



# Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association

*Member Update*

*March 6, 2025*



*Photo Credit: Hampton Public Schools*

# *NRCSA Calendar*

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## **NRCSA Events**

### **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](#)

### **NRCSA Legislative Forum**

February 26, 2026

Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln

[More about this event](#)

## **Committee Meetings**

### **NRCSA Executive Committee**

March 19, 2025, 3:00 PM

Bronze 5

Younes North Convention Center in Kearney

### **NRCSA Executive Committee**

June 2025

Time & Location TBD

### **NRCSA Legislative Committee**

Every Thursday during Bill Introduction & Hearings,

9:30 AM, Via Zoom

## *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**  
Search Complete



**Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools**  
Search Complete



**Pawnee City Public Schools**  
Search Complete



**Shelton Public Schools**  
Search Complete

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

**Login: member Password: learning**

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## ***NRCSA Updates***

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### **NRCSA SPRING CONFERENCE/PRE-CONFERENCE**

**The NRCSA Spring Conference is just two weeks away!!** The conference will be held at the Younes Conference Center North in Kearney on March 20 & 21. We are expecting another great conference, highlighted by Thursday's keynote speaker: Joe Sanfelippo. You will not want to miss his presentation! Other featured speakers will be Nebraska Commissioner of Education Brian Maher and Nebraska Coaches Association Executive Director Darin Boysen.

For the second straight year, we are also offering a free pre-conference. Franklin-Covey has provided NRCSA with the opportunity to provide a very valuable experience, centered around the work of Steven Covey. The pre-conference will take place on Wednesday, March 19, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A free lunch will also be provided. A little information about the pre-conference from Sam Stecher of Franklin-Covey, Client Partner for Franklin-Covey Education:

*“Leadership is the cornerstone of thriving schools, especially in rural communities like ours. In partnership with NRCSA we are excited to invite you to the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People pre-conference on March 19, an inspiring session designed specifically for leaders shaping the future of small, rural districts.*

*This interactive workshop will equip you with actionable strategies to:*

- *Foster collaboration among your team.*
- *Cultivate a school culture where everyone's capacity to lead is enhanced—from the boardroom to the classroom.*
- *Drive sustainable results, even with limited resources.*
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*Don't miss this opportunity to invest in yourself and your school community. Together, let's turn challenges into possibilities.”*

#### **TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND THE 2025 NRCSA SPRING CONFERENCE:**

1. Viewing the crane migration on your way into Kearney—an awesome spectacle!
2. Thursday's featured speaker: Joe Sanfelippo (one of the best I've heard!).
3. We promise you'll be fed well. Really well.
4. The chance to go for a 5:00 a.m. walk with NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles (weather permitting, of course).
5. Free chocolate in the vendors' hall! Lots of free chocolate!
6. Meeting members of the National Rural Education Association's Executive Committee as they will be having one of their meetings in Kearney in conjunction with the NRCSA Spring Conference.
7. Thirty-five outstanding breakout presentations with something of interest for everyone!
8. An added feature: a free hospitality hour in the vendor hall prior to the Chuckwagon Dinner! Refreshments and gift drawings!

### **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

9. Oh, almost forgot: THE CHUCKWAGON DINNER!
10. The always emotional awards ceremonies for outstanding personnel in our rural schools and ESUs.
11. Outstanding musical performances by the Palmyra-Bennett Jazz Band and the Wood River Elementary.
12. An opportunity to reconnect with old acquaintances and make new ones in the hospitality rooms!

There are a lot more great reasons to attend, but already exceeded the maximum of 10.

## [Register to Attend the 2025 NRCSA Spring Conference](#)

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### **2025 NRCSA Legislative Forum**

The 2025 NRCSA Legislative Forum was held on Thursday, February 20, at the Lincoln Cornhusker Marriott. Attendance was down somewhat due to the frigid weather, The day's speakers included:

- Senator Brad von Gillern
- Open Sky Policy Institute Executive Director Rebecca Firestone
- Senator Dunixi Guereca
- Senator Dan Lonowski
- Senator Jana Hughes
- NRCSA Lobbyist Russ Westerhold and NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles
- About twenty Senators joined those in attendance for lunch.



*SENATOR BRAD VON GILLERN (REVENUE COMMITTEE CHAIR) AND REBECCA FIRESTONE (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR OPEN SKY POLICY INSTITUTE) WERE TWO OF THE PRESENTERS AT THE NRCSA LEGISLATIVE FORUM*

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### **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH & PLANNING**

**We are in the midst of the time in which we see movement of Superintendents.** NRCSA has an outstanding Superintendent Search Service and I would encourage your Board of Education to closely consider these services if you are in need of a Superintendent.

This year we have already assisted the Boards of Education at Lawrence-Nelson, Boyd County, Pawnee City, and Shelton in their Superintendent searches.

