



# Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association

*Member Update*

*October 10, 2024*



*Photo Credit: Anselmo-Merna Public Schools*



[www.nrcsa.net](http://www.nrcsa.net)



[www.twitter.com/NRCSA1980](https://www.twitter.com/NRCSA1980)



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# *NRCSA Calendar*

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## **NRCSA Events**

### **NRCSA District Meetings**

August to October 2024

#### **Northeast**

October 14, 2024, 11:30 AM

Wayne State College

#### **North Central**

October 15, 2024 10:30 AM

In Ord

#### **West**

October 16, 2024, 12:30 PM

Bridgeport (Prairie Winds Community Center)

### **NRCSA Legislative Forum**

February 20, 2025

Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln

[More about this event](#)

### **NRCSA Spring Conference**

March 20 & 21, 2025

Crowne Plaza & Younes North Convention Center in

Kearney

[More about this event](#)

### **NRCSA Golf Tournament**

July 22, 2025

Meadowlark Hills Golf Course in Kearney

[More about this event](#)

## **Committee Meetings**

### **NRCSA Executive Committee**

November 20, 2024 9:00 AM

CHI Center in Omaha, Room 206-207

### **NRCSA Scholarship & Recognition Committee**

November 20, 2024, 10:00 AM

CHI Center in Omaha, Room 208

### **NRCSA/UNO Closing the Achievement Gap Research Team**

November 20, 2024, 11:00 AM

CHI Center in Omaha, Room 206-207



## *NRCSA Search Service*

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**Please let Jack Moles know where superintendent vacancies occur, so that NRCSA Superintendent Search can make direct contact. We need to hear as soon as possible in anticipation of getting promotional materials specific to that board of education ready. It is critical that Board Presidents have the NRCSA contact information so that if they choose to consider a Superintendent Search Service, NRCSA is one they hopefully will consider.**



### **Boyd County Schools**

**[Announcement of Vacancy](#)**

**[Apply for this Vacancy](#)**

Application Deadline: **Nov. 6, 2024**

Finalists Selected: **Nov. 13, 2024**

Interviews: **Nov. 18 & 19 or Nov. 23, 2024**

Contract Begins: **July 1, 2025**



### **Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools**

**[Announcement of Vacancy](#)**

**[Apply for this Vacancy](#)**

Application Deadline: **Nov. 18, 2024**

Finalists Selected: **Nov. 25, 2024**

Interviews: **Dec. 4 & 5, 2024**

Contract Begins: **July 1, 2025**

Access the Members area of [www.nrcsa.net](http://www.nrcsa.net) anytime.

**Login: member Password: playground**

**NRCSA has moved to a new office.** The new address for NRCSA is:

440 S 13th St, Suite B  
Lincoln, NE 68508

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**NRCSA's annual membership drive is nearing its end.** Notices were sent out in time for your July Board meetings, but members were welcome to pay their dues in the 2024-25 budget year. Annual Dues remain at \$850. Last year we had 221 school districts, ESU's, and State colleges and we expect to continue our annual growth. Thanks to you for being a member. This energizes our representation and advocacy for rural Nebraska, no matter who we are engaged with on education, legislation, or community issues. Without your support, there is less rural advocacy. Whether we like it or not, the outstate and rural population does not create a legislative majority anymore. In fact, rural Nebraska lost another seat in the Unicameral in the most recent redistricting. Finding success, whether passing, amending, or stopping legislation comes from membership, relationships, and focus. Thanks to your membership in NRCSA, rural is at the table and making a difference on behalf of our rural students, schools, and communities.

We do expect a growth in membership this year as we have already been informed that three Boards of Education have already voted to become new members for the 2024-25 school year. We are excited to welcome **Osmond ESU 1, and Shelby-Rising City** to NRCSA! We are very excited to have you as partners.

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**The NRCSA Executive Committee has made a positive move to assist non-traditional educators move toward full teaching certification.**

As a result of this move, new scholarship opportunities were created for paras who are in a "para to teacher program" and for transitional educators. NRCSA will provide three \$1,000 scholarships for the fall semester and three \$1,000 scholarships for the spring semester for the 2024-25 school year. Applicants for the scholarships must be current employees of a NRCSA-member district or ESU. Applicants must be enrolled for that semester in one of two types of programs: (1) in a recognized "para to teacher" program such as is offered by the three State Colleges (Chadron State, Peru State, or Wayne State), or (2) a transition to teaching program in which a person with a minimum of a bachelor's degree who is employed to teach in a member school while working through a transitional program, such as offered by the University of Nebraska-Kearney. The applicant could currently be teaching under a transitional certificate. Application materials were distributed to member Superintendents and ESU Administrators, who were then asked to share with potential candidates in their buildings. The Fall applications were received and the NRCSA Scholarship and Recognitions Committee selected the three scholarship winners.

NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles visited the districts of the three recipients to make the scholarship presentations. The Fall recipients are: Kayla Christensen (Morrill), Lauren Nichols (Sioux County), and Tabitha

## **NRCSA Leadership**

Dr. Heather Nebesniak, President.  
Ord Public Schools

Mark Lenihan, Past President.  
Wayne Community Schools

Chris Kuncl, Pres-Elect.  
Mullen Public Schools

Chris Prosocki, Secretary.  
Southern School District # 1

## **District Representatives:**

Eugene Hanks, West  
Crawford Public Schools

Dale Hafer, North Central  
Ainsworth Community Schools

Daryl Schrunk, Northeast  
Randolph Public Schools

Paul Sheffield, Southeast  
Exeter-Milligan Public Schools

Jon Davis, South Central  
Alma Public Schools

Jane Davis, Southwest  
Hershey Public Schools

## **Executive Director:**

Jack Moles

## **Lobbyists:**

Jon Edwards  
Scott Moore  
Russell Westerhold

## **Legislative Co- Chairs:**

Dr. Jason Dolliver  
Pender Public Schools

Bryce Jorgenson  
Southern Valley Schools

## **Scholarship & Recognition Co Chairs:**

Tim Heckenlively,  
Falls City Public Schools

Jim Widdifield  
Minden Public Schools

Nelson (Falls City).

Kayla Christensen is currently a para at Morrill Elementary School. She has a Bachelors degree in Sports and Exercise Science and is working to obtain teaching certification in Early Childhood Education (Inclusive) through UNK.

Lauren Nichols is currently a Science teacher (provisional certificate) at Sioux County Public Schools. She has a Bachelors degree in Applied Sciences and is working to obtain a teaching certificate in Secondary Science through UNK.

Tabitha Nelson is currently a para with Falls City Public Schools. She is working on a teaching certificate in K-12 Special Education through Chadron State College.

Applications for the Spring semester will go out in late October or early November. I ask you to encourage qualified candidates to apply for these scholarships.



*Morrill Board President Bill Watson, Jack Moles, Kayla Christensen, Morrill Elementary Principal Delinda Lackey.*



*Sioux County Superintendent Liz Baker, Lauren Nichols, and Jack Moles*



*Falls City Superintendent Tim Heckenlively, Tabitha Nelson, and Jack Moles*

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## **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH & PLANNING**

A year ago, NRCSA assisted 4 Boards of Education in choosing their next Superintendent of Schools.

In 2023-24, NRCSA assisted the Boards of Education at Sioux County Sioux County and Raymond Central in identifying their next Superintendent. We also assisted Deshler and Fairbury in identifying Interim Superintendents for next year. We are currently assisting the Boards of Education at Lawrence-Nelson and Boyd County in their Superintendent searches.

