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International Comparisons in Education (Why doesn't the USA perform better?)

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NSEA-RETIRED ADVOCATE

www.nsea.org/retired

June 2019: V 14, I-3

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Dr. De Tonack
NSEA-Retired
President



A Heartfelt Thank You

NSEA-Retired had an opportunity to say thank you to Art Tanderup and Jim McDermott who are leaving the NSEA-Retired Board. Art taught from 1974 to 2009 in Naper, Orchard, Tekamah-Herman and taught as an UNO adjunct. Through those years, he served in various capacities in the local and district associations. He also served on the NEA Resolutions committee and many years as the treasurer for NSEA-Retired.

Art served as an alternate to Delegate Assembly in 1975 and has been a delegate every year since, including the special Delegate Assemblies: 44 years as a delegate to 46 DAs. Art represented Nebraska at 19 RAs as well. Art also served as a NEA Director for 2 years.

Jim graduated from Kearney State Teachers College, taught one semester at



Riverton and then moved to Alliance. He served in various capacities for the local association, president of the Panhandle District and 13 years total on the NSEA Board of Directors. He has attended 13 RAs and over 25 DAs. After retirement, he spent 10 years on the NSEA-retired board and a 3-year term as vice president.

Both Art and Jim were presented with wind chimes with attachments including their names and NSEA-R.

NSEA-Retired Provides Flagpole and Flag

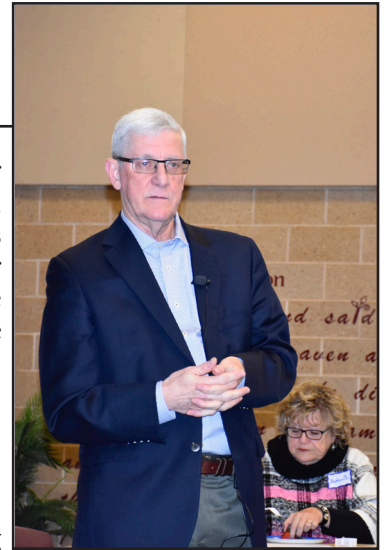


The flagpole was on the original wish list when the NSEA building was remodeled. It was cut to stay within the budget. Pictured are NSEA-Retired members as NSEA Operational Specialist and retired liaison Mike Wiesen raises the flag in front of the NSEA building on April 26, prior to DA. The flagpole includes a dedication plaque: "Honoring Nebraska Educators/ NSEA-Retired/2019"

International Comparisons in Education

(Why doesn't the USA perform better?)

Lawrence C. Scharmann
Professor of Education
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education
University of Nebraska (Lincoln)



Dr. Scharmann presenting to Lincoln Retired Members

I spent 23 years of my career in higher education as an administrator of teacher education programs (15 at Kansas State, 4 at Florida State, and 4 at UNL). I would, on occasion, find myself in discussion with school board members or state legislators concerning the standing of American schools in relation to rankings reported, for instance, by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Before making a case why our educational system has no need to apologize, let's examine our 2015 PISA rankings.

- Reading literacy – 24th (tied with Chinese Taipei)
- Mathematics literacy – 40th (tied with Israel)
- Science literacy – 25th (tied with Norway & Austria)

Taken out of context, these rankings make it appear as though there is something quite amiss with American schooling. What are other nations doing that achieve higher rankings?

I had the great fortune, in my capacity as Director of the School of Teacher Education at Florida State University (2010-2014), to visit three nations whose PISA rankings are consistently superior to those of the United States: Finland, South Korea, and Singapore. These nations were chosen since at least one member of our study group had a personal connection in each respective country and each nation was ranked in the top 10 in at least two of the three categories reported in the PISA results. The table below provides the comparative rankings.

	United States	Finland	South Korea	Singapore
Reading Literacy	24 th	5 th	7 th	1 st
Mathematics Literacy	40 th	13 th	7 th	1 st
Science Literacy	25 th	5 th	11 th	1 st

Our group spent at least five days in each of these nations. We spoke with university faculty members, public school administrators, secondary teachers, and (when possible) government officials. The results of these visits yielded one overarching conclusion – the rankings represent a comparison of Apples to Oranges. Three themes provide additional context for this conclusion: 1) College prep enrollment; 2) Locus of responsibility/ Cultural status of teachers; and 3) National motivation for enhancing literacy.

