



Raising achievement and closing the gaps for ALL students.

Tip-Off

September 11, 2020

Welcome Back!



Welcome back to the 2020/2021 school year! The summer went by way too fast, but it is my hope that you were able to take the time for some rest and relaxation. I know the beginning of this year has brought a mixed bag of emotions for everyone involved. What you have done in a matter of days/weeks is an incredible accomplishment that will go down in the books on how dedicated and professional teachers were during the pandemic of 2020. I have seen how hard you all have worked to get ready for distributions of books, iPads and computers. I am not saying it wasn't hard or challenging, but it was handled professionally and with unknown certainty of what the final plan would be. You, the educators did that! You should be proud of the work you did, and it was noticed by those who matter. Your students have been eagerly waiting to meet you, to see a friendly smile, and hear a familiar voice that cares for them. Though it is being done virtually, you have created the space to be welcoming, friendly and conducive for the A+ learning to take place.

I continue to commit to you that I will work cooperatively and respectfully with all Omaha Education Association (OEA) members and the Board. I seek to be transparent in my actions and to ensure a relationship built on trust and doing what is in the best interest of our members, while always advocating for your best interests first. Together we can make positive change happen for our students and teachers.

The OEA is strong because of our members. We have 2,800 members working together to reach our mission of "Raising achievement and closing the gaps for ALL students." There is no one person that can reach that goal, it takes all of us as a collective group to attain those goals. YOU are the OEA and we are stronger because of you.

There are many things that OEA will be active in this year. The Board of Directors meet monthly to address issues or concerns that impact our Association, the Association Representatives (AR) meet monthly and discuss about issues that are affecting the classrooms at the building levels, various committees are tasked with charges that strengthen our mission, but without YOU this work can't happen. A list of committees is listed with a small description of what their focus will be on and the chairperson of that committee. The OEA provides many opportunities to lead, one just needs to be willing. So, my ask of you is simple, will you join a committee to make the association stronger?

There is no rest for the OEA. We are full steam ahead as the new year kicks off. We are starting the negotiation process again, as we have entered in year two of a two-year contract. Your negotiation team has begun the process to prepare for the upcoming negotiation sessions. But it doesn't stop there. They will continue to meet over the next few months to prepare for the actual process to begin. This dynamic team is sound and will represent you extremely well at the table with the District. Many things are being planned to increase teacher voice on the Comp and Benefits Committee, your voice MATTERS and is needed, I urge you to participate.

I'd like to welcome Becca Dingwell to the OEA Team! Becca is our new OS and will be working with Elementary Teachers. Becca and Liz Figueroa will continue to work with members on member rights cases as well as Organizing Projects to identify and propose improvements in your working conditions.

Finally, I want to "thank you" for being a member of the OEA! Without you we wouldn't be as strong, it is important now more than ever that we continue to stand together. Teaching is not an easy job it is hard. You make a difference and the OEA is here to assist you whenever needed.

Best of luck this year and I look forward to working with you.

Robert Miller
President, Omaha Education Association

OEA Committees:

Meetings will be held via ZOOM until further notice! Your Committee Chairs will have the link, please reach out to them to receive the link and additional information from the committee.



