

The Educators'



# ADVOCATE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

Volume 52 | Issue 3



**SPEAK UP** for the Schools  
Our Students Deserve!

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SDEA Board of Directors meeting minutes can now be found online at NEA EdCommunities on the “SDEA Members Only” group page.

## Vision

We envision valued education professionals providing quality public education for all students.

## Mission

South Dakota Education Association ensures the collective voice for South Dakota public education professionals.

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020

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# President's Corner

## Join Me for SDEA's Lobby Week!

As your new president, I am experiencing a lot of firsts such as my first time running a board meeting, or my first time being interviewed by the media. But the first experience representing the educators of South Dakota as your President and lobbyist is probably my proudest first yet.

I have always watched the legislative process and visited session during lobby days, but I have never had the opportunity to be there every day and watch it all unfold. I am learning the lingo like 'smoke out', 41st Day, hog house, and crossover, and I am getting the feel for the flow of the committee hearings and debate. I am getting to know the legislators and people from South Dakota from all points of view. Some days it can be overwhelming, but at the same time very rewarding because I am there to make sure our educators have what they need to give students the schools they deserve.

As I talk to the legislators in the hallways and in committee, I am struck by how many of them really do want to know what educators think about education funding, home-schooling and the state's involvement in curriculum. They ask how teachers are handling this crazy year and they truly appreciate all you have done for the students in their districts.

What has surprised me the most is just how little information some of them have on how our schools work. Things move fast during session and every legislator should know how the education bills they are considering will affect the students living in their districts. That's why our members are the best story tellers for what schools need.

During the first week of March, SDEA is hosting Lobby Week. Because of the pandemic, the SDEA leadership team decided to forego an in-person lobby day. Instead, we are encouraging you to get involved from your home. We are going to kick-off the 2021 Lobby Week with a tele-townhall March 1st at 7pm CST. This is your opportunity to get a legislative briefing and ask questions about what is happening at the Capitol. On Tuesday, we will kick-off the final push for education funding and will encourage all members to write their legislators to let them know what funding will mean for their schools. Wednesday will be 'Red for Ed' day. We are encouraging all educators to wear their best red in solidarity of one-another. Please take pictures and record messages about what legislation will mean for your students. Finally, on Thursday share those photos and videos on social media with the #sdSpeakUp and #sdleg. While you might not be in Pierre in person, your participation in Lobby Week will have an impact.

The one thing I am learning during the first legislative session as your president is that your voice does matter. If we speak up together, we can give our students the schools they deserve.

Again, it is an honor to serve the educators in South Dakota. I am looking forward to many more firsts with all of you. *Loren Paul*

**Loren Paul**  
SDEA President

800-529-0090  
605-224-9263, ext 116  
loren.paul@sdea.org



# A Word from Our **NEA Director**



## **Dana Livermont**

Dana is a certified school counselor and K-12 specialist with the SD Statewide Family Engagement Center who serves as your representative on the NEA Board of Directors. She is passionate about organizing around issues and equity for students in South Dakota. Twitter [@theDanamyte](https://twitter.com/theDanamyte)

This Association, from the national level down to the local level, is by, for, and through our members. By virtue of being a member, you have part ownership of its goals, its initiatives, and ultimately, its success. At all levels, we elect various officials and representatives to sit on boards and act on our behalf, just like I am elected to serve you on both the SDEA and NEA Boards of Directors (BOD). As leaders, we are responsible for listening to our members and fulfilling their will.

One of the most impactful ways that SDEA members can elevate their voices and guide the work of our Association is to participate in our annual state-level Representative Assembly (RA). It is a time to share ideas, give feedback to SDEA leadership, and debate the issues that matter most to our members and the communities we serve. Here are a few of the most important actions that happen at the Representative Assembly.

### **Budget Hearing and Adoption**

Each year, the SDEA BOD presents a proposed budget to the delegates at the RA. Our BOD must be able to adequately explain the revenue coming in and how we propose to use it to meet the goals of this Association. Use this opportunity to ask specific questions about the proposed spending and how it relates to our goals.

### **Amendments to the Bylaws**

Our Bylaws are the most sacred documents for our Association. They hold the highest authority over our work. They delineate powers and roles, direct elections, calculate dues, and much more. Although the deadline to submit proposed changes has passed, the debate has not yet begun. That will happen at the RA. These changes can have a large impact on our members, so sending delegates to debate and vote is crucial.

