

The Educators'



# ADVOCATE

NOV/DEC 2023

Volume 55 | Issue 2



**“Sometimes it just takes a small accomplishment for students to see that there is more to them than they thought.”**

**George Hawkins**  
2024 SD Teacher of the Year

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### 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.

NOV/DEC 2023

Volume 55 | Issue 2

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# President's Corner

## Raise Your Voice... But What Does that Mean?

With everything going on in public education, you often hear me say 'educators need to raise their voice to make a difference'. So, what does that mean? To me, it means getting involved in any way to help your students and your profession. It could be doing something as simple as talking to your local leaders about issues that concern you to becoming a leader at the local, state or national level.

At the local level you could attend a local association meeting, volunteer to attend a school board meeting, serve on the membership or bargaining committee or step up to be a local association leader. It could be as simple as talking to your colleagues about why you became a member and encouraging them to join as well. Everything you do, big or small, raises the collective voice of educators.

You can raise your voice by getting involved at the state level. Again, that could be anything from responding to an SDEA poll asking your opinion, attending an SDEA Conference or participating in a professional development opportunity on our Bridge platform to serving on the SDEA Board of Directors. Your participation is raising the voice of educators.

If you want to get involved at the national level, you could consider being a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly. This is an opportunity for you to help shape the work

at the national level by joining roughly 5,000 other educators from across the country to set the priorities for the union. Again, you are lifting the voice of educators on the issues that really matter.

You really do make a difference when you participate in the work of the Association. I encourage you to use your voice in whatever way you can. If you want to join us at the state or national level here are a couple of dates to put on your calendars. First, if you are interested in serving on the SDEA Board of Directors or becoming a NEA RA delegate, you need to let me know your intentions by January 15, 2024. You can find more information on running for one of these elected positions in this publication and on our website at [sdea.org](http://sdea.org). You should also mark your calendars for the SDEA Lobby Day, February 25-26, 2024. This will be a great opportunity to raise your voice with legislators for public education.

Finally, I want to thank you for the work that you do every day. You truly make a difference in the lives of students.

**Loren Paul**  
SDEA President

605-224-9263  
[loren.paul@sdea.org](mailto:loren.paul@sdea.org)



## A Word from Our NEA Director

**Kelsey Lovseth**

NEA Director

[kelsey.loveseth@gmail.com](mailto:kelsey.loveseth@gmail.com)

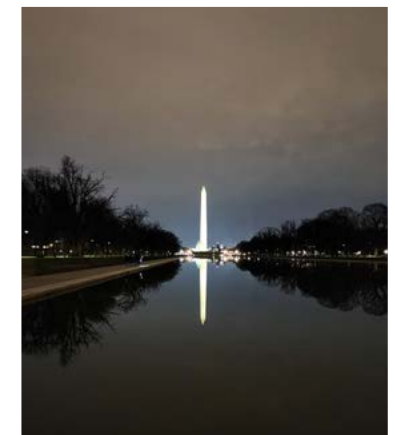
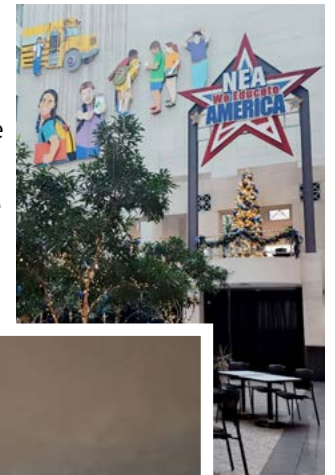
This past summer when I was entering the NEA building in Washington, D.C., an Executive Team member greeted me by saying "Welcome to Your Building." As members, it is our building.

I am a history teacher. I enjoyed walking down the hall of past NEA Presidents and immersing myself in the history of the "teacher's union". As a long time member, I have learned so much about the National Education Association's history and structure. I thought I would use this segment to explain what an NEA Director means.

