can design a professional learning partnership that will address the priorities of your school or system in ways that work within your budget. We would be grateful for the opportunity to speak with you during one of our upcoming NRCSA information sessions or another time of your choosing if those times don't work for you and your team. Please contact Jeff Liberty, Senior Vice President of Innovation for more information: jeff@betterlesson.com.

BOARDWORKS

Boardworks provides highly interactive and supplemental K-12 resources to enhance teaching and learning. Our goal is to empower every teacher to engage students and improve comprehension across all learning environments. Very simply, we keep teachers teaching and offer a subscription-free platform.

NEE

Evaluating Teachers in Remote Learning Settings. Teacher evaluation is one of the many challenges school leaders are facing in their continued response to COVID-19. How should school leaders evaluate teaching in an uncertain environment, and what does effective teaching look like if you move to a remote learning setting? The Network for Educator Effectiveness, a comprehensive educator evaluation system housed at the University of Missouri, has developed recommendations, resources, and templates to help school leaders evaluate and support teachers during these challenging times. In this

NRCSA Events

NRCSA West District Meeting

September 23, 2020 Time and Location TBD

NRCSA Spring Conference

March 25-26, 2021 Holiday Inn in Kearney More about this event

NRCSA Golf Tournament

July 27, 2021 Meadowlark Hills Golf Course in Kearney

More about this event

NRCSA Legislative Forum

February 2021 Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln More about this event

Committee Meetings

NRCSA Executive Committee Meeting

November 18, 2020, 9:00 AM At the CHI Center in Omaha

NRCSA S & R Committee Meeting

November 18, 2020, 11 AM At the CHI Center in Omaha

NRCSA Legislative Committee Meeting

November 18, 2020, 1:15 PM At the CHI Center in Omaha

NRCSA Programs

Grant Programs

Global Speech Teletherapy

myONcore Services

Planning Support Service

Scholarship and Awards Programs

Superintendent Search Service

Legislative Contacts

U.S. Senators

Deb Fischer

Ben Sasse



Member Update

August 6, 2020

session, we provide our recommendations for evaluation and share resources school leaders can use over the coming school year and beyond.

The links to register and/or join the Zoom meetings are below:

The schedule is (NOTE THAT ALL TIMES ARE CDT):

TUES, AUG. 11, 1:00 P.M.--BetterLesson

https://betterlesson.zoom.us/j/7500178714

Meeting ID: 750 017 8714

WED, AUG. 12, 9:00 A.M.—NEE (you must register to attend this presentation)

https://umsystem.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAodu-

upiMoH9JLHqBNJUDuokzSw_x5s5zc

We are excited to welcome some new members to NRCSA. New for the 2020-21 school year are Brady, Bridgeport, Lexington, Summerland, and Verdigre. We have been notified by five other districts or ESUs that they plan to become new members as well. If we retain all members from last year and all of the new districts/ESUs do join we will be around 208 members. This would be a new high!

I want to thank everyone who volunteered to serve on one (or more) of NRCSA's Reopening Committees. Over 100 NRCSA-member Superintendents and ESU Administrators committed to helping develop ideas for use in developing a school district's reopening plan for the coming school year. This project was an attempt to help districts wade through the decision making process as they work toward what we expect to be the re-opening of Nebraska schools. These volunteers were divided up into eight sub-committees, each tackling a different topic that needs to be addressed in considering re-opening. Two committee heads also served on the Steering Committee. Each committee met at a set time/day weekly during June. The goal was to have a "finished" document by the first weekend in July. We did reach our goal as the document was released on Friday, July 3 to all NRCSA-member Superintendents and ESU Administrators. It was released on Tuesday, July 7, to all other NRCSA members (i.e. Board members, Principals, etc), as well as to all non-member Superintendents and ESU Administrators.

I am extremely proud of the great leadership demonstrated by so many rural Superintendents and ESU Administrators in this project. Their willingness to work as members of a team was outstanding. I have great confidence in our rural Nebraska Superintendents and ESU Administrators. Our schools and ESUs are in good hands!