- **Compensation and Benefits** - Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the Month
This committee will coordinate and promote member education and communication regarding bargaining, train and develop negotiation team, conduct bargaining research and provide a regular report of progress towards accomplishing the goals to the OEA Board of Directors.
Contact: Justin Potts - potts.justin@gmail.com
- **Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC)** - Meets the 3rd Thursday of the Month
This committee will develop and implement strategies to involve more minorities in the work of the OEA/NSEA/NEA. Identify, encourage and assist in the election of minority members in positions of leadership. Also anything that brings the concerns of minority teachers to light where they may be overlooked.
Contact: Paula Aguirre - paguirre1090@yahoo.com
- **Governance** - Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the Month
This committee is responsible for the governing functions of the OEA, takes action to amend bylaws and policies of the board and association; is responsible for the administration of elections.
Contact: Diana Casey- dpowerwoman@hotmail.com
- **Instructional Advocacy** - Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the Month
The committee will work to improve the instructional environment for all students and teachers in a proactive and advocating manner. They will work with the ProCom to address concerns that are brought forward from both the District and OEA.
Contact: Meeghan Hartfield - ma_hartfield@yahoo.com
- **Membership** - Meets the 1st Tuesday of the Month
This committee will develop, promote and conduct the membership drives and New Teacher activities to increase and maintain active membership in the OEA.
Contact: Hana Krommenhoek - hmkhoek@gmail.com
Ed Ventura - venturaomaha@gmail.com
- **Political Action Committee for Education (PACE)** - Meets the 4th Wednesday of the Month
The PACE Committee will develop, train and implement Legislative and School Board Contact Teams, handle interviews for area districts and make recommendations. Attend appropriate functions with state senators and school board members.
Contact: Cathy Armbeck-Hughes - carmbeckh@cox.net
- **Professional and Community Relations (PCR)** - Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the Month
This committee will work to maintain community involvement and activities for the association and its members. Will work with OEA staff to develop a program for Laurel's night and seek member participation on activities.
Contact: Sharon Rhodes - sharon.bell7288@gmail.com
- **Retirement** - TBD
This committee will review OSERS and retirement activities and changes, provide workshops for OEA members on retirement planning.
Contact: TBD

Are you looking for a way to get involved with your association?

Joining a Committee may be the best way to test the waters!

*Please contact the Executive Team: President Robert Miller,
Vice President Tracy Hartman-Bradley, Vice President Kathy Poehling,
or just call Lorrie at the OEA (402-346-0400) and she will take your name
if you have interest in joining a committee, but are unsure of how to get started!*

Unless otherwise noted, all committee meetings are held at the OEA office, 4202 So. 57 Street

NSEA Expands Free Webinar PD Offerings

NSEA's schedule of professional development webinars is now supercharged!

A year ago, NSEA offered about two dozen webinars over the school year. The 2020-21 schedule already lists that many sessions, along with a professional development catalog of presentations by NSEA staff and members available on demand.

Of interest are the seven NEA Member Benefits programs scheduled throughout the school year, each of them at least twice. Topics include Women and Money, Life Stage Investing, Student Loan Forgiveness and more.

The professional development sessions offer professional growth to members via Zoom. For details, reach NSEA Organizational Specialist Isau Metes at 1-800-742-0047, or at:

isau.metes@nsea.org

Register at this link:

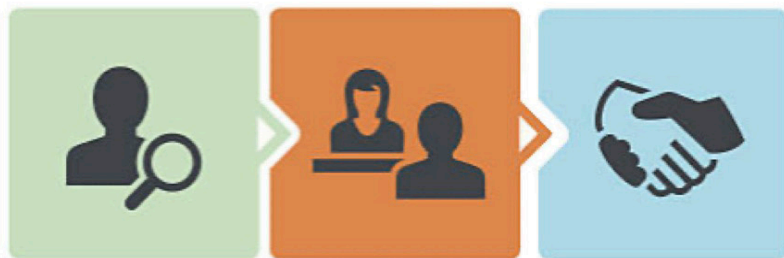
www.nsea.org/webinars

The schedule (Central time; webinars are an hour, unless noted):

- **Thursday, Sept. 17, 5:30 p.m.:** Women and Money.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 22, 5 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Thursday, Sept. 24, 5 p.m.:** Student Loan Forgiveness/Reduction. (90 minutes.)
- **Tuesday, Oct. 20, 6 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Thursday, Oct. 22, 5 p.m.:** Financial Essentials.
- **Thursday, Nov. 12, 4:30 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Thursday, Nov. 12, 6 p.m.:** Life Stage Investing.
- **Thursday, Dec. 10, 5:30 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Tuesday, Jan. 12, 6 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Thursday, Jan. 14, 5 p.m.:** Charting the Course.
- **Thursday, Jan. 28, 5:30 p.m.:** Women and Retirement.
- **Thursday, Feb. 11, 5:30 p.m.:** Women and Money.
- **Tuesday, Feb. 16, 5:30 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview (Travel focus).
- **Thursday, Feb. 18, 6 p.m.:** Student Loan Forgiveness/Reduction (90 minutes).
- **Tuesday, March 16, 4:30 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Thursday, March 18, 5 p.m.:** Financial Essentials.
- **Tuesday, April 13, 5:30 p.m.:** NEA Member Benefits Overview.
- **Thursday, April 15, 5 p.m.:** Life Stage Investing.