College prep enrollment

PISA results are obtained from assessment scores of students attending college prep secondary schools. With respect to my four-nation comparison, herein lies the first discrepancy. In Finland, South Korea and Singapore, high-stakes testing occurs that limits the number of students admitted to college prep schools, whereas the United States provides virtually all secondary students with a college prep curriculum. College prep enrollment is given below:

College Prep enrollment	United States	Finland	South Korea	Singapore
	100%	40%	20%	25%

If we compare 100 percent of our students to just the top 40, 20, and 25 percent of Students in Finland, South Korea and Singapore, respectively, why under these circumstances would we expect to look good in the PISA findings?

Locus of Responsibility/Cultural Status of Teachers

Another factor to consider is locus of responsibility ... in other words, who is to blame when students do not succeed? In the U.S., teachers are often blamed, denoted by school district report cards and/or individual teachers' value-added scores (a consequence of NCLB implementation).

Finland finds the value-added concept puzzling, since teachers are one of the most respected (and competitive) professions in their nation. When a student does not succeed in Finland, blame is not assigned. Instead, an analysis of every student's individual needs is performed. Individual students may receive the attention of 1, 2, or even 3 teachers (e.g., regular, special, and reading education teachers) to attend to one individual student's needs. Furthermore, every teacher in Finland receives two master's degrees – one in their subject matter and one in pedagogy – both paid for by the Finnish government. The situations in South Korea and Singapore are mitigated by the fact that in pre-identifying the top 20-25 percent of academically talented students, fewer special needs, reading, and related student problems occur. It is more likely in South Korea and Singapore for individual students to lack motivation – blame is then assigned to parents for not having provided sufficient parental pressure or 'extra schooling' (i.e., 'hogwans' or 'cram schools').

National motivation for enhancing literacy

Finnish, Korean and Singaporean histories are fraught with having been the recent victims of various conquering nations – thus, each desire to maintain independence and national sovereignty. All three countries see education as a funding priority; enhanced literacy is noted as a crucial factor in sustaining their existence as a nation. The United States, when it created a system of public schools, provided a model for other nations to emulate. Schools were seen in our past as performing the same function as I note for Finland, South Korea and Singapore. Unfortunately, in some circles, we take our schools for granted and forget the powerful transformation they provide in helping to create our own national identity.

LEGISLATION AND EDUCATION



Pictured are LEA-Retired members Pat Etherton and Linda Lannin along with Senator Hanson

Shown are retired members Linda Lannin and Pat Etherton as they gathered for their annual Lobby Day on February 12. Weather challenged the 65 registrants, but many were able to gather at NSEA to be updated on legislative issues and meet with the senators of Nebraska. Senator Lindstrom addressed the group during the luncheon. Several bills warranted attention including support of mental health services in schools, teacher-mentoring programs, the student discipline act, and grievance procedures for teacher improvement plans. Opposition to dollar-for-dollar tax credits

to donors to private schools was also discussed. Adequate funding for public education continues to be important to legislative lobbying. At the right are retired members Lisa Fricke and Patsy Koch-Johns who participated in Lobby Day and added perspectives from their leadership in Nebraska's State Board of Education. Retired members have continued to be important to various educational concerns in Nebraska including helping in fall candidate races, monitoring polling places, writing letters and making phone calls to their senators.