One of the more outstanding features of the NRCSA Superintendent Search Service is that the consultants who assist Boards of Education with their searches are all retired rural school Superintendents who experienced great success in their careers. They know what it takes to be successful in a rural school district and community, and how to work closely with a rural school Board of Education.

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@nrca.net\*\*](mailto:jmoles@nrca.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.

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

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

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#### **We will have several leadership positions that will need to be filled for the 2025-26 school year.**

Some positions are elected, while some committee positions are appointed. Nominations for elected positions are open until they are closed at the NRCSA membership meeting at the Spring Conference. Positions to be filled via elections:

**PRESIDENT-ELECT** The President-Elect goes through a three year Presidency cycle (President-Elect, President, Past President). Mark Lenihan will finish his three year term at the end of the current year. This position is filled via a state-wide election of the membership. We currently have one nomination for President-Elect.

**SECRETARY** This position serves as the recording secretary for the Executive Committee for a three-year term. It is available for two consecutive terms. Current Secretary Chris Prosocki, Superintendent of Southern, will be moving to Hastings, which is not a member of NRCSA. This position is filled via a state-wide election of the membership. We currently have one nomination for Secretary.

**SOUTHEAST DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE** This position is part of the NRCSA Executive Committee and must be in a member-entity in the Southeast District. A term of office is three years and a person can serve two consecutive terms. Paul Sheffield (Exeter-Milligan Superintendent) is retiring at the end of this year, thus the position is open. Nominations are accepted. We currently have two nominations.

**WEST DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE.** This position is part of the NRCSA Executive Committee and must be in a member-entity in the West District. A term of office is three years and a person can serve two consecutive terms. Mo Hanks (Crawford Superintendent) is retiring at the end of this year, thus the position is open. Nominations are accepted. We currently have two nominations.

We will also be filling vacancies that come about in the Legislative Committee, Scholarship and Recognition Committee, Closing the Achievement Gap Committee, and Rural Teacher Committee.

If you are interested in specific positions, please contact Jack Moles.

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**The 2025 regular session of the Unicameral is nearing the half-way point of the 90 day session.** Bill hearings will end in the very near future, then the body moves to full day debate. Some bills of special interest to NRCSA members include:

- LB 31 (Conrad)
- LB 89 (Kauth)

- LB 135 (Holdcroft)
- LB 140 (Sanders)
- LB 300 (Murman)
- LB 303 (Hughes)
- LB 389 (Murman)
- LB 509 (Sorrentino)
- LB 575 (Hallstrom)
- LB 633 (Hansen)
- LB 645 (Ballard)
- LB 652 (Hansen)

NRCSA's bill summary page may be accessed here:

[NRCSA Bill Summaries](#)

**From Governor Pillen's website:**

*Governor Jim Pillen is providing state senators with the newly published 2024 School Property Tax Collection Report, aimed at providing historical context for funding of the state's school districts, the impact of recent legislation in reigning in property tax increases and a request to state senators to consider legislation that will finally address inconsistencies in state aid to schools. The report, compiled by the Governor's Policy and Research Office (GPRO), compares data across each of the state's 244 school districts, accounting for the impact of state aid and property tax increases to taxpayers in those districts.*

*"We have newly elected state senators who may not have a complete understanding of how the state's funding formula has worked historically, nor the impact of recent legislative initiatives when it comes to setting caps and also providing state funding to those districts," said Gov. Pillen. "This document helps illustrate the impact of those changes and hopefully, inform discussions as we embark on the next legislative session and resume efforts to provide additional property tax relief to Nebraskans."*

*There are three key findings from the report:*

*Caps are working to slow the growth of school property taxes. It is estimated that in 2024 growth will be 2.7%, the smallest percentage increase since 2018.*

*Cuts in state aid are negatively impacting property tax relief delivery, especially for certain districts.*

*State revenues can eliminate property tax increases enacted by school districts, through the creation of a stable school aid formula.*

*"The majority of a taxpayer's property tax bill is tied to their local school district – an average of 60 percent," said GPRO Director Kenny Zoeller. "One hundred and eleven school districts have had a reduction in state aid in the current year. Some have increased property taxes to help meet that decrease and others have far exceeded it. We need to find a way to better help districts budget for the aid they do get, thereby creating some predictability and hopefully, further reduce what Nebraskans end up paying in property taxes year over year."*

*The analysis calls for Nebraska lawmakers to provide greater funding certainty through the Tax Equity and Equalization opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA). That formula has undergone multiple adjustments since its creation in 1990, which has also made it more confusing and has created disparities among districts in how they manage predicting budget shortfalls that are subsequently made up through property tax increases.*

*"The formula is inconsistent and hits taxpayers hard. It is not fair to them or the schools. Providing certainty to school districts will allow Nebraska to have sustained property tax reductions for the first time in history," concludes the report.*

**2024 Property Tax Collection Report**

# 2025 NRCSA Spring Conference

The 2025 NRCSA Spring Conference will be held on March 20 & 21, 2025, at the Crowne Plaza and Younes North Convention Center in Kearney.