If your district finds a need to locate your next school leader, please be sure to keep the NRCSA Superintendent Search Service in mind. For more information you can contact Executive Director Jack Moles at [jmoles@nrcsa.net](mailto:jmoles@nrcsa.net) or by phone at 402-335-7732.

Another service that is offered is a planning service. It is a common practice for Boards of Education and the Superintendent to develop short and long-term plans. We are currently assisting Anselmo-Merna in their planning process. NRCSA does provide a quality service using experienced consultants. If you are interested in more information, please contact Executive Director Jack Moles.



*SYRACUSE-DUNBAR-AVOCA used the NRCSA Planning Service in 2022. NRCSA Consultants Rob Hanger and Fred Helmink assisted the district with its planning.*

### [NRCSA Search Service Experience](#)

### [NRCSA Planning Support Brochure](#)

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**The Special Session of the Unicameral adjourned on August 20.** The special session of the Nebraska Legislature was called by Governor Jim Pillen with the goal of reducing property tax levels. There were three days of bill introductions and a week's worth of bill hearings.

LB 1, introduced by Sen. Linehan, contained the Governor's plan for property tax relief. In part, this bill would have had the effect of the state taking over the funding of public schools. The plan had many issues from many different individual Senators and did not move forward. LB 9, introduced by Sen. Hughes, contained a plan that was more beneficial for NRCSA-member districts. This bill was taken over by the Revenue Committee as the vehicle to move the Governor's plan forward. As amended, it also did not gain traction.

LB 34 ended up being the next vehicle by which the Unicameral's Revenue Committee attempted to move forward with concepts in the Governor's plan. After much debate, the amended LB 34 was again amended. In the end, property tax relief that was originally provided through income tax credits in LB 1107 from a few years ago will now be "front-loaded". In the past these income tax credits for property taxes paid had to be claimed when property owners filed their income taxes. It is estimated that between 40% and 50% of property owners did not file for these credits. With LB 34, property owners will now automatically receive the reductions without having to file for them.

The cost of the new credit is \$750 million in FY25, then increasing 3% every year after that. The state will reimburse school districts for the cost of the new credit. The bill also changes growth in property tax levy authority for cities and counties. LB 2 and 3, referred to the Appropriations Committee, change provisions relating to appropriations and funds to lapse unexpended funds from FY2023-24, reduce General Fund appropriations in the current fiscal year, to provide for transfers of cash funds to the General Fund, and to provide for the crediting of investment earnings from certain cash and revolving funds to the General Fund. LB 2 and LB 3 provide the additional funding for LB 34.

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**The 2024 regular session of the Unicameral ended in April.** Below you will find a link to NRCSA's summary of bills that were passed. A few bills that did not pass are also listed. Bills signed by Governor Pillen

become effective three calendar months after adjournment (July 18, 2024), unless the bill has a specific operative date or was adopted with an emergency clause. Bills adopted with an emergency clause take effect the day after being signed. All bills not enacted at the conclusion of this year's session are indefinitely postponed and will not carry over to the next Nebraska Legislature. They may, however, be re-introduced by a Senator as a new bill.

### [NRCSA Bill Summaries \(Jack Moles\)](#)

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**NRCSA has developed a “resource” document to assist members when they want insight on a particular topic.** Often we are contacted and asked if we know of a school that has experience in a topic of interest. Many times we can point them in the right direction, but often we need to put out a request for information to the members. We have developed a list to begin from and already have some contact information on some of the topics. The plan is to feature this list in each of our monthly updates. Below is a link to a copy of this “early” list. If you would be willing to be listed as a resource or if you would like to suggest other topics for inclusion, please contact Jack Moles.

### [NRCSA School Programs](#)

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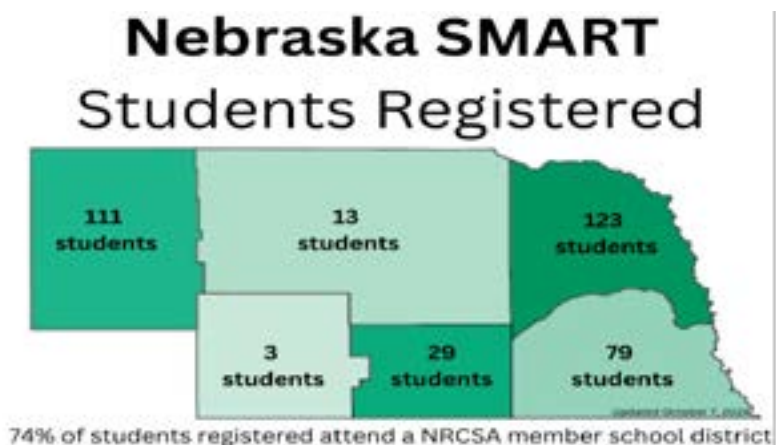
**From NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles:** *NRCSA is backing the work of the Nebraska State College System and the Nebraska SMART program. This is a unique approach to providing free tutoring services to your students. Information on the program is provided below. This program is beneficial on many levels. Among them are:*

- *The program is FREE for kids and families.*
- *The program provides valuable experience for prospective teachers.*
- *The program provides a paying job for prospective teachers.*
- *The program provides another great connection between Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State with NRCSA member school districts. All three of the State Colleges are NRCSA members.*
- *The program provides an opportunity to connect prospective teachers with rural schools. Some of the tutors did not attend rural high schools and this provides an opportunity for them to connect with rural.*
- *The program provides an opportunity to connect YOUR school with prospective teachers. You may be in the market to hire one of these tutors in the future and this connection could help!*

### **Nebraska SMART Free Online Tutoring for K-12 Students**

I am excited to report that after the first month of tutoring (September 3 – October 3), we have matched the number of completed sessions from the entire three months of the spring 2024 semester, totaling 214 sessions. Our Tutors have spent over 118 hours this semester in tutoring sessions with students across rural Nebraska.

Since the end of the Spring 2024 Semester, we've registered over 215 new students, totaling 358 students registered, 74% of which are students attending NRCSA member school districts.



Thank you for the role you have played in raising awareness of and promoting this program!

### **Parent/student feedback**

*“I understand the material better [after my tutoring session] and I think I should do [well] on the test. The tricks I learned should help me remember the steps better and go through the process smoothly, without overthinking the problem.”*

*“[My Tutor] was incredible! She was extremely kind and patient. [My son] said he definitely wants to continue sessions with [his Tutor] as time allows. I have never seen him so happy after doing math homework. This program has been an absolute blessing. Thank you!!!!”*

*“[My Tutor] gave me good tips about math and test taking advice!! Very kind!!!!”*

*“[My Tutor] was super sweet and very helpful. Also, she was very patient while I was figuring out my problems.”*

### **Student Registration**

Parents and students can schedule tutoring appointments with a Nebraska SMART Tutor by logging in to their accounts through the [website](#). Students should provide homework for which they wish to receive help. Assignments can be uploaded to the secure classroom, can be messaged to the Tutor in advance, or a picture can be taken of the assignment when connected to the Tutor.

### **Fall Tutoring Hours**

Fall 2024 Semester Tutoring Hours are Monday through Thursday 3:30-7:30 PM local time.



### **No Tutoring October 14**

Tutoring will not be offered Monday, October 14, due to the State Colleges' mid-term break.