The document can be accessed here:

Considerations for Developing Re-Opening Plans in Nebraska Schools

U.S. House of Representatives

Don Bacon

Jeff Fortenberry

Adrian Smith

Nebraska Governor

Pete Ricketts

NE State Senators

Joni Albrecht, Dist 17

John Arch, Dist 14

Carol Blood, Dist 3

Kate Bolz, Dist 29

Bruce Bostelman, Dist 23

Tom Brandt, Dist 32

Tom Brewer, Dist 43

Tom Briese, Dist 41

Machaela Cavanaugh, Dist 6

Ernie Chambers, Dist 11, no e-mail

Robert Clements, Dist 2

Sue Crawford, Dist 45

Wendy DeBoer, Dist 10

Myron Dorn, Dist 30

Steve Erdman, Dist 47

Curt Friesen, Dist 34

Suzanne Geist, Dist 25

Tim Gragert, Dist 40

Michael Groene, Dist 42

Steve Halloran, Dist 33

Ben Hansen, Dist 16

Matt Hansen, Dist 26

Mike Hilgers, Dist 21

Robert Hilkemann, Dist 4



Member Update

August 6, 2020

Other education organizations have put out reopening documents for their members. The documents are shared here simply as other resources for districts. They can be accessed here:

Nebraska Department of Education

Launch Nebraska Website

Nebraska School Activities Association

NSAA Return to Activities

Nebraska Association of School Boards

District Leadership Team Contingency Planning

Nebraska State Education Association

Guidance for a Safe Reopening

Membership dues reminders (and possible new members) were mailed to districts

July 6th. These letters were sent to current NRCSA members, as well as any non members in our enrollment range. Memberships and renewals are \$850 per district and are due by September 15. NRCSA membership has grown from 177 members seven years ago to 201 in 2019-20. Membership continues to grow, and as stated above, we believe 2020-21 is no exception. Thanks to you and your school district or ESU for being a member. This energizes our representation and advocacy for rural Nebraska no matter who we are engaged with on education, legislation, or community. Without your support, there is less rural advocacy. Whether we like it or not, the outstate and rural population does not create a legislative majority anymore. In fact, rural Nebraska will likely lose a couple more seats in the Unicameral in the next redistricting. Finding success, whether passing, amending, or stopping legislation comes from membership, relationships, and focus. As a result of your membership in NRCSA, rural is at the table and making a difference on behalf of our rural students, schools, and communities. When completing the membership registration for the school district or ESU, we ask the Superintendent to include the email addresses for all Board of Education members. In sent the monthly has Member Superintendent/Administrator and the Board of Education President. NRCSA now emails the Member Update to all the Board of Education members for whom we have email addresses.

The NRCSA website (www.nrcsa.net) has a new look. We needed to update the program that was being used to provide for our website. As a result of that we had the opportunity to provide a newer look. The new look went live on July 29, after we had the chance to share it with the Executive Committee. I believe you will like the new look. We believe the site will also become easier to navigate.

Sara Howard, Dist 9

Dan Hughes, Dist 44

Megan Hunt, Dist 8

Rick Kolowski, Dist 31

Mark Kolterman, Dist 24

Andrew La Grone, Dist 49

Steve Lathrop, Dist 12

Brett Lindstrom, Dist 18

Lou Ann Linehan, Dist 39

John Lowe Sr., Dist 37

John McCollister, Dist 20

Mike McDonnell, Dist 5

Adam Morfeld, Dist 46

Mike Moser, Dist 22

Dave Murman, Dist 38

Patty Pansing Brooks, Dist 28

Dan Quick, Dist 35

Jim Scheer, Dist 19

Julie Slama, Dist 1

John Stinner, Dist 48

Tony Vargas, Dist 7

Lynne Walz, Dist 15

Justin Wayne, Dist 13

Matt Williams, Dist 36

Anna Wishart, Dist 27

NRCSA Leadership

Ginger Meyer, President Chadron Public Schools

Del Dack, Past President. Paxton Consolidated Schools

Dr. Dawn Lewis, Pres-Elect. Arlington Public Schools Welcome to new Executive Committee members President-Elect Ginger Meyer (Superintendent at Chadron), Northeast District Representative Dr. Jon Cerny (Superintendent at Bancroft-Rosalie), and South Central District Representative Jon Davis (Superintendent at Alma). A special thank you to Curtis Cogswell (McCool Junction) who leaves the Executive Committee after serving through the presidency cycle over the past three years and Dennis Shipp (Bertrand) who has retired.