There will be many informative and timely sessions regarding law, TEEOSA, school finance, curriculum development, updates from the Department of Ed, staff and board development, updates regarding current federal and state legislation and others. Sessions highlighting special programs and initiatives are always a plus. A total of 35 sessions will be provided at the conference. As always, the general sessions will feature music groups, speakers on Thursday and Friday, scholarships, awards, recognitions, and the traditional meals that have become a mainstay of the conference.

As usual, there will be many opportunities for networking and informal discussions with attendees from other schools!

**Be sure and make plans to attend!!**

## Room Reservations

There are several hotels in and around the area. Attendees will need to make room arrangements for the conference.

These hotels participate in group rates for Spring Conference

Crowne Plaza (308) 238-7000  
Hampton Inn (308) 234-3400

These hotels do NOT participate in group rates

Holiday Inn (308) 237-5971  
Comfort Inn & Suites (308) 236-3400  
La Quinta Inn & Suites (308) 237-4400  
America Inn & Suites (308) 234-7800  
Fairfield Inn (308) 236-4200  
Holiday Inn Express (308) 234-8100  
Microtel Inn & Suites (308) 698-3003  
New Victorian Inn & Suites (308) 237-5858  
Wingate Inn (308) 237-4400

## Program Highlights

### Wednesday March 19, 2025

**10:00 AM Pre-Conference:** The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

**Presented by:**



**6:30 PM** Exhibitor Check-In and Set-Up

**7:00 PM** Early Registration and Hospitality Rooms Open

### Thursday March 20, 2025

**7:15 AM** Registration & Exhibit Hall Open

**8:00 AM** General Session

**11:00 AM – 11:50 AM** Select-a-Session I

**12:00 PM** General Session

**2:20 PM - 3:10 PM** Select-a-Session II

**3:35 PM - 4:25 PM** Select-a-Session III

**6:00 PM** Country Buffet

**7:00 PM** Hospitality Rooms Open

### Friday March 21, 2025

**7:30 AM** Registration Open

**8:00 AM- 8:50 AM** Select-a-Session IV

**9:00 AM – 9:50 AM** Select-a-Session V

**10:00 AM** Brunch

**10:50 AM** Closing Session

**12:50 PM** Gifts, Prizes, & Giveaways



**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. The instruments provide 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/school-district-profile/>

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> or contact Todd Henrichs at [thenrichs@openskypolicy.org](mailto:thenrichs@openskypolicy.org).

As we head into the new legislative session, Open Sky has shared a few more tools that can be especially helpful. A message from Rebecca Firestone, Executive Director for Open Sky shares:

*Dear friends,*

*Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed a wonderful holiday break and arrived in the New Year ready for what is sure to be an interesting Legislative session. On behalf of the team at OpenSky, I want to thank you for the work you have done to prepare for the important policy work ahead for all of us this year.*

*At OpenSky, we've also been busy getting ready for the 2025 legislative session, and I wanted to share a number of updates with you here.*

*We wanted to take an opportunity to share a few quick reference materials we have developed that we think will be especially useful this session (attached).*

- 1. A one-page guide to TEEOSA, the K-12 public school funding formula. With significant changes promised to the formula in pursuit of property tax relief, we felt it was important to share the current state of play.*
- 2. A guide on the budget process, including a timeline, who is involved, and a breakdown of important components of the state budget. With a significant deficit heading into session, lawmakers will grapple with complex decisions regarding spending. At OpenSky, we are ready to work towards a budget that reflects the priorities of Nebraskans and allows everyone a shot at The Good Life, and we look forward to partnering with you in this work.*

*I also wanted to introduce you to some new members of our team who you may interact with during the upcoming session:*

*Lillian Butler-Hale joins our team as Outreach and Engagement Director. She replaces Joey Adler Ruane, who will continue to support OpenSky for some time from his new role with the lobbying firm Lindsay Harr MacDonald. Lillian was most recently in the office of Senator Jen Day and will be a great asset to the team during this session. Please make sure to say hello when you see her in the rotunda.*

*Noah Rhoades just joined us in a new role as Outreach and Engagement Manager. He will support our legislative work as well as community engagement and outreach efforts, including coalition building. We are excited to have him on board.*

*We are also launching a refreshed website at [www.openskypolicy.org](http://www.openskypolicy.org), and last, but not least, we have moved! Same building, bigger office. Please make note that our new address is 1325 H Street, Suite 200 Lincoln, NE 68508. We look forward to welcoming you to our new space soon, when we are a little more settled.*

*We are excited to work alongside all of you this session, and here to be a resource. Don't hesitate to reach out*

to me or anyone on the team if you need us.