Recruit an Educator to join the...



OEA
Omaha Education Association

\$20 Gift Card for the New Member



The new member will be awarded with a \$20 VISA gift card for signing up.

Sweet Treat for AR & New Member



Win Lunch

for all members
in a building



Winners announced Oct. 13
one from Elementary • Middle • High
based on the highest percentage increase

Like us on  

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Save Time by Voting Early!

Considering all the upheaval that has accompanied 2020, there is one thing NSEA members can do to save time and energy while practicing social distancing: vote by mail!

“Voting by mail is so easy and is such a time-saver,” said NSEA President Jenni Benson. “It’s the perfect way for busy educators to cast a ballot.”

Nebraska Secretary of State Bob Evnen announced in August that every registered voter in Nebraska will receive an application for mail-in ballots this fall. In order to receive a ballot for the Nov. 3, 2020, General Election, voters must complete the application form they receive in the mail, apply a stamp and drop the form in a U.S. Post Office mail box, or drop it off at their county clerk or election commissioner’s office.

Voters may also go to the secretary of state’s website, click on the ‘Early Voting’ tab and follow instructions found there.

Early voting ballots will be mailed out beginning on Monday, Sept. 28. The last day to request a ballot to be mailed is Friday, Oct. 23, and all ballots must be delivered to the county election office on Nov. 3, 2020, by 8 p.m. CDT (7 p.m. MDT).

Those educators who are not registered to vote have until Friday, Oct. 16, to register. Registration can be completed in the county clerk or election commissioner’s office, or at the Nebraska Secretary of State’s website at: <https://sos.nebraska.gov>

Questions? Contact your local county clerk or election commissioner’s office.

A complete list of NSEA’s recommended candidates will appear in the October edition of The Voice.

NSEA Offers Conversation on Race, Belonging

Space is Limited, Registration Opens Soon

Building on two years of sessions with member educators and administrators, your Association leadership is excited to offer a series of seminars this fall titled NSEA Conversations About Race and Belonging.

The 12-session series begins in October via Zoom and will carry through March or April, with a break over the winter holiday.

Using the conversations, participants will:

- Improve their personal racial understanding based on self-examination and awareness;
- Increase their capacity and confidence to initiate and engage in meaningful conversations about race in their classrooms, schools and communities;
- Develop their capacity to be effective allies and empathic partners; and
- Become better equipped to work collectively to dismantle and disrupt racist systems.

The series is an intensive virtual program that builds a peer cohort and peer-to-peer relationships through conversation, storytelling, self-awareness, racial literacy, critical thinking, and the practice of dialogic and reflective skills that will prepare participants to lead small group discussions.

The program covers a range of topics, such as race as a social construct, systemic racism, racial identity, implicit bias, micro-aggressions and other manifestations of the racial contract, inter- and intra-racial allyship, the importance of presence and listening, and how to move from thinking and feeling to transformation and action.

NSEA Conversations About Race & Belonging will be led by Michele Chang and Palma Strand, both of whom have experience working with Nebraska educators. Chang and Strand have led two previous cohorts of NSEA members through a similar program.

The program will accept 22 applicants and consist of 12 sessions of 2.5 hours each.

Watch the NSEA website for registration details and registration beginning in mid-September. That site is at:

www.nsea.org

The program is funded by a grant from the National Education Association.



Recommended Candidates

OPS School Board

Subdistrict 1 - Ricky Smith

Subdistrict 3 - Alex Gates

Subdistrict 7 - Jane Erdenberger

Subdistrict 9 - Tracy Casady

Congressional District

2 - Kara Eastman

Legislative Districts

3 - Senator Carol Blood

7 - Senator Tony Vargas

9 - John Cavanaugh

11 - Terrell McKinney

13 - Senator Justin Wayne

31 - Tim Royers

39 - Allison Heimes

45 - Susan Hester

49 - Jen Day

State Board of Education

District 2 - Lisa Frickey

District 4 - Jacquelyn Morrison

NEA Eliminates Annual Fee for Loan Forgiveness Plan

Student Debt Reduction Program Fee Waived

For those Association members seeking relief from student debt, the process just got less expensive.

