

Read Across America!

Save the Date!

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

This will be the National Education Association's twelfth annual observance of NEA's Read Across America. NEA is calling all of America's children, both young and old, to reward their learning by celebrating the joys of reading with Dr. Seuss on his 105th birthday. Readers of all ages are encouraged to celebrate on Monday, March 2, 2009.

Our reading party for the Omaha Public Schools will take place on Monday, March 2, 2009. If you would like to have a community reader come to your classroom, please fill out this form and send it to the OEA office by Friday, January 16, 2009. You will be informed of the name of your reader and their scheduled time by February 20, 2009.

So please mark your calendars now and feel free to email Rose Pope (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.

READ ACROSS OMAHA – CELEBRITY READER REQUEST

Teacher's Name _____



School _____

Grade or Class _____

Room # _____

Cell phone number _____ School number _____

1st Choice Time _____ **Be specific – not just AM or PM**

2nd Choice Time _____ **Be specific – not just AM or PM**

3rd Choice Time _____ **Be specific – not just AM or PM**

Title of book that you will have ready for the Community Reader to read:

Please send in this completed form to OEA by Friday, January 16, 2009



WHEN & WHERE

December 16
OEA CAF

December 17
Ad Hoc Finance Committee

December 18
Members Benefits Committee
Compensation & Benefits

December 25 through January 1
OEA Closed

January 8
PACE

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

The OEA office will be open
from 8am to 4pm Dec. 22-24
and Jan. 2nd.

OEA Tip-Off

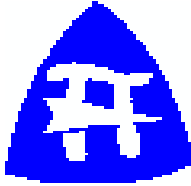
The OEA *Tip-Off* is a bi-monthly publication printed for members of the Omaha Education Association.

Sue Perkins,
Communications Specialist

Direct Inquiries to:
Maddie Fennell, Editor
maddie.fennell@nsea.org
402-346-0400

Eddie Ventura,
Information Coordinator
edward.ventura@ops.org

Visit us on the web at:
www.omahaoea.org



OEA Tip-Off

December 12, 2008

Happy Holidays!!

From the OEA Staff

Dennis Gehringer Tim Krapp

Mary Freel Marj Stolle

Lorrie Stuto Brian Eilderts Sue Perkins

And OEA President Maddie Fennell



INFINITE CAMPUS

The OPS Board of Education has approved the purchase of Infinite Campus as the new student data management system. Training on Infinite Campus has begun and will last through the beginning of the 2009 school year. A complete detailed training calendar will be made available by January 2009.

Implementation of the new system will involve three core phases:
Conversion, Customization, and Training.

CONVERSION AND CUSTOMIZATION - is scheduled over a six-month time frame beginning in January of 2009. The "Go-Live" date to begin exclusive use of the Infinite Campus System is scheduled for JUNE 15th of 2009.

TRAINING - Training will be provided for all users of the Student Information System from November of 2008 through the 2009-2010 school year. OPS will follow the following training model:

Core Team - The Core Team will consist of key District personnel that will be responsible for the full functionality, administration, and security of the system.

Building Coach - The Building Coach will be the key individual in the building that will be the first line of support for Infinite Campus.

Teacher Coach - The Teacher Coach will be the first line of support for the teaching staff in the school building.

Visit the Infinite Campus web site for frequently asked questions about the implementation process. Go to the OPS Home page>Central Offices>Student and Community Services>Infinite Campus or directly to <http://www.ops.org/District/Default.aspx?TabId=1366>.

Legislative Contact Teams

As public school educators we are often reminded that “Every decision in education is a political decision.” This notion of education being policy-driven is not always first and foremost in our minds. Washington, DC, seems very far away when we’re immersed in the bustle of our classrooms. The prospect of lobbying lawmakers half-way across the country is daunting.

The good news is that we can be effective agents of change on a local level! 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. It is important that they know and understand what takes place in your classroom!**

There will be a Political Contact Team training session on Saturday, January 24th at 10:00 a.m. at the OEA. 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 the skills necessary to become a liaison with a school board member, state legislator or Learning Community Coordinating Council member.

Be a voice for our students and for your colleagues!

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

Nebraska State Education Association Delegate Assembly Nominations

The Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA) Delegate Assembly is the governing body for the NSEA. The NSEA Delegate Assembly will take place in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Marriott on April 24 & 25, 2009. The meetings begin around 7:00 p.m. on Friday and run through lunch on Saturday. All expenses, including your overnight stay, are paid for by the NSEA.

Election of the 50+ OEA delegates will take place Tuesday, February 10, 2009. To be eligible to run for election as an OEA delegate, you must be nominated. You can be nominated by:

- 1) Submitting a nomination form to the OEA by 5pm on **Tuesday, January 13, 2009** OR
- 2) Being nominated from the floor of the Tuesday, January 13, 2009 meeting of the OEA Representative Assembly at Wilson Middle School. The meeting begins at 4:15pm.

FILING DEADLINE: January 13, 2009

Nomination forms have been sent to your building as a “Please Post”; they are also available on the OEA icon on First Class or by calling OEA at 346-0400.



Professional Development Log

Priority Calendar: January 5th

January 5th, our first day back from Winter break, is a day without students.

According to the OPS Priority dates schedule, the entire day is for teacher planning and preparation. No meetings can be scheduled by administration on this day (except for an after school staff meeting) without the approval of a majority of staff members obtained through a secret ballot vote.

Be sure of what is scheduled in your building BEFORE winter break!

If you have any questions, please contact the OEA.

Alternative Compensation

On December 8th, the OPS Board of Education received a formal briefing on alternative compensation from Human Resources Assistant Superintendent Janice Garnett and General Services Administrator Gerry Huber. OEA President Maddie Fennell made additional comments to the Board, focusing on the potential that alternative compensation brings to our district. She emphasized the OEA Board’s three guiding principals:

- We need substantial new money at the table that can be sustained over time.
- Salary increases cannot be based solely on student test scores.
- Any new funding or salary structure must be bargained at the local level.

One of the documents that Maddie shared with the board was “Ask the Hard Questions about Alternative Compensation: A Checklist” from the National Education Association Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy department. The document lists several factors to consider as you weigh whether to participate in an alternative compensation program, including:

Is your pay system competitive with other pay systems? Does your base pay reflect the value of teaching? How much will a new system cost? Is there an evaluation process built into the plan that allows for corrections? Is it easily understood? Are you trying to change or reward behavior? Will the number of employees involved be limited? How subjective or objective are the performance factors? Will a new compensation plan require additional workloads? What are the intended and potential unintended consequences of the plan?

These questions, and many more, will need to be fully explored as we move towards developing a compensation system that more accurately compensates teachers for their work.

The OEA Board of Directors position states that any alternative compensation plan must:

- 1. Bring in new, substantial and sustainable funding.**
- 2. Not be based solely upon student performance.**
- 3. Be negotiated and voted upon.**

Threat Assessment Evaluation

Do you feel that a student poses a serious threat to the safety of other students or staff? If so, you have the right to ask your Principal for a Threat Assessment of that student. The principal then decides if your building Threat Assessment Team needs to be convened. Your building Threat Assessment Team will evaluate the student and determine any action that needs to be taken. If the Team does convene, you have the right to meet with them and share your concerns.

If you report a threat to your Administrator and he/she does not call a team together, or the team does not ask for your input, or you feel the threat has not been acted upon appropriately, you have the right to contact Roddie Miller in the School Safety office at TAC (557-2136) and ask for a review of the situation. If you don’t know who is on your building Threat Assessment Team, ask your principal or counselor and share that information with members in your building.