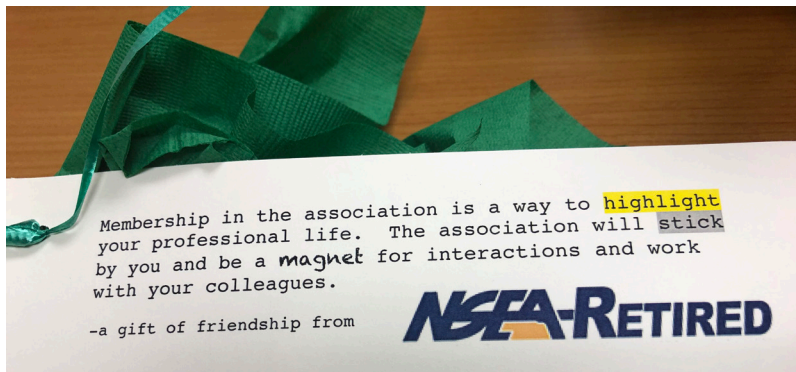
Add Your Story



Would you like to have your name and some of your teaching experiences placed in a book detailing the many duties of teachers? The book, tentatively called "Are You a Teacher? I Say No" will use real-life anecdotes to show that teachers are not only teachers, but nurses, lawyers, counselors, bankers, policemen, parents and more. Scottsbluff retired teacher James McDermott is in the early stages of writing the book and is searching for real-life experiences to be shared by veteran teachers. Those who have stories selected for the book will receive a free copy. To offer a story to McDermott, please send to him at 1920 Ave. P, Scottsbluff, NE, 69361. He may also be reached at jpmcdermo@hotmail.com

Welcoming New Educators to the Profession

With the help of an NEA-Retired grant, NSEA-Retired has extended encouragement to new educators and “about-to-be” educators in various ways this past year. From a previous grant, many Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) members received the book “What Great Teachers Do Differently: 17 Things That Matter Most,” a book that is actually required in some Nebraska methods classes. At their April spring conference, SEAN attendees received the book “Your First Year” by the same authors Todd, Madeline and Katherine Whitaker. Students are also given, “First-Year Teacher Survival Kits,” packed with rubber bands, paper clips and other items fitting the various lines in the attached note.



Similar small gifts of friendship were provided at various meetings provided by NSEA staff. One from the NSEA-Retired included a highlighter, magnetic clip, and glue stick plus some candy. The attached note reminded individuals “the association is a way to highlight your professional life and the association will stick by you and be a magnet for interactions and work with your colleagues.” Several local retired groups from Lincoln,

Omaha and the Platte Valley retired groups prepared gift bags welcoming new educators to the profession with a combination of local and grant monies as well as numerous donations.

This year’s grant also helped NSEA-Retired contribute in a small way financially to the March Educators Rising competition. Educators Rising gives high school student members hands-on teaching experience and strives to sustain their interest in the profession and cultivate the skills they need to be successful educators. Several retired members served as judges at the event. Volunteers included Ann Quinlan, Jan Stamper, Bev Westerberg and John Heineman from Lincoln.



“One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.”
~Malala Yousafzai

Retired Locals Staying Active

Lincoln Education Association Retired meets 10 times a year but has also added some special interest groups which gather at various times. Shown below is an afternoon wine tasting group at the home of Dr. Margie Nowak. Another Lincoln Retired group traveled to Omaha for a winter trip that included a visit to the Durham Museum.



The Platte-Valley Retired Association includes members from the Grand Island and Hastings area. Shown below is member Rita Lammers with Pam Gosper, a Gold Star member, who presented at a fall meeting.



Amy Campagna from NE Wildlife Rehab Inc., presented a program to the Bellevue Retireds, and below is a picture of Amy holding a corn snake, a field loving species of the Southern U.S.



Shown above are the Millard Retired members donating their time at the local food bank for one of their many activities. Shown below are NSEA Retired members from left to right, Bob Ingram, Susan Daughtery, Monica Evon and Terry Osborn as they shared educational experiences and suggestions with Bellevue University SEAN members this past March. Another group of retired members presented a similar panel to SEAN members at Wayne State College. That panel included Brad Weber, Ellen Imdieke, Rae Brown, and Ed and Lee Brogie.



“We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust our sails.”

NSEA Retired Spring Conference



Keynote Speaker
Neal Clayburn
 NSEA Assoc. Executive Dir.

Dressed in his uniform, Neal Clayburn, NSEA Associate Executive Director, shared the history and value of Boy Scouts of America (BSA). BSA was inspired by and modeled on the Boy Scout Association established by Robert Baden-Powell in Britain in 1908. BSA was founded in 1910 and became the largest youth organization in the United States.