### **How can school districts help?**

Your assistance in communicating with parents in your school district is essential to expand awareness and generate interest in this program. Below are ways that you can help:

#### **Share about Nebraska SMART**

- In school/district/classroom parent newsletters
- During Parent/Teacher Conferences
- With Teachers, Counselors, Parent/Teacher Associations, and district staff
- Link [Nebraska SMART](#) as a student resource on school district websites
- Distribute bookmarks to each K-12 student in school/district
- Connect with Nebraska SMART on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- Share with district technology team the domain [allowlist guide](#)



For more information, visit: [www.nscs.edu/nebraskasmart](http://www.nscs.edu/nebraskasmart)

Questions, comments, or concerns? Email: [nebraskasmart@nscs.edu](mailto:nebraskasmart@nscs.edu)

School districts can request additional promotional supplies by emailing [nebraskasmart@nscs.edu](mailto:nebraskasmart@nscs.edu).

Thank you for your support in broadening awareness of Nebraska SMART within your school districts! We look forward to serving your students.

Julie Dickerson, Nebraska SMART Director  
[nebraskasmart@nscs.edu](mailto:nebraskasmart@nscs.edu)

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### **From Rebecca Vogt, UNL**

Today we are releasing the first of the reports from the 2024 Rural Poll, focusing on the well-being of rural Nebraskans. The report can be accessed online. The press release for this report can be found here.

### **Well Being of Rural Nebraskans**

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### **From Jay Martin, NDE Director of School Safety & Security**

It is time for a new school year, and I hope you all found time this summer to do something fun and/or relaxing! Below you will find the School Safety Newsletter – Fall Edition. In the first five pages is the quarterly school safety updates and trainings. The **Badge Certification** is underway, and we already have several schools who will be getting their Diamond Badges to show their communities the challenging work they are doing to keep students, staff, and visitors safe and secure. Make sure to sign-in and get your badge today!

Due to many requests the **Digital Parent Academy is now available on our YouTube Channel**. Also, there is a Promo video for parents that can go up on schools Digital Billboards to direct parents to view the 4-part series on being digitally wise with their children. Thanks to those of you who suggested the billboard.

Once you have read the School Safety Newsletter there is **seven different flyers with trainings** that are available this fall. Please use the links to get your staff signed up for these opportunities to aid in keeping others safe.

Lastly, please join us in Kearney on October 17th YCC, South from 8:30 to 4:30 for the **School Safety Summit**. Anyone from our schools is welcome to attend including the first responders in your communities. **School Safety is not just for specific people** it is for everyone, and we will have a great keynote Lisa Hamp, Virginia Tech survivor, several breakouts, and a panel discussion on two emergency situations. Registration will be coming soon this month or the first part of September.

Take care and have a safe school year!

### **School Safety Newsletter - Fall 2024**

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### **UNL Extension Center: Embracing Innovation: Exploring the Dynamics of New Partnerships**

Developing business & Industry, organizational, and postsecondary partnerships with school districts can play a pivotal role in enriching the educational experience, supporting student achievement, and strengthening connections between schools and their communities. By leveraging external resources, expertise, and support, schools can create a more inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environment for all students. While partnerships within school districts can bring numerous benefits, there are also challenges that may be encountered. These can be overcome by fostering a culture of collaboration, prioritizing communication and

relationship-building, seeking creative funding solutions, and promoting equity and inclusivity in partnership efforts. Additionally, leveraging support from district leadership, community stakeholders, and external resources can help schools overcome obstacles and maximize the benefits of collaborative partnerships.

We in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), specifically the College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources (CASNR) and Nebraska Extension 4-H, believe this strategy for K-12 partnerships will result in a strong learning innovation network of support for every learner and every educator in the state of Nebraska. The world of higher education is evolving, driven by changes in technology, demographics, workforce demands, and societal expectations. To meet the needs of today's learners in the 21st century and prepare them for the challenges of tomorrow, we are embracing innovation, collaboration, and a student-centered approach.

In recent years, CASNR has created two new positions to help in this work. Dr. Tammy Mittelstet ([tmittelstet@unl.edu](mailto:tmittelstet@unl.edu)) is serving as the CASNR Statewide Education and Career Pathways Coordinator and Bailey Feit ([bailey.feit@unl.edu](mailto:bailey.feit@unl.edu)) serves as the LPS/CASNR Early College and Career Pathways Coordinator. They engage in co-creating education and career pathways for students and supporting teachers by:

- creating opportunities and minimizing barriers for all learners in the exploration of education and career pathways,
- investing in and supporting teachers to innovate and integrate cross-curricular concepts of Food, Energy, Water, and Societal Systems (FEWSS) throughout K-12 education,
- encouraging our higher education institutions to share content expertise to build curriculum that will inform best practices in the areas of FEWSS and mentor future systems thinkers for the continuum of learners through our higher education institutions,
- connecting and developing a team of community leaders to build partnerships that combine resources to support student and teacher innovation, and
- building a workforce of tomorrow with the support of the industry of today by developing work-based learning opportunities.

If you would like to get monthly updates, consider signing up for the L.I.N.K.S. newsletter at <https://casnr.unl.edu/k-12-partners>.

Nebraska Extension brings University of Nebraska expertise and research in 8 key areas of impact directly to Nebraskans from all walks of life in each of the state's 93 counties. Nebraskans turn to Nebraska Extension to strengthen their families, inspire their communities, empower young people, conserve and protect natural resources and advance their farms, ranches and businesses. Nebraska 4-H represents one of the eight key areas, and has been a leader in the career and college readiness field by being one of the first in the country to support a statewide educator position and team to provide leadership in program development and delivery.

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**The College & Career Success Team is led by Dr. Dawn Lindsley ([dawn.lindsley@unl.edu](mailto:dawn.lindsley@unl.edu)) at the State 4-H Office and Jacie Milius ([jacie.milius@unl.edu](mailto:jacie.milius@unl.edu)) in Gage County.** In 4-H, we believe in the power of young people. With nearly six million members nationwide and 140,000 in Nebraska, we empower youth to lead for a lifetime. In a rapidly changing world, it's crucial for young people to be equipped with the right mix of knowledge, skills, and experiences for their transition from education to the workforce. Through our programming, we provide developmentally appropriate, experiential learning opportunities to help youth and adults explore postsecondary education and career options, preparing them to reach their fullest potential in today's dynamic job market. If you would like to learn more, please visit <https://4h.unl.edu/programs-priorities-career-college-success>.

Nebraska students are the leaders, innovators, and problem-solvers of tomorrow. Through collaboration with business & industry, organizational, and postsecondary partners, school districts can provide students with invaluable real-world experiences, access to resources, and insights into the demands of the workforce. We can bridge the gap between education and employment, equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and connections they need to thrive in the competitive global economy. Together, we can create a brighter future for our students and our communities.

**NRCSA has had the great privilege to work closely with Open Sky Policy Institute over the years.** They provide great information on the fiscal impact of legislation that is very helpful to me in my work as NRCSA's chief lobbyist. I would encourage Superintendents and Board of Education members to sign up to receive Open Sky's email updates.

Open Sky has developed some awesome Nebraska Public School District Profiles instruments. It provides much information that can be used to tell the story of your district in comparison to other districts when discussing school finance. The instruments can be accessed at:

<https://www.openskypolicy.org/schooldistrictprofiles>

The mission of OpenSky Policy Institute is to provide impartial and precise research, analysis, education and leadership on fiscal policy-improving opportunities for all Nebraskans. Subscribe to their email updates at <https://bit.ly/OpenSkyUpdates> <https://bit.ly/OpenSkyUpdates> or contact Todd Henrichs at [thenrichs@openskypolicy.org](mailto:thenrichs@openskypolicy.org).