In the Spring to 2023, I was elected by South Dakota members to represent SDEA on the Board of Directors. The National Education Association Board of Directors and Executive Committee are responsible for the general policies and interests of the Association. We are subject to the policies established by the Representative Assembly, Constitution and Bylaws. The Board consists of at least one director from each state affiliate, six directors for the Retired members of the Association, and three directors for the Aspiring members

of the Association. Larger states can have an additional director for each 20,000 NEA active members. The Board meets four times a year, plus one meeting during the Representative Assembly.

My role is to be YOUR voice at the NEA.



### Local Treasurer's Training

- Responsibilities as an Association Officer
- Reporting Association Income and Expenses
- Important Tax Topics
- Membership Dues/Reconciliation
- ACH payment option

Contact Holly Frederick at [holly.frederick@sdea.org](mailto:holly.frederick@sdea.org) and Lathie Under Baggage at [lathie.underbaggage@sdea.org](mailto:lathie.underbaggage@sdea.org) to set up your training date!



# Get to Know George Hawkins

## 2024 South Dakota Teacher of the Year



Meet the 2024 South Dakota Teacher of the Year: George Hawkins, a social studies teacher at Jefferson High School in Sioux Falls. George, who is in his 12th year of teaching, did not follow a traditional path to the classroom. Prior to finding his way to the school building he was a practicing attorney. Now, he shares his love of history and civics through project-based learning. SDEA had the opportunity to spend an afternoon in George's classroom where his ability to masterfully engage students was on full display. Whether the topic was

fiscal policy or oil trusts, it was abundantly clear why students loved to be in Mr. Hawkins' class. George took time out of his busy schedule to answer some questions to help our readers get to know the 2024 Teacher of the Year.

### Tell us more about you — hometown, family, education...anything you want your fellow SDEA members to know?

*I grew up in Watertown, SD after moving there when I was three years old; we moved due to my father's work, but he soon took a job at Lake Area Tech. I had a stay-at-home mom who instilled the values of hard work, loyalty, and caring for others in me and my two older sisters. I graduated from Watertown High School in '99 and eventually received my Bachelor's degree from Augustana College (now University) in 2004. I pursued my teaching certificate but instead went to the USD School of Law and received my Juris Doctorate. Having come back to the teaching profession I became the 2016 James Madison Fellow for South Dakota, which allowed me to obtain a Master's degree from Ashland University in American History and Government.*

### What was your initial thought when you heard your name announced as the South Dakota Teacher of the Year?

*Pure shock. I felt that the other finalists were tremendous representatives of our teaching profession and thus one of them was going*

*to be selected. It didn't feel real then, and it doesn't feel real even now.*

### What are you most looking forward to over the next year?

*Getting to meet and know the other states' Teacher of the Year. From what Alyssa has said, this is the best year of professional development. I'm interested in learning from others and then bringing it back to the classroom to make a better classroom for my students.*

### What do you see as some of the greatest challenges facing public school educators and students in the coming years?

*Teacher shortages and burnout. Educators are a vitally important component of our educational system and school districts are facing issues regarding a lack of adult bodies to fill the necessary roles to make schools function effectively.*



### What advice do you have for teachers who are just entering the profession?

*Make time for yourself. You'll be overwhelmed at times and make sure to connect with friends and family or whatever keeps you grounded and refreshed.*

### Is there something your students know about you that others may not?

*I studied abroad in China for a semester while an undergrad student.*



### What is the one lesson you hope that students take from your class?

*They are capable of much more than they think they are capable of. Many times, students get stuck believing that they cannot because they haven't done it before. Sometimes it just takes a small accomplishment for students to see that there is more to them than they thought.*

### Any parting words of wisdom?

*As Minor Meyers said, "Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good."*



### Best method of self-care?

*Relaxing night with family or friends.*

Hawkins will go on to represent South Dakota in the National Teacher of the Year award ceremony in Washington D.C. next spring. As an SDEA member, George also received a \$1000 SDEA Innovation Grant.



### 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.

# South Dakota's Public Schools Prepare for Voucher Fight

As more and more states pass school voucher programs, it comes as no surprise that some South Dakota lawmakers are eyeing legislation to do the same when they come back to Pierre in January. So, what exactly would a voucher program mean for South Dakota's schools and students?