### **New Business Items**

New Business Items, or NBIs, can be proposed by individual members, locals, caucuses or councils, or even the BOD itself. They are ideas about what SDEA should do for members—a task force, a study, a publication, a development, etc.—relating to a specific topic of importance. NBIs must be completed within the next calendar year. Our standing rules allow NBIs to be submitted up to the weekend of the RA, so visit with your local to see if there is an NBI you'd like to bring to the RA.

### **Adoption of the Legislative Agenda**

The Legislative Agenda is the guiding document used by SDEA leadership to determine which legislation to support or oppose. Throughout the legislative session,

— continued to page 11

# SDEA ESP Advisory Council to Offer Technology Training

SDEA has significantly expanded its capacity for professional development for certified members over the past six years. A group of ESP members want to see that same growth in trainings that are meaningful and relevant to clerical, custodial, food services, maintenance or transportation ESPs.

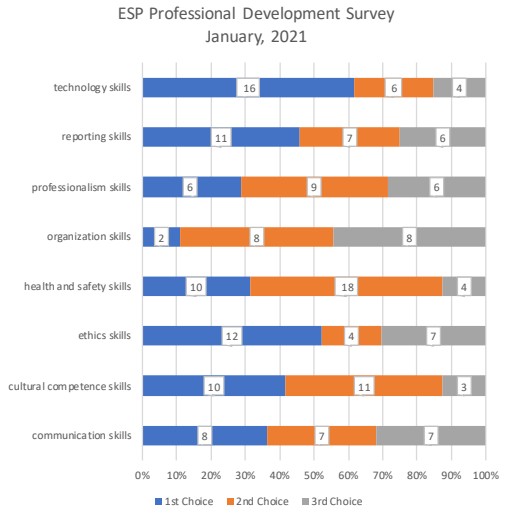
In late 2020, SDEA’s ESP Advisory Council set up a sub-group to determine professional development needs of ESP members and to establish suitable training to meet those needs. An online survey was sent out in mid-December asking ESP members to rank their top three training areas of need. Based on the NEA ESP Professional Growth Continuum (<http://bit.ly/PGCESP>) respondents could choose from the eight universal standards of professionalism:

1. **Communication Standard**
2. **Cultural Competence Standard**
3. **Organization Standard**
4. **Reporting Standard**
5. **Ethics Standard**
6. **Health & Safety Standard**
7. **Technology Standard**
8. **Professionalism Standard**

“After the ESP council reviewed survey results, we have decided to move forward with offering a technology training PD in the early spring,” said Council chair Heather Harmon. She also asked ESP members to participate in a survey coming soon to narrow down technology topics.

The Council also prioritized training in the categories of health and safety skills and cultural competence.

As they become available, all trainings will be found on <https://bridge.sdea.org/>.



## Questions? Contact:

**Rich Mittelstedt**, Teaching and Learning Coordinator  
800-529-0090 | 605-886-4800 | [richard.mittelstedt@sdea.org](mailto:richard.mittelstedt@sdea.org)





— SDEA LOBBY WEEK —

# A Week to Speak Up for the Schools Our Students Deserve



March 1-4



## Lobby Week 2021

SDEA is hosting “Lobby Week” **March 1- 4, 2021** to give educators the opportunity to speak up for the schools our students deserve. The pandemic prohibits us from bringing you to the Capitol, so this year we are going to ask you to join us from where you live and teach.

Here are the activities we have planned:

1<sup>st</sup>



### Monday Kickoff Day

Lobby Week Kick Off Town Hall with SDEA President Loren Paul at 7pm CST Sign Up: <https://bit.ly/3pXYKhE>

READY  
SET  
GO!

2<sup>nd</sup>



### Tuesday Speak Up and Contact Your Legislators

Email, phone, or text your legislators about how additional education funding will help your school and students.



3<sup>rd</sup>



### Wednesday Wear Red for Ed and Record

Dawn your best red outfit and create a video about the importance of increases to education funding and what it means for your school and your students.



4<sup>th</sup>



### Thursday Get Social

Post your Red for Ed Photos and Video on your social media platform of choice with **#sdleg**, **#sdspeakup**, **#sdredford**



All Week



### Wear the Official Speak Up Button...

Mailed to your local leader the week of February 22!

