

NEA's Read Across America: Celebrating Dr. Seuss's Birthday

Business leaders, philanthropists, politicians and other committed members of our community are volunteering to share their love of reading with our students for Read Across Omaha on March 2nd. *We currently have more reading volunteers than classrooms to read to!*



Please submit your Read Across America Reader Request Form (available on the OEA icon on First Class) to the OEA NO LATER THAN JANUARY 23rd. All participating classrooms will be entered into a drawing for a free hard cover copy of a Dr. Seuss classic and readers will have Dr. Seuss bookmarks to distribute to students. We have also purchased two Cat in the Hat costumes and will be sending you more information on how your building can receive a visit from the Cat in the Hat the week of March 2nd!

Please mark your calendars now and feel free to email Rose Pope at (Rose.Pope@ops.org) if you have questions.

For more information about how to generate excitement for reading among America's children and their families and about best practices for motivating and teaching reading, visit www.nea.org/readacross.

Omaha Education Association Omaha Food Bank Drive

January 14th through February 10th.
Please bring items to the AR Assembly
On February 10th
At Wilson

**Canned or Boxed Food, Personal Items,
Household goods, Toiletries and
Monetary Donations are Welcome!**
The staff with the greatest per member
contribution (of items and/or money) will be
provided a free breakfast cooked by
OEA President Maddie Fennell

“Who ya’ gonna’ call?” Top 10 List

Here are some of the most frequently requested numbers:

- 10. Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance: Paula Montgomery, 557-2119
- 9. Benefits (leaves, life insurance, absences, Early Leaving Incentive) : Kari Meisenbach, 557-2152
- 8. Payroll: Dawne Claussen, 557-2116
- 7. Retirement: Michael Smith, 557-2105
- 6. Questions about your 403b: Linda O’Keefe, 557-2334
- 5. Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA): 800-742-0047
- 4. Nebraska Unicameral: 800-742-7456
- 3. If you have been called to Human Resources: Dennis or Tim at 346-0400
- 2. Questions about OEA membership, including change of address: Marj, 346-0400
- 1. Don’t know who to call? Call OEA at 346-0400 and we will assist you!



WHEN & WHERE

January 20
OEA Leadership Roundtable

January 22
Compensation & Benefits

January 24
Political Contact Team Training
10:00 a.m.

January 29
Retirement Seminar

All meetings begin at 4:15 p.m.
@ OEA unless otherwise noted.

OEA Tip-Off

The OEA Tip-Off is a bi-monthly publication printed for members of the Omaha Education Association.

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www.omahaoea.org



OEA

Tip-Off

January 16, 2009

DO YOU WANT A RAISE NEXT YEAR?

Every dollar that goes into education is voted on by an elected official. As public school educators we are often reminded that “Every decision in education is a political decision.”

As we enter into a negotiations year, we need teachers who are ready, willing, and trained to share their stories with elected officials. We need those elected to public office to understand the need for and support policies that provide more money for teacher salaries.

The Omaha Public Schools Board of Education, the Nebraska Legislature, and—new on the political scene—the Learning Community Coordinating Council, are all made up of women and men who are our neighbors and members of this community. It is vital that we, as educators, establish strong working relationships with the policymakers who directly impact OPS students and teachers. Students’ learning conditions are teachers’ working conditions!

There will be a Political Contact Team training session on Saturday, January 24th at 10:00 a.m. at the OEA Office. NSEA staff members Karen Kilgarin (Assistant Director of Government Relations) and Brian Mikkelsen (Director of Political Field Organizing) will conduct the workshop. This is a great opportunity to learn how to share your story or, if interested, how to become a liaison with a School Board member, State Legislator or Learning Community Coordinating Council member.

Be a voice for yourself, your students and for your colleagues. A famous quote from Rabbi Hillel said “If I am not for myself who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?”

To RSVP, or if you have questions, please contact Susan Kalina at susankalina@hotmail.com or 689-4341.

CHANGES TO THE TRANSFER PROCESS

This year a committee comprised of OEA members, Human Resources staff and administrators made recommendations for changes to the transfer process. The changes included an earlier starting date, a final date for all transfers, and having all documents processed online.

ONLY those teachers who request a transfer by February 3rd will be allowed to enter the transfer pool. If you are not sure, it is better to submit a letter of interest; you can decline to be moved or withdraw from the process at any time. If your letter is NOT in by February 3rd, you will not be allowed to use the transfer process this year.

RETIREMENT NOTICE

This is the time of year when our office receives many questions about retirement. Our first recommendation is to attend a retirement seminar (see the article in this Tip-Off regarding the January 29th seminar). We also remind staff members that for all of the paperwork to be processed on time, they are to officially notify OPS of their retirement by March 1st.

Your principal may ask all staff, or individuals, if they are planning to retire. Your retirement announcement isn’t official until you complete the appropriate paperwork with OPS, but you can notify your principal “unofficially” so that they can work on their staffing plans for the next school year.

Spring 2009 Tenured Teacher Transfer Process

General Information:

The tenured teacher transfer process will begin January 7, 2009 and end May 22, 2009.

Tenured teachers desiring transfers must submit an e-mail or a note to Human Resources **by 5:00 p.m.,**

February 3, 2009. *No late requests will be accepted.*

Tenured teachers who contact Human Resources will receive information about the process, along with the transfer packet link, via First Class email, between February 4th & 6th.

