

NSEA-RETIRED ADVOCATE

www.nsea.org/retired

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Hanging Out with NSEA-Retired at the LINCOLN CHILDREN'S ZOO



The Nebraska State Education Association-Retired held its annual Spring Conference at the Lincoln Children's Zoo, bringing members together for a day of learning, fellowship and new experiences. The event featured a variety of presentations focused on education, health, safety and the arts. More than 60 retired educators from across the state gathered to reconnect and share ideas.

The conference opened with a presentation highlighting the Lincoln Public Schools Science Focus Program. Attendees learned how the program encourages students to explore scientific concepts through hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences. Coordinator Lindsey Roy said the program helps students foster curiosity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Members also heard about Lincoln High School's International Baccalaureate Program, which prepares students for success through rigorous academics, global perspectives and a commitment to service. Program coordinator J.P. Caruso provided an overview of the curriculum and its impact on students as they prepare for college and future careers.

Representative Paula Harre from Domesti-PUP introduced attendees to the organization's work supporting emotional well-being through companion animals. Along for the presentation was a very special guest, a highly trained service dog who greeted members and enjoyed a few snacks from attendees.

Bryan Health shared practical strategies for preventing falls and



Hanging Out, Together: 1. Representative Dr. Paula Harre from Domesti-PUPS brings a very special guest to meet with NSEA-Retired members. 2. Bryan Health physical therapist Laura Corbridge talks about preventing falls. 3. A beautiful quilt design donated by NSEA-Retired member Dr. De Tonack. 4. Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason presents to members. 5. NSEA-Retired member Paula Aguirre browses the silent auction items. 6. A Lincoln Children's Zoo resident sloth. 7. NSEA-Retired members show off their "Lynne Walz for Governor" yard signs while NSEA-Retired President John Heineman (left) and NSEA President Tim Royers pose for a selfie. 8. Lincoln Public Schools Science Focus Program Coordinator Lindsey Roy presents. 9. NSEA-Retired member Janis Elliot shows off her new quilt. 10. NSEA-Retired Member Faye Sitzman shares the love with a Domesti-PUP service dog.

maintaining independence, while the Lincoln Police Department offered guidance on recognizing scams and protecting personal and financial information.

Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason inspired attendees with a reading and discussion about creativity, storytelling and the role poetry plays in connecting people and communities. The conference

concluded with a special presentation from Lincoln Children's Zoo staff featuring one of the zoo's resident sloths, giving attendees an up-close look at one of the zoo's most popular animals.

Members were also the first in the state to receive signs supporting Lynne Walz for governor during one of the campaign's first statewide distribution events.

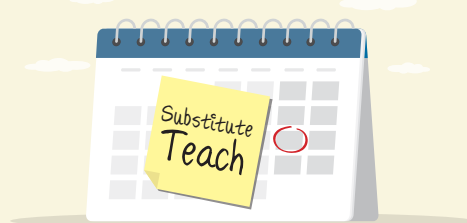
The annual event reflected NSEA-Retired's commitment to lifelong learning, community and engagement, providing meaningful programs that enrich retirement.

Watch for more opportunities to connect with members across the state as NSEA-Retired continues to offer educational programs and events throughout the year.

120

DAY

BREAK IN SERVICE



NSEA-backed Legislative Win

Retired educators who want to return to Nebraska schools will have a shorter path back to the classroom under a new law that took effect May 1.

LB824 reduces the required separation-from-service period from 180 days to 120 days for members of the Nebraska School Retirement System (NPERS) and Omaha School Employees Retirement System (OSERS) who are taking a retirement distribution. The measure was one of several education-related bills approved during the 2026 legislative session.

The new law provides a clearer process for retirees considering substitute teaching or other school employment after retirement. While the waiting period is shorter, members should be aware that the law also eliminates previous allowances for limited substitute or volunteer service during the separation period.

Under LB824, retirees taking a distribution may not provide any service to an employer participating in their retirement plan during the 120-day separation period. This includes substitute teaching, volunteering, coaching, officiating and mentoring through programs such as Teammates, or similar activities.

The separation period begins on the later of two dates: a member's termination date or the date NPERS or OSERS systems receives a valid distribution application.

For contracted school employees, the termination date is generally the final day of their contract. For hourly employees, it is the last day worked.

One important provision remains unchanged. Members who retire but do not immediately request a retirement distribution may continue to provide substitute or volunteer service. In those cases, the 120-day separation period does not begin until NPERS or OSERS receives a valid application for distribution.