Onward,  
Rebecca

[Open Sky TEEOSA Guide](#)  
[Open Sky Budget Process Guide](#)

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**One of the more outstanding student academic activities that I've had the pleasure of working with is Academic Decathlon.** The nation-wide program provides a prescribed course of study each year. Teams are made up of students of different academic abilities. Students with an "A" average compete against other students with an "A" average, students with a "B" average compete against other students with a "B" average, and students with a "C" average compete against other students with a "C" average. Schools can choose how they prepare for competitions. Some teams meet after school or in the evenings, while some schools offer a class.

There is a regional competition in January, with the State Championships being held in February. Students compete for medals at both events. Scholarships are awarded to members of teams who are successful in the competitions. Three of my four children competed in Academic Decathlon and between them were awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships.

This year, two NRCSA-member schools qualified for the State Championship: Amherst and Johnson County Central.

If you would like get more information on the Nebraska Academic Decathlon, please contact NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles or one of the Nebraska Academic Decathlon Co-Executive Directors:

Ardis Moody [ardis.moody@gmail.com](mailto:ardis.moody@gmail.com)

Cris Hay-Merchant [chaymerchant@bellevue.edu](mailto:chaymerchant@bellevue.edu)



JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM



AMHERST ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM

**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 for Spring scholarships were distributed to member Superintendents and ESU Administrators, who were then asked to share with potential candidates in their buildings. Applications were due on Monday, Dec. 2. The NRCSA Scholarship and Recognitions Committee selected the three Spring semester scholarship winners.

Prior to Christmas break, NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles visited the districts of the three recipients of the Spring scholarships to make the scholarship presentations. The Fall recipients are: Amanda Dubs (Crawford), Ashley Callahan (Cedar Bluffs), and Vicki Miller (West Point).

Amanda Dubs is currently a paraprofessional at Crawford Elementary School. She is working on a teaching certificate in Special Education and Early Childhood through Chadron State College..

Ashley Callahan is currently a paraprofessional at Cedar Bluffs Public Schools. She is working on a teaching certificate in Elementary Education through Chadron State College.

Vicki Miller is currently a kindergarten paraprofessional with West Point Public Schools. She is working on a teaching certificate in Early Childhood Inclusive through Chadron State College.



*Crawford Principal (and Superintendent-Elect) Keri Homan, Amanda Dubs, NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles, Crawford Superintendent Mo Hanks*



*Cedar Bluffs Superintendent Harlan Ptomey, Ashley Callahan, NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles*



*West Point Elementary Principal Doug Gross, Vicki Miller, NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles, West Point Superintendent DJ Weddle*

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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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**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 currently have 107 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)).

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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 119 such meetings. I most recently attended the Board meetings at Crawford and Sioux County on Monday, Feb. 10, and the Board meeting at Creek Valley on Tuesday, Feb. 11.

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

**Monday, March 10: Summerland**

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.



*CREEK VALLEY BOARD OF EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION*

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

**March 2025:**

\* Lauren Moore of Arapahoe was the Class B Girls Bowling Individual Champion. Annemarie Slaughter of Howells-Dodge was the Runner-Up.



\* Dylan Jensen of Wayne was the Class B Boys Bowling Individual Champion.



\* Cec Vandersnick of Wayne was honored as the 2025 NSAA Outstanding Service Award Winner for Bowling.



\* Dexter Hanzel, a math and science teacher at Neligh-Oakdale was awarded the 2025 Milken Educator Award, becoming only the 49th Nebraska teacher to have received the award.



\* The Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) is proud to announce the 28 recipients of the 2024-2025 NSAA Champions for Coaches Award. This annual recognition honors outstanding coaches across Nebraska who demonstrate exceptional dedication to students, schools, and their communities. Several coaches/sponsors from NRCSA-member schools were honored. They include:

- GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY: Holly Rieschick, Auburn
- BOYS CROSS COUNTRY: Chris Wiseman, Plattsmouth
- FOOTBALL: Josh Dean, Hemingford
- VOLLEYBALL: Julie Ratka, Minden
- PLAY PRODUCTION: Sheila Hoesing, Wausa
- BOYS WRESTLING: Cole Sittig, Crawford
- GIRLS BASKETBALL: Maggie Moon, Crofton
- BOYS BASKETBALL: : Jim McLaughlin, Freeman
- SPEECH: Kaitlyn Clark, Gothenburg
- JOURNALISM: Kristen Harris, Southwest
- BOYS GOLF: Taylor Stech, Chambers
- GIRLS TRACK & FIELD: Lori Peters, Wood River
- BOYS TRACK & FIELD: Joe Ortmeier, Osmond