Welcome to newly appointed Legislative Committee members. At the June meeting of the Executive Committee the following were appointed to fill openings on the Legislative Committee: Vern Fisher (Superintendent at Gibbon), Bryce Jorgenson (Superintendent at Southern Valley), and Larianne Polk (Administrator ESU 7). Bryce and Larianne had completed another person's term last year and start their own first term this year.

Welcome to newly appointed Scholarship & Recognition Committee members. The Executive Committee has appointed the following to serve two-year terms: Wade Finley (Superintendent at Litchfield), Greg Sjuts (Superintendent at Humphrey), and Jim Widdifield (Superintendent at Minden). Dr. Beth Johnsen (Superintendent at Conestoga) was appointed to her own two-year term after finishing Trudy Clark's term last year.

Welcome to newly appointed members of the NRCSA/NDE Closing the Achievement Gap Research Team. Josh Cumpston (Superintendent at Fillmore Central) and Mikal Shalikow (Superintendent at Newman Grove).

The newly appointed Rural Teacher Committee will begin work this fall. Members of the committee are: Dr. Jon Cerny (Superintendent at Bancroft-Rosalie), Stephanie Kaczor (Superintendent at Riverside), Lori Liggett (Superintendent at Gordon-Rushville), Dr. Heather Nebesniak (Superintendent at Ord), Brett Gies (Superintendent at Sioux County), Dan Keyser (Superintendent at Sutherland), Danny McMurtry (Superintendent at Maxwell), Kevin Finkey (Superintendent at Sumner-Edyville-Miller), Sam Dunn (Superintendent at Loomis), Andrew Farber (Superintendent at Louisville), Damon McDonald (Superintendent at Deshler), Mike Williams (Superintendent ar Arcadia). Also joining the committee are state college representatives Dr. Gina Bittner (Peru State College), Dr. Don King (Chadron State), and Dr. Nick Shudak (Wayne State College). Lori Liggett and Stephanie Kaczor will serve as Co-Chairs for the committee. The purpose of the committee is to consider ways in which more people might be attracted to teach in rural Nebraska.

I would like to thank all who helped to tell the story of the great work that was done in our rural schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. You provided great examples to help tell the story. The target audience was the Governor, Senators, Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education. Each week's Rural School Update was also shared on a national level, as well as with all of the members on our mailing list. Many of the stories were shared nationally by a group called "I Am A Rural School Teacher". These stories can be viewed at https://iamaruralteacher.org/. I think a strong

Jane Davis, Secretary. Hershey Public Schools

District Representatives:

Chris Geary, West Leyton Public Schools

Dale Hafer, North Central Ainsworth Community Schools

Dr. Jon Cerny, Northeast Bancroft-Rosalie Community Schs

Paul Sheffield, Southeast Exeter-Milligan Public Schools

Jon Davis, South Central Alma Public Schools

Alan Garey, Southwest Medicine Valley Schools

Executive Director:

Jack Moles

Lobbyists:

Jon Edwards Trent P. Nowka Russell Westerhold

Legislative Co- Chairs:

Randy Page, Thayer Central Community Schs

Dr. Jason Dolliver Pender Public Schools

Scholarship & Recognition Co Chairs:

Tim Heckenlively, Falls City Public Schools

Brian Tonniges, High Plains Community Schools



message was sent that schools were not "shut down", that great efforts were still being made on behalf of our students and our students' families. Thank you all for that outstanding professional and compassionate work.

The Nebraska Unicameral reconvened on Monday, July 20.