Members who terminated employment and submitted a valid distribution application before May 1 remain subject to the previous 180-day separation requirements.

The law also addresses several situations retirees commonly ask about. School board service generally does not violate the separation requirement if the position is elected, does not involve direct supervision of most school employees, and compensation is limited to per diem or expense reimbursements. However, activities such as mentoring through Teammates, training a replacement employee, coaching, officiating or refereeing for a school employer are not permitted during the 120-day separation period.

Members who fail to meet the separation requirements may face significant consequences, including repayment of retirement distributions, retroactive retirement contributions and interest.

NSEA-Retired members with questions are encouraged to review the LB824 Frequently Asked Questions document or contact NPERS/OSERS Member Services at 402-471-2053 or 800-245-5712, Option 1.

FACTS & FIGURES



A majority of retirement benefit distributions (88%) remain within the Nebraska economy.

Plan members by sector:

	School: 104,330
	State: 33,244
	OSERS: 15,409
	County: 14,485
	Patrol: 961 DROP: 32
	Judges: 353



1 in 11 Nebraskans is a member of NPERS.

SOURCE: NPERS 2025 Annual Report to the Legislative Retirement Committee

Journey to Harmony Returns in 2026

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNEY



Participants pose for a photo on the June 2025 Sankofa Journey at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala.



After a powerful experience on the 2025 Sankofa: Journey to Harmony civil rights pilgrimage, NSEA-Retired members are inviting others to join them for the next Journey this fall.

In June 2025, NSEA-Retired members Rita Bennett and Pat Shepard joined 18 participants on a five-day immersive experience organized by Catalyst for Harmony. Traveling more than 1,100 miles through Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, the group visited sites central to the civil rights movement while engaging in guided discussion, journaling and reflection.

"It wasn't just a tour," Bennett said at the time. "It was an immersive experience with time for discussion, journaling and reflection before and after visiting each site."

For Shepard, walking across Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge was among the most meaningful moments of the trip.

"As I prepared to walk across the bridge, I felt intense sadness and anger that we are still fighting for that change 60 years later," Shepard said. "But as I stepped off, I resolved not to give up. I have to believe that, someday, we shall overcome."

The experience left a lasting impression

on both members and inspired Bennett to explore bringing the opportunity to other NSEA-Retired members.

That vision is now becoming a reality.

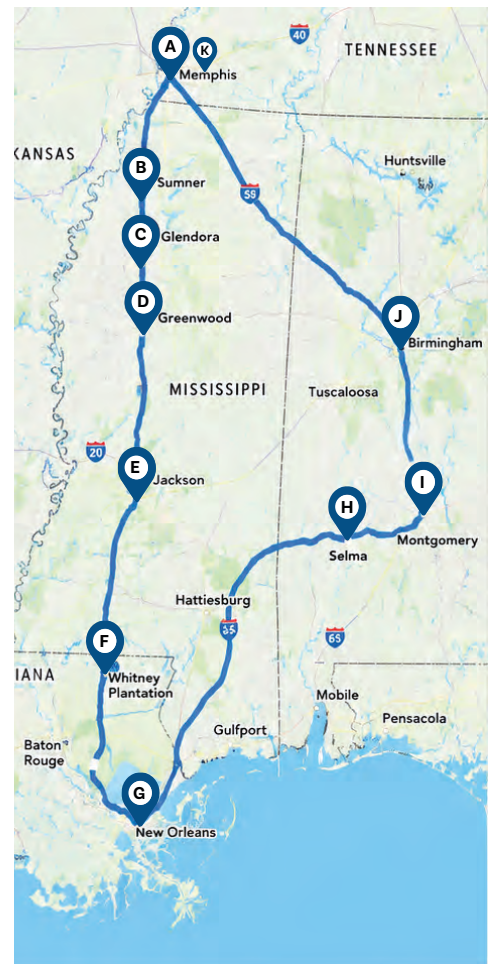
NSEA-Retired is organizing a new Journey to Harmony experience for Oct. 26-31, 2026. The trip will again visit significant civil rights sites across the South while providing opportunities for learning, reflection and conversation about the continuing pursuit of racial and social justice. Bennett believes the experience aligns closely with the association's values.

"The Journey fits in so well with our unified Association goals to learn about and promote racial and social justice," Bennett said. "There couldn't be a better time for others to participate in an experience like the Journey to Harmony."

Space is limited. The approximate cost is \$2,000 and includes lodging, meals, transportation and admission to tour sites. A \$500 deposit is due by July 30 to reserve a spot.