Vouchers take scarce funding from students in public schools and give those resources to unaccountable private schools. The Legislative Research Council estimated that a voucher program would cost taxpayers over \$45 million. Often veiled as "parent choices", vouchers programs allow private schools to use taxpayer dollars to pick and choose which students they want to educate.

No matter how you look at it, vouchers undermine strong public education and student opportunity. **They take scarce funding from public schools**—which serve 94 percent of students of South Dakota's students—and give it to private schools—institutions that are not accountable to taxpayers.

This means public school students have less access to the supports students deserve. Voucher programs will severely limit public schools' ability to offer programs such as art and music or provide up-to-date technology and textbooks. Vouchers will especially hurt our more rural schools where private schools don't even exist.

Moreover, there is **ZERO statistical significance that voucher programs improve overall student success**, and



some programs have even shown to have a **NEGATIVE** effect for students receiving a voucher.

Furthermore, vouchers have been shown to not support students with disabilities, they fail to protect the human and civil rights of students, and they exacerbate segregation.

## What can you do?

**Stay informed. Make sure you sign up for SDEA's Lobby Line to get the latest updates on vouchers and any other education issue that comes before the legislature. Watch for Action Alerts! With one collective voice – we can ensure that South Dakota says **NO!** to vouchers!**



<https://bit.ly/3tQQnLO>

# Mark Your Calendars! SDEA's Lobby Day 2024

The annual SDEA Lobby Day is back! Join us on Monday, February 25 – 26, 2024, in Pierre to network with your state lawmakers and fellow Association members in South Dakota's State Capitol. This is a great opportunity to use your educator voice to create positive change for public education in our state.

## • Sunday, February 25

5:00 pm – Meet SDEA Lobby team for legislative briefing and training.

## • Monday, February 26

7:00 am to 2:30 pm – Visit the Capitol!



SDEA will cover the cost of your hotel. You will receive a detailed agenda about seven days before the event along with your hotel information.



Sign Up  
TODAY



<https://bit.ly/3Q9apIV>



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



# 2024 SDEA/NEA Election

## Board of Directors Positions

### BOARD:

COHE At-Large	(1) 1-year
ESP At-Large	(1) 2-year
Western	(1) 2-year
	(2) 1-year
EGL	(1) 2-year
Plains	(1) 2-year
SEE	(1) 2-year
	(1) 1-year
Eastern Prairie	(2) 2-year

**Note:** Please include a 50-word statement of why you are running for the Board of Directors positions and a candidate photo.

## 2024 NEA RA Delegate Positions

### ALL POSITIONS ARE FULLY FUNDED BY SDEA

Western	2
EGL	1
Plains	1
SEE	1
Eastern Prairie	2
Minority At-Large**	1
At-Large	5

\*\* This position represents SDEA's ethnic minority members but is open to any active or active-ESP member

**Note:** Please include a 50-word statement of why you are running for delegate to the NEA RA.

**January 15, 2024** is the last day to notify Loren Paul, SDEA/NEA President, of your intent to run for SDEA Board of Director position, At-large Board of Director position, or as a state-funded delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

Bylaw proposals are due **January 15, 2024**.

Members who wish to serve as a delegate to the 2024 NEA RA must indicate whether they want to be on the ballot as a state delegate and/or as a unit delegate. The NEA annual meeting will be held **July 3 – July 7 in Philadelphia, PA**. Candidate declarations are due **January 15, 2024**.

You may contact SDEA President, Loren Paul, at Loren.Paul@sdea.org or the SDEA Board of Directors' Election Staff Liaison, Anne Plooster, at Anne.Plooster@sdea.org.