Exclusive to NEA members, the NEA Members Insurance Trust is offering one year of no-cost access to the NEA Student Debt Navigator program powered by Savi. The program identifies all of the best loan repayment options available to each member and provides the information needed to select an informed choice.

According to NEA Member Benefits, members who have used the program save an average of \$156 per month and many thousands over a lifetime using Savi. Considering that the average student debt load is more than \$37,000, \$156 a month is meaningful.

For this year only, the NEA Members Insurance Trust is waiving the usual NEA Member Benefits-negotiated cost of \$29.99 for the Savi program. Non-Association members pay \$99 on the open market.

Utilizing the Savi program compares a member’s repayment and forgiveness options in a side-by-side format, and allows the member to pick a repayment plan, enroll and get on-going advice, tools and information.

To utilize the plan, members must create a no-cost account on the NEA Member Benefits website at:

www.neamb.com

Go to the Savi registration page at:

neamb.com/Products/NEA-Student-Debt-Navigator

When completing Savi’s online registration, it is recommended to have a recent tax return and student loan statement nearby to make registration run as efficiently as possible.

Questions? Call 1-833-615-1376

**between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 8 p.m.,
Monday through Friday.**



Create a Video

to be featured on the **OEA** Social Media

Tell us in **20 seconds or less** why you joined your Association or why it is great.

Send your video clip to robert.miller@nsea.org



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Visit us at omahaoea.org



**What's
Coming
Up...**

All meetings via Zoom

Governance Meeting
Wednesday, September 16
4:45pm

EMA Meeting
Thursday, September 17
4:45pm

PACE Meeting
Thursday, September 24
4:45pm

MEMBERSHIP Meeting
Tuesday, October 6
4:45pm

Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 7
4:45pm

OEA Board of Directors

President:

Robert Miller - robert.miller@nsea.org

Vice President - Member Benefits:

Tracy Hartman-Bradley - trhb1000@hotmail.com

Vice President - Advocacy:

Kathy Poehling - kathyap@cox.net

Elementary Representatives:

Traci Walters - steelerurl36@yahoo.com

Amanda Kloke - amanda.renae@gmail.com

Anne King - anniesbar@cox.net

Terri Childers - terrichilders@msn.com

Octavia Butler - octavia.r.butler@gmail.com

Josh McDougall - jwmcDougall@msn.com

Middle School Representatives:

Faith Johnson - faithteaches22@yahoo.com

Stacie Stevens - stacie.nicole.stevens@gmail.com

Amy Smith - catrona@hotmail.com

Alternative/TAC Representative:

Kim Gardiner - kimgardiner1714@gmail.com

Senior High Representatives:

Molly Davies - maryfrancesdavies@gmail.com

James Goetz - jeg1126@gmail.com

Michelle Settlemyer - canyon_hiker@hotmail.com

For more information on your
Board of Directors Visit:

<https://omahaoea.org/who-we-are/executive-team-board-of-directors/>

Updates on Virtual Learning

- **Change in Leave Practice** - Beginning Monday August 31, through the duration of the pandemic, leave is going to change slightly. If an OEA bargaining unit member has been exposed but is asymptomatic, they will be directed by HR to work from home. This will not be optional. This is paid leave. Contact tracers will be engaged. If teachers test positive or develop symptoms, teachers will be required to use FCCRA leave. Teachers have 10 days of FCCRA leave between now and the end of December. When teachers are on FCCRA leave, they will not teach while quarantined.

- **Progress Reports** - Will need to be completed, follow your building administrators' guidelines.

- **What is next?** The district has begun to look at what second quarter will look like. One thing we have learned during this process is that things change daily. As of the writing of this article, there has been only discussion on what 2nd quarter would look like. A possibly staggered approach or the 3:2 model. It is an attempt to make sure the safety of students and staff are addressed with any option. There have been no definitive plans identified for 2nd quarter.

- **Student Absences** - This has been brought up and currently being addressed. The policy is still being followed and the district is reaching out to parents/guardians of students who are missing class. Continue to follow building procedure. We have been informed of the constant request to notify the building secretary/principal when students leave class for various reasons, causing a disruption to the learning that is taking place.

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