

**OEA**

*Tip-Off*

May 26, 2010

## Seven GREAT Reasons to Remain a Member

1. Unions have always stood up for your rights.
2. We ensure due process is served, and protect your statutory rights.
3. We provide legal services.
4. We are your professional organization. We serve on committees that review what is happening in the area of educational reform. We address teachers' perspectives and concerns.
5. We are politically informed and seek ways to support candidates that favor education issues.
6. If you have a teenage child and are considering college scholarships. You can only qualify for the OEA Foundation Scholarships, as a member. A member who has been active in the Association. (In 2010, OEA gave away over \$325,000 in scholarships)
7. We negotiate for you. (a) You have a job, (b) You have a higher salary, (c) You receive fringe benefits.



Belonging to a Union involves more than paying dues. To reach maximum potential we need active members..

### A Quote to Consider

President Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

*We, as an Association, are only as strong as our members help make us.*

If you'd like to do more for OEA send in an e-mail stating your interests. You can send it to [lorrie.stuto@nsea.org](mailto:lorrie.stuto@nsea.org) Lorrrie will maintain a volunteer file and share with leadership

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## Please Turn In List for AR Captions and Alternates

We have about 60% of our schools who have turned in their building representative lists for AR Captains and alternates. OEA can better serve your school if the AR Captains and Alternate names are turned in.

### **We still need:**

Central  
Career Center  
King Science  
McMillan  
Monroe  
Blackburn  
ILP  
Parrish  
Bancroft  
Belvedere  
Benson West  
Boyd  
Central Park

Columbian  
Crestridge  
Dodge  
Druid Hill  
Field Club  
Florence  
Franklin  
Harrison  
Hartman  
Head Start Early Childhood Pawnee  
Indian Hill  
Jefferson  
Kellom  
Kennedy

Lothrop  
Masters  
Pawnee  
Pinewood  
Ponca  
Saratoga  
Spring Lake  
Springville  
Sunny Slope  
Underwood Hills Focus School  
Early Childhood Center at Yates.

**Deadline June, 2010**

# Plan 125 Flexible Benefit Plan Deadline September 1, 2010

Omaha Public Schools offers a Plan 125 Flexible Benefit Program. The Flexible Benefit Program is not an insurance plan, but a government-sanctioned program to allow all full-time employees to set aside before-tax dollars to pay for certain insurance premiums, un-reimbursed health care expenses and dependent care expenses.

All health, dental and life insurance premiums you pay are automatically deducted on a pre-tax basis for you as part of the District's Plan 125 program.

## **We offer two separate reimbursement accounts:**

1. Un-reimbursed Medical Care Expenses, which includes out-of-pocket medical and dental expenses for you and your dependents. This includes medical, dental and prescription co-pays, eyeglasses, contacts, etc. The minimum annual election is \$250; maximum annual election is **\$5,000**.
2. Dependent Care Expenses, which includes expenses for the care of a child or dependent family member while you are employed. The minimum annual election is \$250; maximum annual election is **\$5,000**.

To participate, current full-time employees **must enroll in one or both of these accounts before September 1** each year. The Plan Year is September 1 through August 31. You must enroll each year to participate.

For new employees, all Flexible Benefit Program enrollment forms for the Plan Year must be returned to the Compensation & Benefits office within 30 days of your employment date. The effective date of your flex plan enrollment will be the 1st of the month following 30 days of employment. Your first payroll deduction will also begin that month.

Please read your Plan 125 Summary Plan Description booklet thoroughly. Remember, the accounts you select on your enrollment form will be in effect for the entire plan year. Your election is **irrevocable**, except as stated in the Plan 125 booklet. **THERE CAN BE NO EXCEPTIONS, AS THIS PLAN IS GOVERNED BY INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE REGULATIONS.**

Should you have questions concerning this benefit plan prior to your enrollment, please contact the Compensation and Benefits Department at 557-2119.