Members interested in learning more or registering can contact Rita Bennett at ritagbennett@gmail.com or 402-440-5999.

Trip Preview



- 📍 A. Memphis, TN
- 📍 B. Sumner, MS
- 📍 C. Glendora, MS
- 📍 D. Greenwood, MS
- 📍 E. Jackson, MS
- 📍 F. Whitney Plantation, LA
- 📍 G. New Orleans, LA
- 📍 H. Selma, AL
- 📍 I. Montgomery, AL
- 📍 J. Birmingham, AL
- 📍 K. Memphis, TN



New Teacher Grants Awarded

The Lincoln Education Association-Retired recognized four future educators with \$1,000 scholarships during its May meeting, continuing the organization's commitment to supporting the next generation of teachers.

The scholarships are awarded annually to graduates of Lincoln Public Schools who are preparing to student teach during the upcoming academic year. Diane Lamb and Linda Freye serve as LEA-Retired scholarship co-chairs.

This year's recipients are Brayden Bouwens, a 2023 graduate of Lincoln East High School who attends Nebraska Wesleyan University and will student teach in elementary education during spring 2027; Makenna Dezort, a 2020 graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School who attends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and will complete

her elementary special education student teaching during fall 2026; Emma Roblyer, a 2022 graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School who attends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and will student teach in elementary education during fall 2026; and Emily Maw, a 2023 graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School who attends Nebraska Wesleyan University and is pursuing endorsements in secondary history-social studies and a coaching certification. Maw will complete her secondary student teaching during spring 2027 and was unable to attend the scholarship presentation.

LEA-Retired thanked Union Bank & Trust for providing much of the funding that makes the scholarships and teacher grants possible.

Delegate Action Leads to Retirement Fix



OEA-Retired members Roger Rea and Cheryl Richardson

OEA-Retired members Roger Rea and Cheryl Richardson advocated in support of legislation to improve retirement benefits for Nebraska educators during the 2026 legislative session.

Sen. Margo Juarez's LB820, which incorporated provisions of Sen. Ashlei Spivey's LB1166, delivered a critical fix to how cost-of-living adjustments are calculated for retirees in the Omaha Public Schools Employees Retirement System. The legislation responds directly to action approved by delegates at the 2025 Nebraska State Education Association Delegate Assembly, demonstrating how member advocacy can shape state policy.

The measure also adjusts the timing of Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems contribution rate changes so future adjustments align with September paychecks. In addition, because the plan is now more than 100 percent funded following the passage of LB645 in 2025, many members will see lower contribution rates beginning in July.

PVREA Supports EPIC Discovery Center Scholarship Fund



PVREA Treasurer Guy Roggenkamp, EPIC Executive Director Alison Larson and EPIC Program Director Scott Mazour outside the center.



The Platte Valley Retired Education Association (PVREA) held its quarterly meeting in February at the EPIC Discovery Center.

Twenty-eight members attended the meeting, which featured a presentation from EPIC Executive Director Alison Larson. Larson shared the center's philosophy of STEAM-based learning, offering hands-on experiences for learners from early childhood through young adulthood.

Following the presentation, PVREA members approved a \$525 donation to the EPIC Children's Foundation. The contribution will support a scholarship fund that helps cover admission costs for students who qualify, expanding access to educational opportunities at the center.



WCEA-Retired Sponsors Summer Movie at Historic Isis Theatre

Members of the Wilber Clatonia Education Association-Retired (WCEA-Retired) partnered with the Blue River Arts Council on June 4 to host a screening of the 1993 film *Dennis the Menace* as part of the annual Free Summer Movie Series at the historic Isis Theatre in Crete.

The opportunity began this spring when Blue River Arts Council member and NSEA staff member Kristi Capek contacted WCEA-Retired Chair Sarah Brown about sponsoring a movie during the summer series. Capek suggested *Dennis the Menace*, starring Walter Matthau and Mason Gamble, noting that retired educators had likely encountered a few “Dennis” characters throughout their careers.

About 100 community members from Crete, Wilber and Dorchester attended the screening. WCEA-Retired members greeted moviegoers, served popcorn and soda, stamped Nebraska Passport books and assisted with theater operations throughout the event.

The Isis Theatre is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year following a complete renovation made possible through the efforts of the Blue River Arts Council and the City of Crete. The theater was also selected as one of 70 stops in the 2026 Nebraska Passport program after a successful application by the Arts Council.