\* Yutan won the Class B Girls Wrestling State Championship. Lakeview was the runner-up. Wrestlers from NRCSA-member schools who won state championships were:

- Class A 140: Kayden Sipp, Adams Central
- Class B 100: Jocelyn Prado, Johnson County Central
- Class B 105: Abby Negley, Cozad
- Class B 110: Addisyn Darling, Yutan
- Class B 115: Bettie Chambers, Palmyra
- Class B 120: Lacy Lemburg, Lakeview
- Class B 125: Aubrie Pehrson, Yutan
- Class B 130: Jordyn Campbell, Yutan
- Class B 135: Ambie Custard, Southwest
- Class B 140: Taylor Ahlman, Battle Creek
- Class B 145: Hayley Rusher, Chase County
- Class B 155: Maggie Fiene, Conestoga

- Class B 170: Rylee Kursave, Arcadia/Loup City
- Class B 190: Addison Arvdal, Sutherland
- Class B 235: Evelyn Bryan-Aldrich, Palmyra



*YUTAN—CLASS B GIRLS WRESTLING STATE CHAMPIONS!*

- \* Battle Creek won the Class C Boys State Wrestling championship. Minden finished as runner-up.



*BATTLE CREEK—CLASS C BOYS STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONS!*

- \* Burwell won the Class D Boys State Wrestling championship. Central Valley finished as runner-up. **BURWELL: CLASS D BOYS STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONS!**

- \* Many wrestlers from NRCSA-member schools were State Champions in Boys Wrestling. Included are:

- CLASS B 106: Ace Schweitzer, Central City
- CLASS B 113: Coy Childers, Alliance
- CLASS B 132: Daylen Naylor, Lexington
- CLASS C 106: Brock Goebel, Syracuse
- CLASS C 113: Ayden Wintz, Battle Creek
- CLASS C 120: Zaiyhn Omelas, Wilber-Clatonia
- CLASS C 126: Ryan Stusse Jr, Battle Creek
- CLASS C 132: Hayden Schmit, David City
- CLASS C 150: Brendan Bolling, Pierce
- CLASS C 157: Quinn Bailey, Chadron
- CLASS C 165: Robert Nelson, Minden
- CLASS C 175: Alex Meinecke, St. Paul
- CLASS C 215: Cal Wells, Broken Bow
- CLASS D 106: Adryck Stewart, Plainview



- CLASS D 113: Brody Jensen, Burwell
- CLASS D 126: Uriel Guzman, Palmer
- CLASS D 132: Drew Dawe, Burwell
- CLASS D 138: Corbin Hoefer, Neligh-Oakdale
- CLASS D 144: Drake Troxel, Southern
- CLASS D 150: Gage Friesen, High Plains
- CLASS D 165: Rowan Jarosik, Sandy Creek
- CLASS D 175: Maddox Jones, SEM
- CLASS D 215: Elijah Fjell, Shelby-Rising City
- CLASS D 285: Levi Gall, Clarkson/Leigh

\* Squads from several NRCSA-member schools won events at the NCA State Cheer and Dance Competition. Included were:

- CLASS C1 HIGH KICK: Holdrege
- CLASS C1 HIP HOP: Conestoga
- CLASS C2 HIP HOP: Shelby-Rising City
- CLASS C2/D JAZZ: Valentine
- CLASS D POM: Amherst
- CLASS C2 GAME DAY: Shelby-Rising City
- CLASS C2/D TUMBLING: Osceola
- CLASS D GAME DAY: Giltner
- CLASS D NON-TUMBLING: Kimball
- CLASS D TRADITIONAL: Loomis
- CLASS C1 GAME DAY: Cozad
- CLASS C1 TRADITIONAL: Adams Central
- CLASS C1 NON-TUMBLING: Conestoga



*CLASS C1 HIP HOP: Conestoga*

\* Samir Maday of Lexington was the Boys 198 lbs State Champion at the Nebraska State Power Lifting Championships. Marcus Fouquier of Plattsmouth was the Boys Unlimited State Champion.

\* Lydia Turner-Hickey was the Girls 165 lbs State Champion and was the Girls Outstanding Lifter at the Nebraska State Power Lifting Championships.



*LYDIA TURNER-HICKEY*

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## Updates from Members & Other Entities

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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



### Nebraska SMART Celebrates One Year of Free Online Tutoring!

In February 2024, Nebraska SMART launched its rural tutoring initiative to provide free online tutoring to K-12 students in Educational Service Units (ESUs) 1, 4, and 13. Since then, our impact has grown! In the Fall 2024, we expanded to include all NRCSA member school districts, ESUs 1, 4, and 13, and other select rural districts. Last month, we celebrated one year of tutoring! In the first year, our Tutors from **Chadron State College, Peru State College, and Wayne State College** conducted over 1,100 tutoring sessions and dedicated more than 600 hours to support K-12 students across rural Nebraska.