#### SDEA Members Only:

Log into MyNEA360 to join the “SDEA Members Only” group to access SDEA/ NEA member only documents and information. New users will need to create a MyNEA360 profile in order to be verified as an SDEA member.

# Why We Need **Diverse** Books

**It's important for all kids to see themselves on the pages.**

Partial article by: Mary Ellen Flannery (*Read the full article at [readacrossamerica.org](http://readacrossamerica.org)*)

When teacher and author Torrey Maldonado was in third grade, his mother brought home *A Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats—the beloved book about a young Black boy exploring his city in fresh snow.

Until then, Maldonado—who is Black and Afro-Puerto Rican—had never seen a kid who looked like him in a book. “I thought that book was me! I thought the mother was my mom,” he says. “What made that book so precious to me is it took my neighborhood and made me see the magic in it.”

## **AN EVOLUTION IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS**

In 1985, less than 1 percent of children’s books spotlighted Black characters. Twenty years later, not much had changed. In 2015, children were about five times more likely to encounter a talking truck or dinosaur on the page than a Hispanic character.

But by 2019, more than 12 percent of U.S.-published children’s books featured Black characters, according to the University of Wisconsin’s Cooperative Children’s Book Center. Additionally, 9 percent of books featured Asian characters; 6.3 percent featured Hispanic characters; and less than 1 percent had Native American or Alaska Native characters. While children’s books still aren’t as diverse as the children who read them, progress is being made.

## **LEARNING A DIFFERENT STORY**

A good book can help you understand what it’s like for people who don’t share your race, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. Diverse books teach empathy, says Erika Long, a middle school librarian in Tennessee.

One of Long’s favorite books is *No Fixed Address* by Susin Nielsen about a boy named Felix, who is almost 13 and lives with his mom and pet gerbil in a van. “It’s a tough topic, but it’s a way to say to a kid that you’re not alone. Other people go through this. There’s a message in there—there’s hope and you’ll be okay,” says Long.



“And if you’re not homeless, if you’re a kid who has everything, it’s about showing them that kids are out there in different situations,” Long says. “How can we show them kindness and how can we build relationships without having judgement?”

Diverse books opened a window for Maldonado. He remembers seeing that *Life* magazine with his neighborhood on the cover and how uncomfortable it made him feel. “My mom looked at my face and said, ‘Well, what are you going to do about it? Be the change you want to see,’” he recalls.

“When I got older, it clicked,” he says. “If you don’t like the narrative about you and your community, your peers and your classmates, then you can rewrite the story.”

## **JOIN NEA’S READ ACROSS AMERICA IN CELEBRATING DIVERSE BOOKS!**

Busy educators can find recommended books, authors, and teaching resources that promote diversity and inclusion at [readacrossamerica.org](http://readacrossamerica.org).



# New SDEA Staff and Roles



## LouAnn Jensen

**What is your role?**  
EGL UniServ Director

**What did you do before SDEA?**

For the past 12 years I was the English teacher at Estelline

High School. During my time there I also taught psychology, sociology, history, government and personal finance at different times.

**Something you want the members to know about you?**

I am excited to serve educators in South Dakota. As a group working together we have so much potential to improve lives and impact the future for our students.

**Anything you want to share about family?**

My husband and I live in Arlington. We have two daughters who are grown and flown. I like to spend time camping and kayaking.

## Eric Herold

**What is your role?**

Plains UniServ Director

**What made you decide to come to SDEA?**

Strengthening education and supporting all educators

is paramount to our future. SDEA empowers these ideals exceptionally and I am very fortunate to work with this association to make a difference. I have always admired and eventually wanted to live in the state of South Dakota as well.



**Something you want the members to know about you?**

I am originally from Thermopolis Wyoming, obtaining my bachelors degree from the University of Wyoming in Laramie. I am ecstatic to be here and to support you in any way that I can. Please feel free to reach out to me for any reason at any time.

## Ryan Rolfs

**What is your role?**

I have transitioned into a Statewide Field Coordinator position.