Eligibility:

Teachers who received tenure **on or before August 2008** are eligible to participate in the Spring 2009 tenured teacher transfer process. Send requests for transfers to Human Resources:

Special Education – Therese Bender

Secondary – Nicole Regan

Elementary – Melissa Orlando



*Teaching positions handled in candidate pools:

- Anyone interested in moving to a Dean of Students position must send a letter of interest and resume to Nicole Regan at Human Resources.
- Anyone interested in moving to an Instructional Facilitator position (Masters degree) must send a letter of interest and resume to Melissa Orlando at Human Resources.
- Anyone interested in moving to a Literacy Coach position (Reading Endorsement, Masters Degree, Reading Services Department) must send a letter of interest and resume to Melissa Orlando at Human Resources.

OEA Retirement Benefits Workshop Scheduled for January 29th

March 1st is an important date when you decide to retire. You must sign the Early-Leave Incentive forms by March 1st to be eligible for that benefit. To help you understand your other retirement benefits, OEA-Retired and the OEA Retirement Committee will host a workshop on retirement benefits on January 29th. The workshop will be held at the OEA, 4202 S. 57th Street. The workshop will start at 4:15 p.m. and last until approximately 6:00 p.m. Coffee and cookies will be provided. If you need directions to the OEA, you can request directions when you make your reservation.

Roger Rea, member of both OEA-Retired and the OEA Retirement Committee, will again lead the session, and will present information on:

- How to estimate your retirement benefits
- Which of the six payment options might be best for you
- What are the buy-in and buy-back provisions
- Key items to remember as you prepare for retirement
- Health insurance after you retire
- The benefits of belonging to the Retired organizations



Mark your calendar now for January 29th, and plan to bring a friend and attend this important informational session. The more you know about your retirement benefits, the better prepared you will be when you actually do decide to retire. Please call the OEA office at 346-0400 to reserve a place at this session. Do it today!

2009 OEA General Election Information

The annual 2009 OEA General Election will be held on the second Tuesday in March (March 10th) as stipulated by the OEA Bylaws. Elective positions in the general election include OEA Board of Directors members and NEA Representative Assembly delegates. Candidates for the OEA Board of Directors are required to have at least one year of active membership in the OEA (Bylaws Article II, Section 6). Election for two at large members of the OEA Children's Action Fund (CAF) will also be held in March 2009.

Candidates may be secured in any one of the following ways:

- 1. By petition of 15 members of the Association.** Petitions must be filed with the Executive Director before the February 10th Representative Assembly adjourns. You may obtain a petition form from your AR, from the OEA office, from First Class, or from the <http://www.Omahaoea.org/media/decision/genpetit.pdf>. The petition form includes the required consent of candidate.
- 2. By personal filing of the candidate for office.** Personal filing of the candidate, in writing, must be received by the OEA Executive Director by **5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 9th, 2009.**
- 3. By nomination from the floor of the February 10th Representative Assembly.** Only Association Representatives can make nominations. A Consent of Candidate form *must* be received from all individuals who are nominated from the floor of the Representative Assembly by Wednesday, February 11th.
- 4. By filing of the Nominating Committee.** In the event no one is nominated for an elective position, a nomination committee shall secure at least one candidate for each elective position. The OEA Nominating Committee shall be elected from the floor of the February 10th Representative Assembly. A Consent of Candidate form *must* be received from all individuals who are selected by the Nominating Committee prior to accepting the Committee's filing.

The following positions are open for election in 2009:

- OEA Vice President – Member Benefits (3 year term 2009-2012). The entire membership votes for this position.
- Three Elementary Board members (2 year terms 2009-2011). Only Elementary members vote for these positions.
- One Elementary Board member (to serve only the 2nd year of a 2008-2010 term). Only Elementary members vote for this position.
- One 5-8 Magnet & TAC Board member (2 year term 2009-2011). Only 5-8 magnet centers and any members not represented by the elementary, middle, or high school levels vote for this position.
- One Middle School Board member (2 year term 2009-2011). Only Middle School (7-8th grade schools) members vote for this position.
- One Middle School Board member (to serve only the 2nd year of a 2008-2010 term). Only Middle School (7-8th grade schools) members vote for this position.
- One Senior High Board member (2 year term 2009-2011). Only Senior High members vote for this position.
- Nineteen delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (The President and both Vice Presidents serve as delegates by virtue of their office. Therefore, 16 OEA delegates will be elected this year.) The entire membership votes for delegate positions.
- Two at large seats on the OEA CAF Board of Directors.

Who's Who of the Candidates Details — NEW PROCEDURES

All candidates for election may have their photo, a 50-word statement, and Association experience published on the www.OmahaOEA.org website. Candidate statements will be published unedited. Only online submissions will be accepted (find the form to submit your Who's Who information at <http://omahaoea.org/decision/board/GeneralElectionWhosWhoFor.htm>). Pictures may be obtained in the following ways:

- Pictures will be taken following the February 10th Representative Assembly at Wilson.
- Pictures will be taken at the OEA office (4202 South 57 Street) Wednesday, February 11th through Friday, February 13th. February 13th is the **last** date that pictures will be taken.

Only photographs taken by OEA on the above dates will be used; candidates cannot submit their own photo. The deadline for online submissions for inclusion in the *Who's Who of the Candidates* is Friday, February 13th, by 5:00 p.m.