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**At the Membership Meeting during the Spring Conference the Executive Committee presented updated NRCSA Constitution/By-Laws for approval by the membership.** According to NRCSA rules, such issues must be shared with the membership prior to the meeting. The updates were approved. Below are links to a working copy with suggested revisions and an adopted copy which was voted on and approved.

[Adopted copy](#)

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**The National Rural Education Association, in partnership with the Rural Schools Collaborative, has issued a study entitled WHY RURAL MATTERS.** The report “looks critically at how educational supports and resources for student well-being are being distributed, casting light on which of our rural children are in need of additional support”. The study is well done and shows Nebraska in a pretty positive light. I would encourage you to take a look at WHY RURAL MATTERS, which can be accessed here:

[Why Rural Matters](#)

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**The National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition (NREAC) partnered with AASA in producing a report on REAP. REAP is a program that benefits many of our smaller districts.** The report can be accessed here:

<https://www.aasa.org/docs/default-source/resources/reports/rural-education-achievement-program-survey-report.pdf>

[Understanding REAP](#)

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**NRCSA is pleased to announce a partnership with New Leaf Teletherapy.** New Leaf provides mental health teletherapy services for both staff and students. I became very interested in this possibility especially in terms of staff services. I know our members are working hard to provide services for their students, but there does not appear to be that same capability when looking at staff services.

I look at this service as helping to bolster what your district is already doing, not to take the place of those efforts. I believe this can be a cost effective means of furthering your efforts.

NRCSA recently hosted three introductory Zoom meetings with Mark Goldman and Deb Romano of New Leaf to have them explain what the program would look like. Below you can access the slide show from those meetings,

as well as a recording of one of the meetings.

### [New Leaf PowerPoint Presentation](#)

### [New Leaf Zoom Meeting](#) (recording)



If you would like to be in contact with Mark Goldman or Deb Romano, please feel free to call or email me and I can help make that happen.



### [Read the Full Blog](#)

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**Board of Education meeting visits.** Beginning in December, 2019, I started attending Board of Education meetings in member school districts/ESUs. Since then, I have attended 106 such meetings. I most recently attended the Board meetings at Alma and Southern Valley on Monday, Sept. 9 and at Kenesaw and Silver Lake on Wednesday, Sept. 11.

I am scheduled to attend the following Board of Education meetings in the near future:

**MONDAY, OCT. 14:** Fullerton, St. Edward, and Boone Central

**MONDAY, NOV. 11:** Stuart and West Holt

**TUESDAY, NOV. 12:** ESU 17

I have really enjoyed attending meetings and am willing to attend Board meetings when I can. I take a few minutes to cover NRCSA news and offerings, as well as a legislative update. When I am going to be in a specific area on Board meeting days I may send out a notice to near-by Superintendents to make an offer to visit. I'd like to be able to schedule two or three in the same evening if I can.

If you would be interested in me attending a future Board meeting, please contact me to start the arrangements. I would also be willing to "attend" your Board meetings via Zoom if you preferred. I would still only do one at a time but would be able to do several in the same evening. Let me know and we will try to make the connection.





*SOUTHERN VALLEY BOARD OF EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION*



*SILVER LAKE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION*

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**The American Heart Association is committed to partnering with schools in rural Nebraska to improve the health of their communities. A few of these opportunities include:**

**Tobacco Free Schools.** Unfortunately, recent data reveals the ongoing challenges of youth tobacco use. The 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey showed that: Approximately 2 million MS/HS students reported using e-cigarettes during the pandemic; nearly 85% of them used flavored tobacco products. More than 4 in 10 HS students and nearly 2 in 10 MS students who used e-cigarettes did so 2 out of 3 days and youth showed a strong brand preference.

Many schools have struggled to keep up with the continued innovation of the tobacco industry. To help address that, the American Heart Association created our Tobacco Free Schools Toolkit. The toolkit is designed to help schools update their policies so that now – and in the future – they will cover all products, people, and places while providing mechanisms that support students who are battling tobacco addiction. More information/resources are here.

**Improving Cardiac Response in Schools.** Did you know that the odds of surviving a cardiac arrest in rural areas is only about half of that in an urban area? In the aftermath of a cardiac emergency - minutes matter. The Chain of Survival starts with those who are present and requires everyone to do their part. The American Heart Association is committed to building a Nation of Lifesavers to and to helping school districts and other entities develop [Cardiac Emergency Response Plans](#). These plans consider: access to functioning AED's, a strong base of CPR knowledge and training, as well as the identification of a response team and the annual practice of

a cardiac emergency. Tim Nikolai, Sr. Rural Health Director at the American Heart Association can help. Please reach out to: [Tim.Nikolai@heart.org](mailto:Tim.Nikolai@heart.org).

## [Learn CPR in 60 Seconds](#)

A note from Mr. Nikolai:

*For those I have not met previously, I am the **American Heart Association's** lead for rural health in the Midwest Region, inclusive of your states. My role allows me to work collaboratively with all manner of organizations that are in a position to impact health in their communities – and schools are certainly near the top of that list.*

*There are many ways our organization has worked to collaborate with schools – supporting access to nutritious, affordable food, helping to address the ongoing challenges of vaping/tobacco use, and more. Today, though I'm focusing primarily on our resources to assist with cardiac readiness / cardiac emergency response planning.*

*Much of the country was watching – or has followed since – the **collapse of Buffalo Bills' safety, Damar Hamlin, on Monday Night Football**. Fortunately, Damar's story had a happy ending. Our goal is to maximize the opportunity for everyone to have a similar outcome should they experience a Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Most organizations will not have the resources that the NFL does to ensure player safety, but there is much that can be done, especially with proper planning.*

*Some data suggests that **nearly 1% of schools will be the site for an out of hospital cardiac arrest annually**. For a variety of reasons, rural areas are disproportionately impacted by both rates of cardiac arrest and poor outcomes. We know that prepared and equipped schools mean better outcomes for staff, students, visitors, and the communities that so often gather in school spaces.*

*We have recently built out/updated a variety of tools to assist schools – and other organizations – with their cardiac readiness. These include:*

- *Sample Cardiac Emergency Response Guidelines and Plans.*
- *A toolkit to maximize the impact of AED placement and implementation.*
- *Training and awareness tools to help with Hands-Only CPR knowledge for staff and students.*
- *A revamped, training site search feature, for coaches, nurses, and others who need CPR certification.*
- *In some cases, we may have – or be able to help secure – financial resources to help schools with purchasing/maintaining AEDs, CPR mannequins, etc. Hearing the scope of that need can help us secure additional resources, so please let us know!*

***Please let me know if you see an opportunity or need to dialogue about these resources further or share them with your member districts. I'm happy to assist with newsletter copy, join or host webinars, or other ideas that fit your standard means of communication.***

*Finally, at the risk of sharing too much – a few other notes I wanted to highlight.*

- *I've attached an invitation for our **Fall Educator Series**. Administrators/Educators from all districts are welcome to attend the sessions they are interested in. You'll see the one in November is on Cardiac Emergency Response Planning.*
- *Last year some 1300+ rural schools in the Midwest participated in our Kids Heart Challenge program. They raised life-saving money for our mission, earned PE equipment for their schools, and helped improve health knowledge in their community. Last year, tens of thousands of families learned Hands-Only CPR through the program.*
- *Thanks to the **Missouri Rural Health Association** for sharing our HeartCorps program on their home page. That opportunity exists for IA, KS, KY, MN, MO, NE, OH, and WI. Happy to chat more!*

**Farm to School Network Takes Root in Nebraska**

The Nebraska Department of Education, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska Extension, Buy Fresh Buy Local, and No More Empty Pots are pleased to announce the establishment of the Farm to School Network in Nebraska. The network aims to increase access to fresh and nutritious foods in Nebraska schools and strengthen connections between local farmers, educators, and communities.