There is some interest by some Senators to find a way to move forward a school finance/property tax relief package, as well as a new business incentive bill and a bill that would commit to a UNMC expansion project. All three of those plans would involve a commitment to large expenditures of state dollars. NRCSA joins with virtually all of the other education groups in our belief that the state will not be able to meet those financial commitments in light of the way in which the economy has been staggered during the pandemic crisis.

A few of the Senators appear willing to push the idea that, in light of uncertainty created by the pandemic, immediate property tax relief is needed. LB 1106, which was opposed by virtually all groups in the Education community, failed to advance. There is still work being done to try to find a compromise that can somehow move forward.

Chris Blum of the Nebraska Safety Council, recently reached out to NRCSA to discuss some ways in which we could partner. He asked me to share the following information:

DRIVERS EDUCATION TRAINING INSTRUCTORS: Teen Driver's Education instructors are aging out of the workforce. During the 1970's and 1980's higher educational institutions offered Driver's Education as a special endorsement towards graduation requirements. Endorsements were removed and all instructors must either pay for their own education or have a sponsor to cover the expenses. The Nebraska Safety Council employs approximately 10 instructors with an average age >60. Nebraska Safety Council is proposing hiring and training ten new instructors state-wide by the end of the year to fulfill our program needs. Automobile fatalities are the leading cause of death for youth. This program will help train instructors that can guide our young people to prevent useless premature death and potential long term disability. We need help identifying potential instructors (we will have funders pay for the certification expenses). We also have a current opening for an instructor.

The Nebraska Safety Council is looking for part-time teen driver education instructors in Lincoln and Fremont. Ideal candidates are already certified to teach teen driver education, have a valid driver's license, and have a minimum of one year of teaching experience. <u>Learn</u> more about the position and apply online today!

• WORKWELL HEALTH COACHING/HEALTH SCREENING/WORKER 360 ASSESSMENTS: Mental health, obesity, hypertension and high cholesterol are leading contributing factors in the cost of poor health in America and Nebraska. Investment in this program provides funding to cover health screening and wellness coaching for up to 200 employees/25 employees in eight small businesses. The screening is utilized



for early identification of health risks and coaching provides the follow up services to guide employees to lasting lifestyle changes. We need help identifying small businesses in our rural communities who would benefit from Health Coaching/Screening.

• SAFETY TRAINING COURSE FUNDING/TRAINERS: As Nebraska has transitioned during the pandemic, we have seen seasoned employees transition back into labor positions to maintain a job. Some of the employees have never been trained to do the job or were trained more than twenty years ago. Processes and systems have changed. Businesses are neglecting retraining due to the cost putting employees at increased risk for injury. We need help identifying small businesses in our rural communities who need Safety Training for their workforce. We have some potential grants to help small businesses that need financial assistance to support workforce safety training.

If you can be of help in any of these items, Chris can be reached at cblum@nesafetycouncil.org.

NRCSA is proposing changes to its By-Laws. Most of the changes are technical or corrective in nature, however there are some changes of substance. Voting on these changes was to have taken place at the General Members meeting that was scheduled to be held during the Spring Conference. We are currently planning to have a General Members meeting in conjunction with the NASB/NASA Fall Education Conference. The proposed changes will be voted on at that meeting. The document below highlights the proposed changes and the rationale for them.

Proposed NRCSA By-Law Changes 2020

NRCSA would like to congratulate Toby Boss of ESU 6 on being selected as NRCSA's Outstanding ESU Staff Member for 2020. With the Spring Conference cancelled this year, we are working with districts to make most of the awards presentations locally. Dr. Boss was surprised at ESU 6 in Milford during his retirement reception. He was serving as Director of Professional Development and had a profound impact not just on schools within ESU 6, but also on many other school districts across the state. Nicely done, Dr. Boss!







NRCSA would like to congratulate Laureen Powell of Cross County Community Schools for being selected as NRCSA's nominee for the NREA Teacher of the Year Award. Mrs. Powell has taught 5-12 Instrumental Music at Benedict, then Cross County, for 34 years.