As part of the Free Summer Movie Series, the Isis Theatre offers free children's movies every other Thursday at 10 a.m. Additional movie information is available through the theater's Facebook page.

Shredding Event Success!



LEA-Retired members volunteered during a community shredding event at the Lincoln Education Association office on June 6, helping support a fundraiser benefiting local educators.

The event was sponsored by the Lincoln Education Association Foundation and the LPS Employees Credit Union. Community members were invited to bring personal documents for free shredding, with voluntary monetary donations accepted throughout the morning.

Proceeds from the event will help fund teacher grants and scholarships through the Lincoln Education Association Foundation, supporting innovative classroom projects and future educators.

OEA-Retired Members Learn About Wills and Estate Planning



OEA-Retired members gathered this spring to learn more about wills and estate planning during a presentation by Omaha attorney Dennis Lee.

Lee, founder of Lee Law Office, focuses his practice on estate planning, probate and trust administration. During the program, he shared information about wills, estate planning and the importance of preparing legal documents that help protect individuals and their families. Members also had the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about planning for the future.



NSEA-Retired Workforce Scholarship Proposal Passes at Delegate Assembly

NSEA-Retired members joined educators from across the state April 24-25 for the 2026 Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA) Delegate Assembly, where delegates elected officers, approved governance changes, set dues and adopted new business items that will guide the association's work during the coming year.

Delegates approved amendments to Article V of the NSEA bylaws that clarify the Delegate Assembly's responsibilities, including approval of the annual audit. The changes also establish deadlines for resolutions and new business items, require advance submission for inclusion in official materials, and clarify that new business items may not conflict with existing bylaws or resolutions and remain in effect for up to one year unless renewed.

Delegates also updated seven existing resolutions and adopted 10 new resolutions covering topics including support for students experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, respect for individual names and pronouns, cross-cultural and multilingual education, preserving generational languages, preventing sexual harassment and discrimination, promoting civility in public discourse and ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Nine new business items also were approved. Among them was an item brought forward by NSEA-Retired directing the association to draft legislation for the 2027 legislative session establishing a Nebraska Educator Workforce Retention Scholarship Program. Delegates also approved studies examining the feasibility of creating an LGBTQ+ Caucus and a Special Education Committee, extending the Legal Representation Study Committee for one year, exploring a full-time release vice president position and expanding electronic "Green Only" Delegate Assembly materials.

Nebraska TOY Honorees Reunite

Delegates welcomed 2026 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Sarah Hardin as the keynote speaker during the Delegate Assembly. Hardin,

a member of the Mullen Education Association and science teacher at Mullen Public Schools, shared stories from her career and encouraged educators to recognize the lasting impact of everyday interactions with students. She emphasized that small moments of encouragement and kindness can leave a lifelong impression.

Following her keynote, Hardin posed for a photo with former Nebraska Teachers of the Year Roger Rea (1989) and John Heineman (2000).



Delegate Assembly 2026

Explore the history of Nebraska Teachers of the Year, including many NSEA-Retired members, by visiting the Nebraska Department of Education's Teacher of the Year webpage at www.education.ne.gov/toy/background-information or by scanning the QR code below.

Scan Me





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Know a Non-Member? Ask Them to Join NSEA-Retired



Summer is the perfect time to help non-members consider the benefits of joining the Nebraska State Education Association-Retired (NSEA-Retired). Here are five compelling reasons to become a member.

Protect Retirement

Membership in NSEA-Retired provides essential resources and support to help secure your retirement. The association advocates for policies that protect pensions and benefits, ensuring a stable financial future for retired educators.

Improve Public Education

By joining NSEA-Retired, you contribute to a collective effort to enhance the quality of public education. Together, we can promote initiatives and reforms that benefit all students and educators, creating a brighter future for our schools.

Advocate for Students

As a member, you gain a powerful voice in advocating for policies that support education. NSEA-Retired engages in political action to ensure that the

interests of students and educators are represented at local, state and national levels.

Stay Connected

Membership offers a valuable opportunity to stay connected with fellow educators. Reconnect with former colleagues, share experiences and build lasting relationships within a supportive community that understands the challenges and triumphs of the profession.

Stay Informed

NSEA-Retired provides access to conferences, workshops and media resources that keep you informed about the latest trends and developments in education. Staying updated enhances your ability to contribute meaningfully to discussions about public education.

Becoming an NSEA-Retired member means being part of a dedicated community. Join us in making a difference for ourselves and for generations of educators to come!

Visit www.nsea.org/joinnow or contact the NSEA Membership Department at 1-800-742-0047.

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