**FAILURE TO COMPLETE AN ENROLLMENT FORM INDICATES YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THIS PLAN YEAR.**

Reimbursement from your Plan 125 Health Care or Dependent Care Expense Account is available in two options:

1. Obtain a Flexible Spending Account Claim Form by printing it at [www.mypayflex.com](http://www.mypayflex.com), or check with the school office.
  - a) Submit the completed Claim Form via U.S. mail to Payflex Systems, Inc., P.O. Box 3239, Omaha, NE 68103-3039 or fax to (402) 231-4310
  - b) A reimbursement check will be mailed to your home or your reimbursement can be directly deposited into your account with prior authorization.
2. Use the Flex Convenience Card
  - a) All flexible spending participants will receive a Flex Convenience Card upon enrollment into the Health Care and/or Dependent Care accounts.
  - b) Use the card for prescription or office-visit co-pays, out-of-pocket medical, dental, vision and hearing expenses, etc. A list of eligible/ineligible expenses can be found at [www.mypayflex.com](http://www.mypayflex.com).

Refer to the Plan 125 Summary Plan Description booklet or [www.mypayflex.com](http://www.mypayflex.com) for more details.

## Family and Community Engagement Summit Recommendations To Improve Student Achievement

More than 130 parents, teachers, community and elected leaders from across Nebraska discussed the importance of family engagement in education during a day-long work session that produced 13 recommendations to support such involvement.

Small group sessions focused on discussions regarding what policies, practices and actions are needed to increase the engagement of various types of families in supporting student learning. Each group developed a set of recommendations and actions, that were synthesized into a comprehensive set and presented to the participants. **Visit the NSEA.org to see the recommendations:** <http://nsea.org/news/media/Recommendations.pdf>

NEA has pledged to invest \$1 million per year for the next six years to pursue strategies to increase teacher effectiveness at low-performing schools. To that end, NEA convinced the Obama administration to add to the models that school districts could choose from to turn around low-performing schools. The Transformation model is now an option school districts can em-

ploy to turn around low-performing schools. It is the only fully collaborative model and the only model that gives all the stakeholders, parents included, in public education an opportunity to actually change the system.



The session was held at LaVista on May 15. Other coalition partners include: Boys Town, Bright Futures Foundation, Educational Service Units Coordinating Council, Education-Quest Foundation, Gallup Organization, Latino Center of the Midlands, Lincoln Education Association, Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska Association of School Boards, Nebraska Children & Families Foundation, Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, Nebraska Community Learning Center Network, Nebraska Council of Schools Administrators, Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska P-16 Initiative, Nebraska Parent Information Resource Center, Nebraska Parent Teachers Association, Nebraska State College System, Office of the Governor, Omaha Public Schools, Omaha Education Association, Nebraska State Education Association, PTI Nebraska, and the Sherwood Foundation.

**If your school assignment changed for next year,  
please send in that information,  
or any other demographic changes to:  
Marj Stolle at the OEA [marj.stolle@nsea.org](mailto:marj.stolle@nsea.org)**

Dear Colleagues,

Seventeen months and three days ago, I was a classroom teacher. One day later I became the President of the Omaha Education Association. More changes have taken place in the past year and a half than seems humanly possible. The previous President resigned; the Executive Director resigned three months later; two Associate Staff dealt with major health issues; the current UniServ positions became state education association employees assigned to Omaha; in the fall a lawsuit was filed against the OEA and two previous leaders and by winter an employee was let go due to the board's commitment to go green. Internally, OEA was off the chart with major changes.



Externally, the global issues during that same time frame involved a national push at all levels for educational reform. State funding was reduced and federal stimulus funding replaced the missing state revenues. Grants from the Gates Foundation and NEA Foundation were other options to support our sagging education funding. A major vetting process began and we were encouraged to move forward. This process wasn't easy. It involved attending education reform conferences and entering into healthy debates as to which best practices support effective teaching. Our team worked over the entire summer both in Omaha and from coast to coast. There was no summer break.