A common theme from some of the decision makers on the state level is that "out of control" local spending is to blame for the property tax problem. NRCSA, along with many other educational entities, maintains that we do not have a school spending issue, but instead have a school funding issue. Attached are two reports, one from NRCSA, the other from Open Sky, that discuss the myth of "out of control" school spending. It is my hope that administrators and Board of Education members will read, then use these reports to counter those claims. When you do please tell your district's story as that is the most powerful way to get this message across.

NRCSA Spending Study

A Look at School Spending in NE from Open Sky

Board of Education meeting visits. Beginning in December, I began attending Board of Education meetings in member school districts. I have attended 14 such meetings. I have really enjoyed this and am willing to attend Board meetings when I can. When I am going to be in a specific area on Board meeting days I may send out a notice to nearby Superintendents to make an offer to visit. I'd like to be able to schedule two or three in the same evening if I can.

Of course, current conditions make it impossible to physically attend Board of Education meetings. I would be willing to "attend" your Board meetings via Zoom if possible. I would still only do one at a time but would be able to do several in the same evening. Let me know and we will try to make the connection.

Once all of this quiets down--and it WILL quiet down eventually--I will start back to meeting physically with some of you.



Dates for future committee meetings are:

NRCSA Executive Committee Meeting: November 18, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. CDT. at the CHI Center in Omaha

NRCSA Scholarship & Recognition Committee Meeting: November 18, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. CDT. In room F at the CHI Center in Omaha

NRCSA Legislative Committee Meeting: November 18, 2020 at 1:15 p.m CDT. at the CHI Center in Omaha

<u>I continue to work on a little project in which I could use your help.</u> I would like to have a picture or two from your school or ESU that includes either (1) the school name and/or the mascot name or (2) a source of pride for your district. Ideas:

- 1. the marquee in front of the school/ESU
- 2. the entrance to the school/ESU
- 3. scoreboard
- 4. student team or group with the name on uniforms
- 5. new building or facilities
- 6. innovative project

Many of you have already responded to my request. To date over 60 schools have responded. If you have not yet participated, you can either email the pictures (jmoles@nrcsa.net) or text them to 402-335-7732. Thanks for your help!

NRCSA co-hosted a meeting with REL on the teacher shortage in rural

<u>Nebraska.</u> Several key players from different fields were invited to attend. The plan was to have a second meeting in early April. We are going to push plans for a second meeting further back in light of current situations-, likely sometime this fall. The REL report that was discussed at the first meeting can be assessed here.

Teacher Retention in Nebraska & Surrounding States

We urge you to consider making use of the NRCSA Partner OneCard as a tool for you in managing school expenditures, both large and small. Certainly, the card can help reduce/eliminate any issues relative to unverified cash expenditures. You decide who uses it, can get cards for each of those users, keep all cards wherever you wish, determine the amount to load it with, and how long the time frame of use is. It is a terrific management tool and clearly identifies each expenditure/name/date/amount. Whether small purchases or very large purchases, the card is a terrific tool. NRCSA owns the state contract, so liability for misuse falls to NRCSA, not the district user. We have only had three circumstances of fraud and all three have been the theft of the card number information, not any district employee misuse. Great job by all participating districts in protecting the card and program! Don't forget, the NRCSA rebate from the transaction fee paid by businesses that choose to accept plastic is used for scholarship, awards, and



special needs. For 2018-2019, the rebate was over \$18,000 to NRCSA, showing that use is increasing, and large purchases are being included. WIN, WIN, WIN!

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH & PLANNING

NRCSA has a Superintendent Search Service which has been highly successful. During the current year the NRCSA Superintendent Search Service has assisted, or is currently assisting, in nine Superintendent searches.

It is a common practice for many Boards of Education and the Superintendent to conduct short and long-term planning. NRCSA does provide a quality service using experienced consultants. If are interested in more information, please contact Executive Director Jack Moles.