**Tell us about your new role at SDEA?**

SDEA and its locals can only be successful if all of our members are active in pushing to create the schools that our students deserve. This activism can take many shapes and forms. Part of my role with this new position is to work with locals in determining which shape or form is best for them, and then building a plan on how to move towards their identified goal. Currently, I'm working with members across the state who are Legislative Action Team leads. These members are working to building relationships with their local legislators through sharing their experiences, and ultimately are advocating for the legislation that is best for South Dakota students and our members.

**Is there something members might not know about you?**

I absolutely love hiking, camping, and spending time in the outdoors.



# Honored Women Educators of South Dakota

Because it can be difficult to get all necessary information on the nominee, while not divulging the fact that the person is being nominated, a new format was voted on in August 2017. The new format is to submit the information that can be obtained, with **items listed below required**. Submit the information by **May 1, 2021** to: Ralyna Schilling, 1209 Ridge Road, Mitchell SD 57301. Nominations can be submitted electronically to: ralya@hotmail.com

Then the nominee will be notified and will be asked to complete the form by June 1, 2021. Those selected for membership in Honored Women Educators of South Dakota will be notified and will be invited to the July luncheon.

**Each SDEA Member may submit one nominee per year.**

**Requirements of nominees:**

1. Be active in education at present and be a present SDEA member. Or, if retired, the nominee must have been an SDEA member during her active career
2. Have a minimum of four years of college
3. Should have spent at least ten years in the field of education
4. Be fully qualified educationally for their field of work
5. Have made major contributions in the area of education
6. Should be active in the community and exhibit character traits worthy of the honor of membership
7. Eligible for membership are classroom teachers, administrators, librarians, supervisors, and former educators

**Submit the following information on a word document. Please note that the letters of recommendation (#8), can be submitted by either you or the nominee.**

1. Full name of nominee
2. Mailing address of nominee
3. Phone number of nominee
4. Email address of nominee
5. Present position of nominee, if currently teaching; past position, if retired
6. Write a paragraph that reveals the personality and real worth of the nominee
7. Name, signature, addresses, phone number of nominator who submits the nomination, and date
8. Optional: Submit 2 or 3 letters of recommendation from others who are familiar with the contributions of the nominee. Possible choices could be co-workers, administrators, students or former students, or parents of present or former students. If the nominator does not submit the letters of recommendation, the nominee will be asked to do so.

**Reminder:  
Nomination is not to be  
divulged to nominee**

# SDEA/NEA OPPORTUNITIES

## GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, CAREER



### SDEA/NEA Educational Innovation Grant

The SDEA/NEA Educational Innovation Grant Program provides grants to members in support of innovative educational and student-oriented projects. The grant program funds new member-led projects. It does not fund projects on an on-going basis. The SDEA/NEA Educational Innovation Grants give preference to proposals that address student achievement, cultural diversity issues, include community partnerships, and can be duplicated by others.

**Deadline:** *May 1*

— continued from page 5

bills will pop up regarding education. The leadership team and staff discuss the bills and always look to the Legislative Agenda to help determine our position. The RA is your opportunity to amend and adopt our Legislative Agenda for the next session.

This year's SDEA RA will be held virtually the weekend of April 9. On top of the important

business, we'll hear from NEA leadership, present various education awards, and manage to squeeze in some fun and connection. Visit with your local leadership about attending this year's RA. Please reach out to me if you have any questions about business at the RA. I hope to see you there!

### LOBBY LINE

#### The Latest News from the State Capitol

Get the latest developments, action alerts and breaking news from the SDEA Lobby Team at the South Dakota State Capitol.

[www.sdea.org/lobbyline](http://www.sdea.org/lobbyline)



**Questions or Concerns** — *Contact a UniServ Director today!*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### February

- 20 Budget Committee Meeting
- 22 EGL Unit Meeting

### March

- 2 Read Across America
- 6 Budget Committee Meeting
- 11 Last Day of SD Legislature
- 11-12 NEA Higher Ed Conference
- 12-14 NEA Leadership Summit
- 14-15 NEA Retired Conference
- 15 SDEA BOD Budget Call
- 18 NEA ESP Pre-conference
- 19-21 NEA ESP Conference
- 20 Plains Unit Mini RA
- 22 Western Mini RA
- 25 Eastern Prairie Mini RA
- 29 EGL Mini RA
- 29 Veto Day

### April

- 5 SDEA BOD Teams Meeting
- 8-9 SDEA BOD Meeting
- 9-10 SDEA RA