Some members felt we weren't moving fast enough, yet we held all board, committee and negotiation meetings needed to keep OEA moving forward. The negotiation process reached what was believed to be a good settlement in October, however members disagreed and voted no to the package. Members via surveys wanted reduced insurance deductibles. The negotiation team also lost most of their summer and experienced many late nights away from family life. Their dedication is to be lauded, given the economic pressures from failed banks, poor tax revenue predictions and the most significant economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Anyone can give up, it's the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone else would understand if you fell apart, that's true strength. OEA leadership kept us moving forward inspired by a strong belief that the greater needs of all members needed to be met. UniServ staff addressed membership rights cases promptly. Phone calls and e-mails continued to be responded to within 24 hours. Office staff worked with one less employee and volunteers stepped up to support OEA. Staffing changes with thoughtful budget planning and reduced spending led to a first time OEA dues reduction. At the OEA we are all working harder no doubt, but also smarter and greener. Members are what this organization has always been about. We strive to add more training to empower members to build capacity in building up membership and in understanding the contract. Opportunities for trainings have taken place this summer and in the fall.

It is change, continuing change, inevitable change that is the dominant factor in society today. Decisions must take into account not only the OEA and education as it is, but as it will be. As your OEA President for the past 17 months and four days, I am honored to have led us on a course that will take us well into the future, thanks in large part to open-minded and forward-thinking OEA leaders, members, staff, NSEA and NEA, and to an ongoing positive, collaborative relationship with OPS leadership.

I wish the new leadership all the best, and encourage all members and connected community to rally in support of continuing the goals of the Omaha Education Association – together we will continue moving forward. *The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made. (John Schaar-futurist)*

Sincerely,

Doreen Jankovich  
OEA President February 2009 – July 2010



OEA is offering short term disability insurance through the AFLAC Company. AFLAC is a company that has held a 30+ year relationship with OEA Members. At the April 13, 2010 AR Meeting, OEA ARs were received a brief presentation from AFLAC representatives and forms were given for ARs to share with their buildings.

If you need a form please contact [mary\\_merica@us.aflac.com](mailto:mary_merica@us.aflac.com) or call 402-934-3950 directly. All AFLAC forms should be sent back to AFLAC representative:  
Mary Beck Merica  
3738 South 149<sup>th</sup> Street  
Omaha, NE 68144

**Deadline for submission is June 1, 2010.**

**PACE & CAF  
Work Pays Off Big,  
Prove Successful  
In Local Races**

PACE Committee interviews and CAF recommendations proved to be 100% successful in school board races, legislative races, state board and congressional races. Over thirty members were involved in the interviews and recommendation process for candidates. In the metro area six Legislative District candidates moved forward from the primary. In both the Congressional and State Board races, recommended candidates moved forward. In addition candidates recommended for school board races also go forward from the primary to the general election. As campaign events begin to line up over the summer from leafleting to parades, we encourage members to support our recommended candidates in their efforts.

### **OEA Tip-Off**

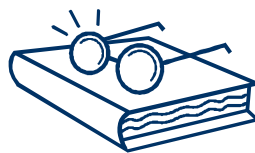
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Visit us on the web  
at: [www.omahaoea.org](http://www.omahaoea.org)



OEA is again offering interested OEA members the VSP Vision Insurance for the 2010-11 membership year. Printed information and an enrollment form can be obtained by calling:

Marj Stolle at the  
OEA Office (346-0400)  
or by emailing her at  
[marj.stolle@nsea.org](mailto:marj.stolle@nsea.org).

The information is also available on the home page of the OEA website:  
<https://www.vsp.com/go/omahaeducationassociation> .

Enrollment forms may be obtained from Marj at OEA  
or they may be downloaded from the OEA website.

Please return completed enrollment forms to  
Marj at OEA by Tuesday, June 1, 2010.