To build this network, a Network Development Committee and Advisory Committee will lead the process and guide stakeholders to create a strategic, collective action plan that will move farm to school forward in Nebraska. The Network Committees are made up of representatives from key organizations and institutions across the state and are focused on breaking down barriers standing in the way of implementing farm to school initiatives.

The Network Committees will begin the network building process with mapping community assets, phase one of the Nebraska Farm to School Network Timeline. Through this phase, they will collect information on existing farm to school activities in the state and establish a vision for the network.

All stakeholders interested in building a stronger and healthier food system in Nebraska may participate in upcoming virtual and in-person listening sessions. These listening sessions will take place from October 10th to 18th and provide a platform for sharing information about current farm to school activities and discussing the future vision for the network.

“Pillars to farm to school success in a state include partnerships, policies, and supportive programming. A network will support development of these initiatives,” said Sarah Smith, Nebraska Department of Education Farm to School Specialist and Project Director.

To register for the listening sessions or to learn more about the Nebraska Farm to School Network, please visit the [\*\*Network’s webpage\*\*](#).

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**Southern Superintendent Chris Prosocki has shared a sample Superintendent Checklist that he uses.** I thought this was a great instrument, one that I wished I had available to me when I was in the Superintendentcy. It can be especially helpful as you head into the new school year! Thanks to Chris for sharing this! You can access the updated checklist here:

[\*\*Superintendent Check List\*\*](#)

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**The ESUCC and ESU 3 have shared a document which outlines all of the trainings and mandates that are required of districts.** The document, “School District Plans, Policies, and Annual Trainings Requirements”, is a handy reminder for districts. Thanks to ESUCC Executive Director Kraig Lofquist and ESU 3 Administrator Dan Schnoes for developing and distributing this handy tool. The document may be accessed here:

[\*\*School District Plans, Policies, & Annual Trainings\*\*](#)

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**We urge you to consider participation in the NRCSA Partner OneCard program** as a tool for you in managing school expenditures, both large and small. Certainly, the card can help reduce/eliminate any issues relative to unverified cash expenditures. You decide who uses it, can get cards for each of those users, keep all cards wherever you wish, determine the amount to load on each individual card, and how long the time frame

of use is. It is a terrific management tool and clearly identifies each expenditure/name/date/amount. Whether small purchases or very large purchases, the card is a terrific tool. NRCSA owns the state contract, so liability for misuse falls to NRCSA, not the district user. We have only had three circumstances of fraud and all three have been the theft of the card number information, not any district employee misuse. For 2023-24, 98 districts/ESUs participated in the program. We have received interest from several districts already this year, so we believe we will end up with over 100 entities using the program. Great job by all participating districts in protecting the card and program! Don't forget, the NRCSA rebate from the transaction fee paid by businesses that choose to accept plastic is used for scholarship, awards, and special needs. For 2023-24, the rebate was over \$30,000 to NRCSA, showing that use is increasing, and large purchases are being included. WIN, WIN, WIN! If you are considering joining the program and need more information, please contact Jack Moles ([jmoles@nrca.net](mailto:jmoles@nrca.net)) or Jeff Bundy ([jbundy@nrca.net](mailto:jbundy@nrca.net)).





The NCA & Proactive Coaching partner to bring Coach Bruce Brown's legendary insights about the parent's role in education-based athletics to your school & community.

Book your School's Presentation

Parent Meetings or Special Events

# THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS

PRESENTED BY DARIN BOYSEN, NCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*"Outstanding information, well delivered. There were times I thought he was talking directly to me, which is a sign of a great communicator. I personally feel I'm better today than yesterday as a sports parent because I was able to listen to this message."* – Parent & School Board Member



### Before the Season

What do Athletes/Kids Really Want?

Releasing Your Son/Daughter to the Experience

Parental Red Flags

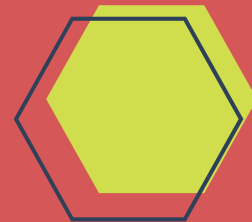


### During the Game/Event

Modeling Appropriate Behavior

Big Picture

One Instructional Voice



### After the Game/Event

Time & Space

Confidence Building

Relationship Building

Six Powerful Words

NEBRASKA COACHES ASSOCIATION

500 Charleston St, Ste 2, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

402-310-5472 | darin@ncacoach.org

Official Association Endorsements as of September 1



**Nebraska School Administrators & School Board Members,**

The Nebraska Coaches Association (NCA) is excited to announce a partnership with Proactive Coaching to bring Coach Bruce Brown’s legendary insights about “**The Role of Parents in Education-Based Athletics**” to your school and community. Please see the attached flyer for highlights/focus of the in-person presentation.

NCA Executive Director, Darin Boysen, will begin travel across Nebraska multiple times throughout the 2024-2025 school year to deliver this powerful and passionate message. The NCA, Proactive Coaching and Darin are partnering to bring this message to your school at a **50% discounted rate from the standard Proactive Coaching in-person booking fee.**

**Presentation Details:**

45-Minute Parent Presentation with One School or Combined Schools

- Single school presentations are recommended but not required
- One presentation = one fee (no additional fee for schools merging)

Audio/Visual Requirements from the Host School:

- Overhead Projector with HDMI Connection
- Screen or Scoreboard Display
- Microphone

**Cost – Payable the Day of Presentation:**

- Within 75 miles of Lincoln/150 miles Round Trip
  - \$750 flat rate
- Beyond 75 miles of Lincoln/150 miles Round Trip
  - \$750 flat rate
  - 50 Cents per mile Round-Trip -OR- Cost of a Rental Vehicle/Gas
  - In some cases, a rental car may be cheaper for longer distances
  - Hotel Expense – if needed
- **Please Note:** Working together with other area schools to book separately on consecutive days of the week can greatly save travel and lodging expenses

**The following booklets authored by Bruce Brown will be available for purchase for \$5 each (15% discount) after the presentation or ordered by the school in advance:**

- *The Role of Parents in Athletics*
- *Playing with Confidence*
- *Life Lessons for Athletes*

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the presentation or booking a date.

All the best,

*Darin Boysen*

Darin Boysen  
Nebraska Coaches Association

Official Association Endorsements – as of September 1





**NRCSA wishes to share in the celebration of the special accomplishments and recognitions going on in our member schools and ESUs.**

**October 2024:**

\* Southern Valley Elementary and West Point Elementary were recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as National Blue Ribbon Schools. Only four schools in Nebraska were recognized and only 356 schools in the country received the award.

\* Four students from NRCSA member schools have been named National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists. They are Kit Brooks (Central City), Austin Schmidt (Heartland), Michael Tophog (Ogallala), and Norah Armstrong (Wayne).

\* Two alumni of NRCSA-member schools were recently inducted into the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame: Chris Kelsay (Auburn) and Jared Crick (Cozad).

\* Jordan Hooper (graduate of Alliance) and Virginia Stahr (graduate of Centennial) were inducted into the University of Nebraska Hall of Fame recently. VIRGINIA STAHR JORDAN HOOPER



**The National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium (of which NRCSA is a member) continues to represent rural education on the Federal level.** NREAC is an extension of the National Rural Education Association. NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles and NRCSA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Bryce Jorgenson (Supt. at Southern Valley) attended the NREAC Federal Legislative Summit in Washington DC on April 28-30.