He also shared information about International Scouting and the World Organization of the Scouting Movement. This summer, Neal is on the Operations Staff for the 24th World Jamboree to be held in West Virginia. He shared videos about International Scouting and the World Jamboree. He talked about his involvement in the 12 day event which will attract over 46,000 Scouts from 156 countries this summer.

Neal added many personal stories of family members involved in Scouts and also shared numerous memorabilia from his Scout involvement over the years.

During lunch, NSEA President Jenni Benson (below) updated participants on recent legislation, in particular that addressing taxation, educator mentoring, and state taxation credit for private school scholarship funding, along with other issues.

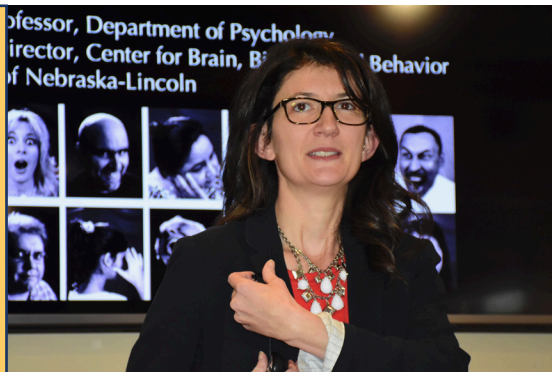


Save the Date:

**NSEA-Retired
 Fall 2019
 Conference**

**Tuesday, October
 15**

**Ramada Inn,
 Kearney, NE**



The afternoon speaker was Dr. Maital Neta with the message and research that finds older adults tend to view ambiguous situations in a more positive manner. Perhaps we have learned to “not sweat the small stuff” and put our energies and focus toward causes and injustices we see.



Numerous breakout sessions filled the morning. At the left is Diane Cox helping participants experience the power of storytelling. Several participants chose an object to help tell a brief story. Bottom left is Theresa Stelik, Lincoln retired member, helping a group experience the power of Tai Chi.



At the right are SEAN leaders London Bercey and Kayley Prenosil sharing questions and concerns on teacher preparation with retired members. Retired conferences always include a visit from a Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska representative. Bottom right is Jon Tidwell with retired member LeAnn Hofmann.



Retired Delegates Serve at DA



Shown are the 20 NSEA-Retired Delegates at the 2019 Delegate Assembly April 26-27. Delegates took many opportunities in support of New Business Items. Shown is Tamara Bailey voicing support for a NBI asking NSEA Board to investigate offering free childcare at Delegate Assembly. Art Tanderup seconded a motion by SEAN President London Bercey focusing on the Praxis Core test, asking to assist more perspective teachers in passing the Praxis Core tests and becoming educators. The NBI proposal passed. Efforts will be made to expand tutoring efforts, and research opportunities to reduce the Praxis cost, and work with the Nebraska State Board of Education and other elected officials and policy makers to reduce the barriers to successful Praxis completion. Retired delegate Marty Perego, a member who is actively involved in tutoring for the Praxis test, also spoke in favor of the NBI. Shown are retired delegates as they work on a strategy in support of the NBI.



NSEA-Retired Delegate - Tamara Bailey



NSEA-Retired Delegates - Art Tanderup & Marty Perego

NSEA-Retired Delegates discuss their strategy at Delegate Assembly



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Keeping Informed On Insurance

Many of our members are either participants in the EHA Direct Bill Plan from BCBSNE if retired and between ages 50 and 64 or are participants in Medicare if age 65 and above. Many Medicare participants are also members in what is now called the Educators' Medicare Supplement, also from BCBSNE, and endorsed by NSEA-Retired. This plan is available to those who are moving from an EHA Subscriber status or who are members of NSEA-Retired. Access to up-to-date information can be found at nsea.org/retired, selecting from the retirement and insurance category. A webinar video describing the EHA Direct Bill plan and the rates for the plan can be found from the Retiree menu option at www.ehaplan.org, selecting retirees from the menu. BCBSNE can be reached at 1-877-721-2583 as well. Seminars addressing the Educators' Medicare Supplement will again be offered this coming fall.