NRCSA Search Service Experience

NRCSA Planning Support Brochure

National Updates

NREA Membership

It has come to our attention that those NRCSA members who have NREA memberships are receiving electronic reminders to renew their NREA memberships. NRCSA is still a state affiliate of the NREA and as such can offer our members a 25% discount when joining the NREA (\$75 for an individual membership or \$300 for a school membership). Simply sign up through NRCSA as the membership materials sent in July describe (send a separate check for NREA membership along with your NRCSA dues renewal). The NREA membership is an additional option, not a unified membership with NRCSA.

From Dr. Jon Habben, NREA President

This latest from NREA/NREAC/AASA Lobby Chris Rogers does not include the most recent negotiations regarding the next round of covid 19 stimulus funds. There will be another round of payments, however a few sticking points remain regarding the amount of unemployment, formerly \$600, will be paid. It has not helped that there are too many reports of "why go back to potentially dangerous work if I make more not working." Some focus on the potentially dangerous work, while others focus on the amount must be too large. Between politicizing and polarizing, is it any wonder ... Both sides have become very adept at "my way or the highway" tactics. Sadly, the election year has not helped. On a more positive note, public school federal funding is well-represented in terms of advocacy efforts. The issues of public money for private use, adequacy of funds to public education, equity issues within public education funding, and special populations are front and center. With so many states allowing private and public charters, Nebraskans must remain watchful on that issue as well.

As an additional note, the NREA Executive Director and Executive Committee continue to work toward the virtual 2020 NREA National Conference. I hope you will find time and reason to participate, and we will be back to in-person in Indianapolis for the 2021



event. By the way, NREA has updates its website, just as NRCSA has done take a look. Because there is no opportunity for all of the in-person activities like Annual meeting, Delegate Assembly, annual committee/team meetings, etc., all committee members and elected officers will serve two years. I will be NREA President for both 2020 and 2021. Award winners will be notified, as well. NREA will present two years of awards in Indianapolis.

Take care, open your school safely. Jon

Legislative Corps 7-31-20

From the NREA: Age of Learning provides schools closed due to the coronavirus with free home access for all affected families to leading digital education programs ABCmouse, Adventure Academy, and ReadingIQ. Programs serve students in preschool / pre-k, elementary school, and middle school.

If you represent a U.S. school or district faced with school closures, please complete the below form.

For affected schools outside the U.S., we have partnered with UNICEF to make our resources available at no cost. We will update this page soon with guidance on how to access that offering.

Age of Learning Form

In light of the Department of Education's recent announcement to suspend federal student loan payments and waive interest during the outbreak of COVID 19. Best Colleges provided some links to materials that may be helpful to you and your students related to student loans.

COVID-19 Student Loans Series

Coronavirus Student Loan Suspension Guide:

https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/coronavirus-student-loan-suspension

Essentials to Student Loans:

https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/what-you-need-to-know-about-college-loans/

Refinancing and Consolidating Guide:

https://www.bestcolleges.com/financial-aid/student-loan-refinance-consolidation/



NRCSA Superintendent Search Service – 2019-20 Searches:

Please let Jack Moles know where superintendent vacancies occur, so that NRCSA Superintendent Search can make direct contact. We need to hear as soon as possible in anticipation of getting promotional materials specific to that board of education ready. It is critical that Board Presidents have the NRCSA contact information so that if they choose to consider a Superintendent Search Service, NRCSA is one they hopefully will consider.



Superintendent of Schools – Franklin Public Schools Announcement of Vacancy: Available at a later date District Website: https://www.fpsflyers.org/

Apply for this Vacancy
Application Deadline: **TBD**

Member Employment Postings (not using any search service):

NRCSA members may advertise their employment postings here FREE OF CHARGE, provided they are using NRCSA Superintendent Search or searching without using any search service to fill their vacancy.

No postings at this time.

Buy, Sell, Trade

NRCSA members may advertise jobs or items for sale. This service is completely FREE OF CHARGE to NRCSA members. E-mail **jbundy@nrcsa.net** if you would like to post something. Postings will remain in place for one (1) month but may be resubmitted if additional time is needed.

No postings at this time.