*JACK MOLES AND BRYCE JORGENSEN AT THE U.S. CAPITOL*



*NRCSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JACK MOLES AND NEBRASKA CONGRESSMAN ADRIAN SMITH*

Bryce and Jack met with the offices of each of Nebraska’s contingency in Congress. They specifically shared three points of emphasis with them:

- Copies of NREA’s publication, “Why Rural Matters” was presented to each of the offices.
- Full funding of IDEA was stressed. This would bring about \$171 million more to Nebraska public schools in support of Special Education services.
- Passage of the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2023. This would bring about \$180,000 to school districts surrounded by tax-exempt public lands.

A brief description of the six NREAC legislative priorities are as follows:

- 1) EDUCATION FUNDING: NREAC seeks preservation of critical federal funding for rural schools.
- 2) REAP FUNDING: NREAC urges Congress to increase funding to Title V, Part B of ESSA, the Rural Education Achievement Program, with a specific increase to the Rural Low-Income School Program.
- 3) INFRASTRUCTURE: NREAC supports efforts to ensure any infrastructure proposal in Congress must include funding for modernizing or maintaining rural school facilities.
- 4) FOOD AND NUTRITION: NREAC supports any effort to streamline processes and reduce the administrative burdens related to school meal programs.
- 5) SCHOOL SAFETY: NREAC supports flexible federal formula funding streams that channel resources to rural school districts for school safety that recognizes the geographic and economic challenges in rural communities.
- 6) BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY: NREAC believes access to high-speed internet is critical for providing equitable access to learning for students in rural schools. As such, NREAC strongly supports maintaining E-Rate as an element of the Universal Service Fund in its current funding structure.

**[NREAC Legislative Agenda](#)**

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**Two years ago, NRCSA began a Principal Search Service.** This service is patterned after our successful Superintendent Search Service. Two options are available. Both options will involve NRCSA consultants recruiting candidates for the position. One option will involve the NRCSA consultant making background calls, while the reduced version of the service will place that role with the Superintendent. If you are interested in getting more information about the service now, please contact Jack. Here is a brochure outlining the service.

**[NRCSA Principal Search Brochure](#)**

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**NRCSA developed a corporate sponsorship/partnership program.** The program is designed to provide our corporate partners with more opportunities for contact with the decision makers in our member school districts, ESUs, and the colleges through increased exposure. Corporate partners are able to choose among three levels of sponsorship: Purple Ribbon Partners, Blue Ribbon Friends, and Red Ribbon Sponsors. Different forms of contact with our members are made available in each of the three levels.

***All of NRCSA's corporate exhibit at the NRCSA Spring Conference.***



# Purple Ribbon Partners



### **Apptegy**

Emily Milnamow  
2201 Brookwood Dr, Suite 115  
Little Rock, AR 72202  
Phone: (317) 219-8686  
conferenceteam@apptegy.com



### **DA Davidson**

Paul Grieger  
450 Regency Parkway, Suite 400  
Omaha, NE 68114  
Phone: (402) 392-7984  
pgrieger@dadco.com



### **Cheever Construction**

Doug Klute  
3425 N 44th St  
Lincoln, NE 68504  
Phone: (402) 477-6745  
dklute@cheeverconstruction.com



### **DLR Group**

Emily O'keeffe  
6457 Frances St, Suite 200  
Omaha, NE 68106  
Phone: (402) 393-4100  
eokeeffe@dlrgroup.com



### **CMBA Architects**

Troy Keilig  
208 N Pine ST, Ste 301  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
Phone: (308) 384-4444  
keilig.t@cmbaarchitects.com



### **Facility Advocates**

Dave Raymond  
3738 S 149th St, Suite 102  
Omaha, NE 68144  
Phone: (402) 206-8777  
draymond@facilityadvocates.com



### **Cornhusker International Trucks**

Russ Folts  
3131 Cornhusker Hwy  
Lincoln, NE 68504  
Phone: (402) 304-4016  
russ.folts@cornhuskerinternational.com



### **MCL Construction**

Travis Justice  
14558 Portal Circle  
Omaha, NE 68138  
Phone: (402) 339-2221  
tkj@mclconstruction.com



# Purple Ribbon Partners



## **Network For Educator Effectiveness (NEE)**

Marc Doss  
288 Maguire Blvd  
Columbia, MO 65211  
Phone: (844) 793-4357  
dossm@missouri.edu



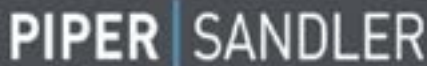
## **Tremco Roofing**

Tyler Petersen  
3735 Green Road  
Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: (909) 302-0617  
tpetersen@tremcoinc.com



## **Voss Lighting**

Randy Herrick  
4624 S 140th St  
Omaha, NE 68137  
Phone; (402) 850-9789  
randy.herrick@vosslighting.com



## **Piper Sandler & Co**

Jay Spearman  
11422 Miracle Hills Dr, Suite 408  
Omaha, NE 68154  
Phone: (402) 599-0307  
jay.spearman@psc.com



## **Wilkins Architecture, Design, Planning**

Jacob Sertich  
2204 University Dr, Suite 130  
Kearney, NE 68845  
Phone: (308) 237-5787  
jsertich@wilkinsadp.com



## **RMV Construction**

Curtis Baetz  
1515 E 11th St  
Kearney, NE 68847  
Phone: (308) 893-2010  
curtis@rmvconst.com



## **Trane Technologies**

Jonathan Hoesch  
11937 Portal Rd  
La Vista, NE 68128  
Phone: (402) 499-8468  
jonathan.hoesch@trane.com

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## *Adams Central Public Schools*



**Mascot:** Patriots

**Enrollment:** 1060

**Location(s):** Hastings, NE

**Interesting Fact:** The district covers over 300 square miles.



Superintendent: **Shawn Scott**

Principals: **Scott Harrington**, Jr/Sr High School  
**Lonnie Abbott**, Elementary

Board of Education: Back Row (from left to right): **Shawn Scott**, Superintendent; **Chris Wahlmeier**, Board Member; **Chad Trausch**, Vice-President; **Derek Uhrmacher**, Board Member.

Front Row (from left to right): **Dave Johnson**, President; **Janice Niemeyer**, Treasurer; **Tim O'Dey**, Secretary.





## Programs

**Program 1. Video Production.** New to the Adams Central High School Curriculum in 2023 is a class geared to teach students how to design and run a video board. The class is tasked with making sure everything runs smoothly for home athletic events. The addition of video boards at Adams Central has happened over the course of the last few years. This class runs the scoreboard, music and lights at home football games and the scoreboard at home indoor athletic events.



**Program 2. Goal Setting.** Over the past two years, Adams Central Elementary has placed a strong emphasis on student growth. Using NSCAS (Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System) scores from fall, winter, and spring, teachers work with students to track progress and set personalized goals. After one-on-one conversations with their teachers, each student establishes a growth target to work towards.

To motivate students, the school organizes class competitions to see which group shows the most improvement. The winning class is rewarded with a pizza party and a traveling trophy. In addition, students who demonstrate growth are invited to an ice cream party as a special celebration of their hard work.

This approach has not only created a positive environment for students to celebrate their achievements, but it has also drawn attention from state education leaders.. The staff at Adams Central Elementary have had the opportunity to share their successes with both the state school board and the Commissioner of Education, showcasing their commitment to fostering student development.