We thank our Tutors, students, families, and partners for making this first year a success! We look forward to continuing to serve rural Nebraska students and helping them achieve their academic goals.

### Parent Teacher Conferences

As Parent-Teacher Conferences approach, we encourage you to share our Program with teachers so they can inform parents. The [Nebraska SMART informational flyer](#) is available on our [website](#). If you need additional bookmarks or promotional materials, please contact Julie Dickerson.

## Spring 2025 Semester Tutoring Hours



*Tutoring is being offered Monday through Thursday, from 3:30 to 7:30 PM local time.*

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

Your help in reaching out to parents within your district is essential to increasing awareness of this program. Here are a few ways you can assist:

#### **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)

Email for inquiries or to request promotional supplies: [nebraskasmart@nscs.edu](mailto:nebraskasmart@nscs.edu)

Thank you for your support in raising awareness of Nebraska SMART!

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

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**Southern Superintendent Chris Proski 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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**Jeremy Braden, Superintendent at Doniphan-Trumbull, has developed a useful agenda for onboarding new Board of Education members.** Many of our districts will bring on new Board members in January. Jeremy's instrument could be a nice template for Superintendents and Board Presidents to use in working with new Board members. It may be accessed here:

### **[Board Member Onboarding](#)**

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**The University of Nebraska Foundation has a program to honor those who were teachers in Nebraska's One Room Schools.**

With a donation, we place the names of these teachers (they can be living or dead) on a Wall of Honor at the University of Nebraska.

With the donated funds, we create scholarships for future teachers (i.e. students studying to be a teacher at the University of Nebraska-Kearney).

*From Dorothy Endacott, UNL Foundation:*

#### ***Call for honorees: One Room, One Teacher Wall of Honor***

*Do you know a rural Nebraska educator whose hard work and dedication have made a difference in the lives of students? Submissions are sought for the One Room, One Teacher Wall of Honor at the University of Nebraska. The Wall of Honor, located in the College of Education Atrium at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, recognizes Nebraska educators who served in a one-room school or other rural school. The program celebrates Nebraska's education pioneers while raising scholarship funds for UNK College of Education students. The honored educators do not need to be UNK graduates; honorees may be living or recognized posthumously.*

*Family, friends and former students may make a gift to recognize a teacher through the One Room, One Teacher Wall of Honor program. There are three giving levels: \$1,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000. The deadline is May 15. Honorees will be recognized as part of UNK's Homecoming Week during a ceremony at 3:30 p.m. Oct. 10 in the College of Education Atrium. Attendance is not required. Learn more at [nufoundation.org/OneRoomOneTeacher](https://nufoundation.org/OneRoomOneTeacher).*

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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**

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.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/safety/school-safety-newsletter/>

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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.

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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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**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!*

### **[American Heart Association Service Summary](#)**

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### **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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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

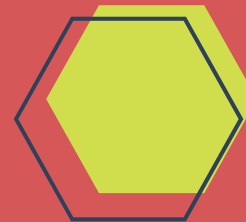


### During the Game/Event

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



**The National Rural Education Association’s Legislative Committee (of which NRCSA is a member) continues to represent rural education on the Federal level.** NRCSA Executive Director Jack Moles and NRCSA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Bryce Jorgenson (Supt. at Southern Valley) attended the NREA 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: NREA seeks preservation of critical federal funding for rural schools.

2) REAP FUNDING: NREA 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: NREA supports efforts to ensure any infrastructure proposal in Congress must include funding for modernizing or maintaining rural school facilities.

4) FOOD AND NUTRITION: NREA supports any effort to streamline processes and reduce the administrative burdens related to school meal programs.

5) SCHOOL SAFETY: NREA 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: NREA 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.

### [NREA Legislative Committee Agenda](#)

**The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) is a group that the NREA Legislative Committee works with.** Sarah Abernathy, CEF’s Executive Director, provided an update following in November’s elections. She does provide a decent overview of what the national landscape might look like moving forward. (Please note that all of CEF’s views do not necessarily reflect all of the views of NREA or NRCSA.)

*FROM SARAH:*

*I. The election and CEF’s mission to support investments in education*

*Dear CEF Members:*

*As we digest the results of yesterday’s election and wait to find out which party will lead the House in the 119th Congress, I imagine many of you are focused on what this means for governing in general and for education funding and policy in particular. We will certainly be facing a more challenging environment for investing in education and for ensuring that the*

*federal government supports and protects students, educators, and education institutions as the country continues to educate students of all ages. CEF's mission to increase the federal investment in education will not change, but we'll have to focus more on defense against funding cuts. We will continue to point out the results of education investments – for students immediately and for economic growth in the long term. We will need to communicate well, broaden our community of advocates, and target our efforts so they are as effective as possible.*

*Things to keep in mind – I generally hope for the best but try to prepare for the worst. I wasn't prepared for last night, but just made a list of some things I expect from a Trump Administration's education agenda, and how likely they are to happen. Key things to keep in mind:*

*Congress did not enact past Trump budgets that cut education funding – In fact, Congress ignored the Trump Administration's requested steep cuts and increased education funding. I don't expect education funding increases now but do know that Members of Congress do not want to vote for bills that will cost jobs in their district or harm their constituents. One of our jobs will be to continue to highlight why investments in education are so important to those who need to be convinced.*

*It is hard to make big changes in government quickly – Some Republicans want to eliminate the Department of Education, while continuing many programs at lower funding but in either the Department of Labor or in Health and Human Services. This type of change is hard to enact. There do appear to be some executive actions that would eliminate civil servant positions, and it's easy to shrink a government agency by not hiring behind staff who leave. If Republicans keep control of the House next Congress, they could use the budget reconciliation process to fast-track passage of tax cuts and cuts to entitlements, since reconciliation bills need only a majority in the Senate, not the customary 60-vote margin to pass.*

*Administrative/regulatory agendas change with each Administration – Since recent presidents have not been able to enact much of their agendas because they often split power with Congress, each successive administration has made changes with executive action, which are then reversed by the next administration. A Trump administration is likely to reverse Biden Administration student loan debt relief executive actions and impose new ones that support*

*their agenda, such as limiting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requirements, limiting transgender student participation in sports or protections at the school level, and changes in interpretation of student civil rights protections.*

*Possible Republican policy agenda focused on the private sector (except for IHEs) – Conservative theory tends to support the private sector as a more efficient than the public sector for accomplishing goals, and I'd expect to see a renewed focus on support for private school vouchers that families could use toward private school education, more tax policy supporting private school tuition, and "local control" for public schools. At the higher education level, Republicans are likely to sharpen their attention to college admission policies, protections for freedom of speech, policies regarding civil rights, and taxation of endowments. This can occur through appropriations and tax policy (forbidding federal funding if a recipient does a certain thing or requiring a certain action to receive federal funding), and through oversight hearings and federal administrative actions, among other actions.*

*What's next?*

*Changes in House and Senate party and committee leadership – We'll know more after all House races are called. The Washington Post has a handy list of the current Republican and Democratic seats most likely to change party, and ACG Advocacy is updating its own list of seats still to call, which I'll share. Meanwhile, I've attached a document that ACG prepared on Friday showing who is in line to head each Senate and House committee for each party depending upon who is in the majority, and who is in line for party leadership positions. Republicans plan to hold leadership elections next week, although the House could push its schedule back depending on what is known about all the remaining elections still to be called.*

*FY 2025 appropriations likely not finalized in December – The government is operating on an extension of fiscal year (FY) 2024 funding that expires on December 20. I think it is now likely that Congress will not finalize FY 2025 appropriations bills by then and will instead extend funding into next Spring (this is what House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) supported when the current 3-month extension was enacted in September), giving the new Republican Administration and Senate more say in the outcome. That outcome does not bode well for investments in education; the current bipartisan appropriations bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee includes \$12 billion more for the Department of Education programs than the*

Republican bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee.

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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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### **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 NCEES 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](#)**

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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.

We are very pleased to partner with our corporate sponsors, and NRCSA is so very thankful that each of you has chosen to partner with us.

**This month we feature:**





## Proactive Roof and Building Envelope Maintenance: Maximizing School District Budgets and Infrastructure Lifespan

It is often said that “the only thing constant is change” – a truth that underscores the importance of proactive roof and building envelope maintenance in school districts. No one ever wants to deal with leaks or other moisture issues in a school. Tremco Roofing and Building Maintenance has partnered with school districts nationwide, offering budget-friendly solutions that protect critical infrastructure and extend asset life. Since ESSER funding is no longer available, many schools may be challenged by limited resources to address deferred maintenance.

Tremco solutions are designed to meet challenging budget constraints while protecting your roofing and building envelope assets, extending performance life for as long as possible, and helping you plan for long-term needs while addressing your most urgent roofing and building envelope problems today.

### The True Cost of “Run-to-Failure” Maintenance

It’s a familiar story: a roof starts leaking, and by the time the issue is investigated, warranties have expired, leaving only one solution—an expensive total roof replacement. Allowing roofs to “run to failure” is both costly and disruptive. By maintaining and restoring your roofs before they reach the point of failure, you can avoid emergency repairs and extend the life of your assets.