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## *Eustis-Farnam Public Schools*



**Mascots:** Knights & Bulls

**Enrollment:** 180 PK to 12

**Locations:** Eustis NE

**Interesting Fact:** We've have an indoor swimming pool in an addition that was added in 1972.

**Superintendent:** Nick Hodge

**Principal:** Taylor Jenner



**Board of Education:** Alan Smith, President (re-elected 2020); Neil Jack, Vice President (re-elected 2022); Tyler Pieper, Secretary (re-elected 2022); Jeff Loshonkohl, Treasurer (elected 2020); Michelle Fasse (re-elected 2022); Nick Toberer (elected 2020)

## Programs:

### Preschool program and addition

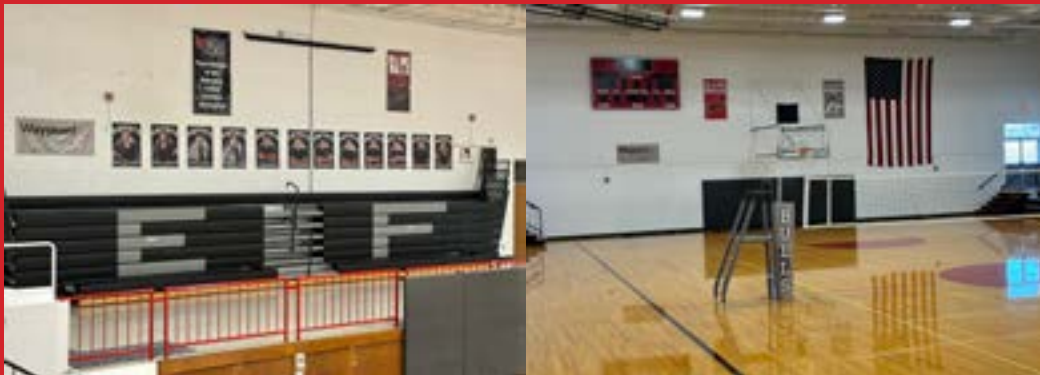
We were one of 17 public schools without a preschool directly associated with our school district, until January 2024. We completed a new addition funded with a lease purchase.



### Eustis-Farnam Knights FFA program tradition of success at both the State and National levels



Hi-Line Bulls (sports only) coop between us Eustis-Farnam and our neighbors to the east Elwood since 2019-20.



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## *Deshler Public Schools*



**Mascot:** Dragons

**Enrollment:** 227 students

**Locations:** Deshler, NE

Superintendent: **Wade Finley**

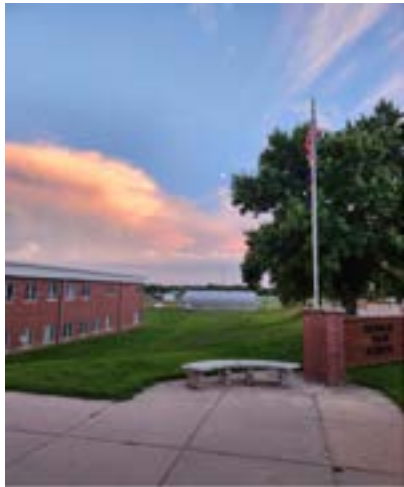
Principal: **Dana Epley**, PreK-12

Board of Education & Administration (*Front L-R*): **Abby Gausman**, Bd. Member, **Chrystal Miller**, Bd. Member, **Andy Schmidt**, Secretary, & **Brian Isernhagen**, President.  
(*Back L-R*) **Matt Vieselmeyer**, Bd. Member, **Ryan Buscher**, Vice President, **Wade Finley**, Superintendent, & **Dana Epley**, PreK – 12 Principal.



**Deshler CTE Programs:** Through the reVISION Grant award of \$100,000, Deshler Public Schools looked very closely at what we are currently offering and where we wanted to expand in our Career & Technical Educational. The following are areas which we have expanded.

**Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.** We have close to 80 FFA members, and it was apparent that the expansion of this program, particularly in the area of livestock, needed to be met, with several students interested in ag as a career, and many of our local families raising both crops and livestock. We recently completed a large-scale greenhouse that will be in operation in the Spring of 2025. We also identified the need for our students to learn about genetics in breeding programs and breeding techniques. We were able to purchase an artificial insemination (AI) simulator that can teach our students the necessary skills of breeding livestock to be used on their own livestock operations, several of which are supervised agricultural experience projects.



**Health Sciences.** Thayer County Health Services helped us to identify areas of need through our partnership with them. We were able to purchase a suture kit, sports nutrition kit, and an EMT package worth \$25,999 to help work towards EMT certification for our students in the upcoming years. Several students have graduated with 30 credits or more in the healthcare sciences field, as well as being CNA certified and have their general education coursework completed as they head into their career field or two- or four-year colleges.



**Skilled & Technical Sciences.** Deshler Public Schools has had an elite CTE program for well over a decade. We have a very strong and long-standing partnership with Reinke Manufacturing. Through this partnership, Reinke Manufacturing has furnished a welding shop, including robotic welders, as well as providing us with a commercial level robotic arm and metal CNC lathe. In addition to equipment, they have also sent staff to teach our welding courses and coach a robotics team for us (which had the opportunity to go to nationals AND we are working to restart a robotics program in Thayer County now!). Many of our students have graduated with multiple levels of welding certifications, making them both career- and college-ready.

We are fortunate that Reinke Manufacturing sends their techs over to teach both student and adult welding classes in our facility, and that we have teachers who have stepped in (outside of their certification areas) to learn the trade as well. In our work with Reinke Manufacturing, there was a need to expand our programming. We are now teaching SolidWorks, as well as hands-on Irrigation and Electrical exploratory classes to our junior high students, and recently introduced a small engines class.

The reVISION grant allowed us to purchase \$69,729 worth of equipment for this program. We were able to purchase a CNC plasma table and an Epilogue laser so that our students would be able to expand their knowledge in the area of metal fabrication. We are hoping that these purchases help to expose our students to entrepreneurship as well as building a school-based enterprise.



**I would encourage districts to consider participating in the Academic Decathlon competition.**

Academic Decathlon is an activity that is dependent on students of different ability levels. A team is made up of students who are in the Honors (A average), Scholastic (B average), and Varsity (C average) levels. Students may move up, but they may not move down. The combined scores of the students in all 10 competition events are counted, thus each team member is very important. There is a defined course of study in each subject area each year. Subject areas are commonly Math, Language & Literature, Science, Social Science, Economics, Art, and Music which are covered in the Regional competition each year. At the State Competition, Speech, Interview, and Essay are added. There is a “theme” each year that many of the subject areas cover. The theme for 2022-23 was the American Revolution. The theme for 2023-24 will be “Technology and Humanity”. Regional competition takes place in January and State competition takes place in February. The school can decide how to prepare for the competitions. Some schools have teams that have practices in the evenings or after school. Some simply provide the students with materials to study prior to competitions. Other schools offer a class to prepare.

Quiz Bowls are wonderful and fun activities, but they do not have a defined course of study like the Academic Decathlon. I find the Decathlon to be the best academic competition that I have experienced. To me, it is based on true study and learning.

This year as I worked the State Academic Decathlon Championships, I had an opportunity to connect with great kids from NRCSA-member districts Adams Central, Johnson County Central, and Lexington.