### The Power of Proactive Maintenance

Routine inspections, diagnostics, and timely repairs are essential to prolonging roof life. By catching minor issues early and restoring rather than replacing roofs, schools can save significantly. Roof restoration is not only more cost-effective but also less disruptive. Unlike roof replacement, which involves tearing off the old roof and generating significant waste, restoration uses fluid-applied systems that extend the roof’s life by 20 years or more—often with minimal odor or disruption to the learning environment.

Scheduled roof maintenance is essential to avoid premature roof failures. Routine maintenance helps prevent small issues, like cracks or blisters, from escalating into costly damage. Roof systems should be inspected and maintained regularly and include:

- **Inspection and Cleaning:** roofs should be inspected for surface damage, pooling water, debris accumulation, and signs of leaks or compromised seals, especially around roof penetrations, and cleaned annually.
- **Drains and Curbs:** Flat roofs are more prone to pooling water, which can lead to leaks, mold, and structural damage. Cleaning drain assemblies and possibly installing new drains may alleviate this problem.
- **Joint Sealing:** Extreme weather changes, age and other problems can create cracks or open joints in your parapet walls and concrete surfaces. This can allow water to infiltrate your roof and building. Early detection of cracks in the roof membrane protects the building’s interior and structural integrity.
- **Flashings:** The most common reason for premature roof failure is flashing problems. Simply repairing or replacing failing flashings with reinforcement membranes designed to be compatible with your roof system can help you avoid major problems down the road.
- **Patch and Repair:** As roofs age, minor problems such as tears and splits in the membrane, as well as cracks and deterioration of the walls may occur. Left unrepaired, they can become major problems and lead to large capital expenses.



## Tremco/WTI for Your Maintenance Needs

Limited budgets and vast responsibilities often mean that roofing and building envelope maintenance is reactive rather than proactive; only addressed when leaks or damage appear.

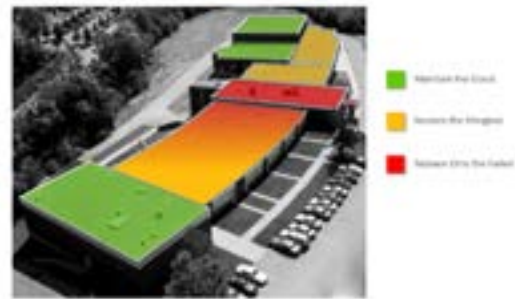
Through Tremco Roofing's affiliated construction services company, WTI (Weatherproofing Technologies, Inc.), school districts in Nebraska can obtain comprehensive maintenance, repair, roof management, and general contracting services for the entire building envelope. From simple patch and repair to ongoing maintenance to roof restoration or even replacement, Tremco and WTI have you covered. Taking a proactive approach to managing facility infrastructure can prevent costly emergencies, reduce disruptions, and stretch your budget much further.

Tremco even offers the TremSource® leak management program. One call to our 24/7 hotline sends qualified roofing technicians to find and repair roof leaks anywhere at your facility.

## Asset Management Methodology: A Roadmap for Success

Tremco takes roof maintenance a step further with its asset management program. An effective facility asset management program consists of three parts: expert inventory assessment, prioritized construction, and scheduled maintenance—so you know what you have, spend wisely and keep your building enclosures operational for as long as possible. With this approach, you can optimize both your budget and your operations.

The first step in effective asset management is assessing the condition of your roof and other building envelope components. Categorize them using a simple triage system:



- **Green (Maintain):** These areas are in good condition and require only routine maintenance.
- **Amber (Restore):** These areas need restoration to prevent further degradation.
- **Red (Replace):** These areas have reached the end of their useful life and require replacement.

This categorization allows you to develop a long-term (10-20+ years) maintenance and repair plan. Applying this methodology to all aspects of your building envelope—roofs, walls, windows, and foundations—can save time and money in the long run.

## Beyond Roofing: A Holistic Approach to Asset Management

While roofing is an essential starting point, the asset management approach should extend to the entire building envelope. Walls, windows, doors, and foundations all play a role in maintaining the building's integrity and energy efficiency. By understanding the condition of these assets, prioritizing repairs, and developing a structured plan, districts can achieve predictable budgets and long-term cost savings.

## Conclusion: The Payoff of Proactive Maintenance and Asset Management

For rural school districts in Nebraska, proactive maintenance and asset management offers a clear path to optimizing performance, extending the life of critical infrastructure, and avoiding costly emergency repairs. By investing in routine maintenance and timely restorations, facility managers can safeguard their buildings, protect their budgets, and ensure a safe, comfortable learning environment for years to come.

Contact Jim Wolfsohn at 816.801.7844 or [jwolfsohn@tremcoinc.com](mailto:jwolfsohn@tremcoinc.com) to discover how **Tremco** can help your district implement cost-saving, proactive maintenance strategies.



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## *NRCSA Programs*

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