On a personal note, three of my four kids participated in Academic Decathlon through high school and between them they won thousands of dollars in scholarships as they were on teams that had success. I currently serve on the Nebraska Academic Decathlon Board of Directors. I have been very involved with this activity for many years and highly encourage you to consider adding it to your school. A new school can have its enrollment fee waived the first year and may receive free study materials.

If you have any questions or have a staff member who is interested, please feel free to contact me. You could also contact the State Director, Vicki Deniston-Reed at [dcthl.n.denistonreed@gmail.com](mailto:dcthl.n.denistonreed@gmail.com).



*ADAMS CENTRAL ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM*



*JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM*



*LEXINGTON ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM*

**UNL Tuition Discount & GOLD Grant.**

We have a new tuition discount program aimed at better serving folks from rural districts who are seeking school leadership degrees (MEd – principalship, EdD – superintendency) or endorsements. The program provides a 15% tuition discount for educators who

serve in NRCSA member districts or are in an area classified by NCES as rural or town. We think this is a small but important step toward helping rural schools be intentional about growing their own leaders. If interested, please contact Dr. Nick Pace at [nick.pace@unl.edu](mailto:nick.pace@unl.edu)

### [Big Red Leader Website](#)

### [Big Red Leadership Flyer](#)

**In addition, invite your participation in a federal grant application aimed at helping Nebraska school districts. Led by the UNL Department of Educational Administration, the *Growth-Oriented Leadership Development (GOLD) Project* is a collaboration across NCSA, NRCSA, ESUCC, and NDE. Goals include:**

- Developing current and future leaders in a grow-your-own model
- Strengthening School Leadership
- Improving Principal and Teacher Retention

### ***GOLD Highlights:***

- A focus on local, building/district level context, not a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach
- Research-based content aligned with Marzano's Balanced Leadership and other recent work
- Use of existing professional development structures led by credible leaders and coaches
- No additional costs or duties to ESUs or districts

### ***GOLD Includes:***

- Regular, large group professional development for the principal and 2-3 teacher leaders per building
- Small group coaching and facilitation provided by grant-funded coaches
- Application of material presented in sessions to local school improvement priorities and integration with the new NDE Nebraska Teacher and Principal Professional Standards (NTPPS)
- A stipend to participating schools to support implementation of GOLD dimensions and materials

To Learn More:

<https://cehs.unl.edu/edad/gold-project/>

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## **Chadron State College Special Education Para-to-Teacher Program Initiative.**

**Purpose:** This “Grow Your Own” Special Education Teacher program is designed to provide school districts with the opportunity to cultivate and participate in the training of their para-professionals who wish to continue their education to become special education teachers.

**Who:** Any individual who holds a minimum of an Associate's Degree (or equivalent credit hours) from an accredited higher education institution, and who is employed as a para-professional within a school district.

**What:** Chadron State will provide required course work and enrichment activities via online, face-to-face (via Zoom), and on the job experiential learning, leading to a Bachelor's in Education Degree, and a Nebraska Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in Special Education (grades PK-12). With administrator input, program course work will be tailored to best fit your district practices and expectations. Each course will be offered in an 8-week format, with 12-13 credit hours to be completed each 16 week semester.

**How:** Program participants will be advised, monitored, and supported by CSC faculty/staff, and a CSC Education Program liaison is specifically assigned to facilitate their progress. District para-professionals may enter the program at any time in the academic year.

**When:** once participants reach their senior academic year they will embark on completing their capstone course work, via online and Zoom class sessions. This course work has been pared down considerably with the understanding and assumption that these student teachers will be learning “on-the-job”. For example, one section covers classroom management practices. Clearly, one can argue and attest that these student teacher interns are learning more about managing a classroom from being mentored by veteran teachers within your school, and observing them in action. This is the belief and learning approach embraced during this senior year. However, to ensure and assess concept learning, Chadron State faculty will be meeting with your student teacher cohort twice per week for 1.5 hours, via Zoom conferencing technology.

**Graduation:** At the completion of this program students/candidates graduate from Chadron State College, and apply for teaching licensure resulting in a valid initial teaching certificate with and endorsement in PK-12 Special Education. Chadron State's education program is nationally and State accredited. As such, interstate certification reciprocity is not a problem.



## Things for your consideration:

- 1) To qualify for this program participants must hold at least an Associate's Degree or the equivalent in college credit hours. (CSC will work with those applicants to provide them with the needed coursework leading up to program entry).
- 2) Districts must agree to maintain para-professional employment throughout the course of the program—including during the student teaching experience.

Please contact Dr. Adam Fette for more program information, at [afette@csc.edu](mailto:afette@csc.edu).

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### **The UNL Department of Educational Psychology has received a grant from the Swanson Foundation which allows them to offer mental health services to rural schools.**

From Dr. Michael Scheel, Chair of the UNL Department of Educational Psychology:

*The UNL Department of Educational Psychology would like to offer counseling and psychological services, as well as consultation services to the schools and communities of Southeast Nebraska. We run a mental health counseling and therapy clinic and we are offering counseling and consultation services to teachers, administrators, students, and community members of Southeast Nebraska. Services will be provided through remote and confidential means (i.e., Zoom conferencing). We are hoping that schools, families, and individuals contact us to schedule an appointment for a telehealth counseling or consultation session.*

*We have recently learned that a donor will support our work with individuals living in rural Southeast NE by paying all fees for services. Thus, whoever seeks out our services will simply have to indicate they live in Southeast Nebraska, and any services we provide will be paid for through the UNL Foundation. Individual, couple, and family counseling will be provided without financial expense. Additionally, we can provide teachers, school administrators, school counselors, and school social workers consultation services for students of their schools without charge.*

*We are very excited to enter a partnership with schools and communities of SE Nebraska to promote mental health and well-being. We are aware of the mental health counseling disparities that exist in Nebraska*

*rural areas, and our department, our College of Education and Human Sciences, and UNL are highly interested in offering our expertise and resources with the goal of enhancing the well-being of SE Nebraska individuals, schools, and communities. We are a group comprised of licensed psychologists and psychology graduate students who regularly provide services through our clinic to the Lincoln community. We are seeking to reach beyond Lincoln to connect more with surrounding rural areas. We also are acutely aware of the importance of addressing mental health concerns right now as we all are experiencing the stress of going through the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*The Counseling and School Psychology Clinic is a training clinic in which graduate students in counseling and school psychology work with clients under the supervision of licensed psychologists. Services are available to all on a sliding scale. For clients from SE Nebraska communities, services will be paid for through UNL Foundation funds supplied by a donor who cares deeply about the welfare of schools and communities in SE Nebraska. Counseling services are offered to improve well-being, improve academic and behavioral issues, stabilize mood, manage stress, and improve life-adjustment issues.*

*For more information, please visit our clinic website:*

<https://cehs.unl.edu/edpsych/clinic/>

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**A common theme from some of the decision makers on the state level is that “out of control” local spending is to blame for the property tax problem.** NRCSA, along with many other educational entities, maintains that we do not have a school spending issue, but instead have a school funding issue. Attached are two reports, one from NRCSA, the other from Open Sky, that discuss the myth of “out of control” school spending. It is my hope that administrators and Board of Education members will read, then use these reports to counter those claims. When you do please tell your district's story as that is the most powerful way to get this message across.

[NRCSA Spending Study](#)

[A Look at School Spending in NE from Open Sky](#)

## Contact Information

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### NRCSA

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**New Leaf Teletherapy**

**Planning Support Service**

**Scholarship and Awards Programs**

**Superintendent Search Service**

**USBank OneCard Program**



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