### Return completed forms by one of the following methods:

#### Mail:

SDEA President  
Attn: Elections  
411 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

#### Scan & Email:

Loren.Paul@sdea.org  
or  
Anne.Plooster@sdea.org

**All necessary election forms and policies may be found online at [www.sdea.org](http://www.sdea.org).**

# SDEA Reapportionment

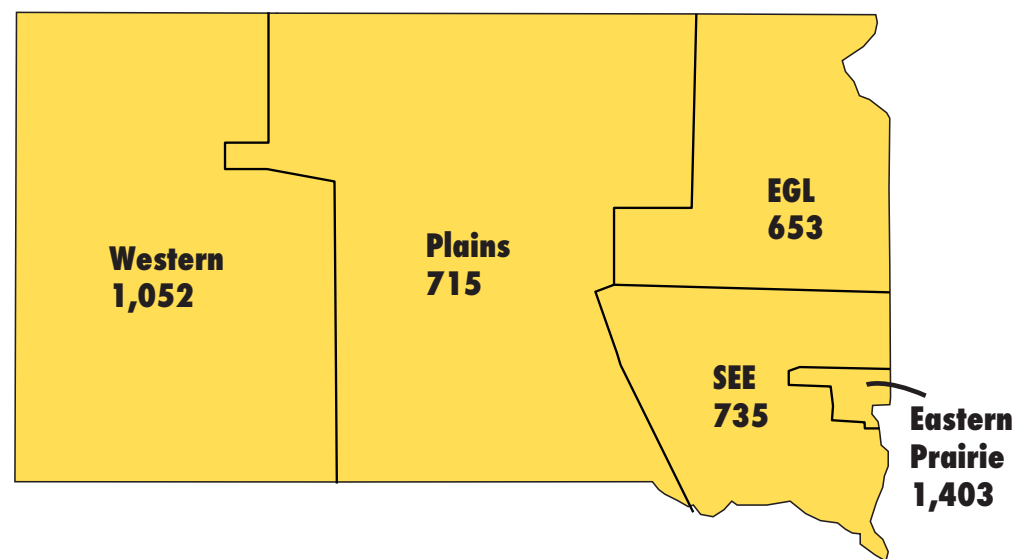
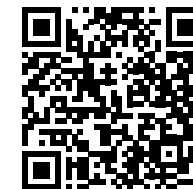
Every three years SDEA has to go through a reapportionment process to balance out its governance and UniServ Staffing units. During this process the committee works to ensure that each member has equal voice through their voting rights in the organization. As part of the results of the process, some of our local affiliates will change which unit they belong to in order to achieve that balance and this will also impact which UniServ Director that they work with. If you are interested in running for an SDEA Board or officer position, you will be running for those positions in your new unit since the changes officially take effect **July 15th, 2024**. The units that will be affected by these changes are Eastern Prairie, SEE, and EGL. As a reminder, the deadline for candidacy forms for governance positions is due on **January 15th, 2024**.

In this election, the new lines only apply to Board positions. If you would like to run to be a delegate to the NEA RA, you will run for that position from your current unit.



Scan this code to see the new SDEA Governance map that takes effect **July 15th, 2024**.

Scan this code to see who your current SDEA UniServ Director is. This page will be continuously updated with staffing changes throughout the reapportionment transition process.





**Lisa Weier**  
 Teaching and Learning Coordinator  
 Lisa.Weier@sdea.org

Dear Educators,

In the pursuit of creating exceptional learning environments, continuous professional development is the foundation of growth. We are excited to invite you to participate in our upcoming series of Focus Groups for Professional Development. These sessions are crafted to harness the collective wisdom of educators, educational support professionals, and experts in the field, fostering a collaborative space where innovative ideas can flourish.

**Purpose of the Focus Groups:**

Our focus groups are designed to address the evolving challenges and opportunities in education. By facilitating open discussions and sharing best practices, we aim to:

- Identify current educational challenges and explore innovative solutions.
- Share successful teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches.
- Foster collaboration and networking among educators and educational support professionals.
- Develop targeted professional development programs based on shared insights.

- Create a supportive community committed to continuous improvement.

**Benefits of Participation:**

- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with educators and professionals from diverse backgrounds, building a network of support and collaboration.
- **Professional Growth:** Gain insights into the latest educational trends, methodologies, and technologies, enhancing your professional skills.
- **Contributing to Education:** Contribute to the development of impactful educational strategies and programs, shaping the future of education.

**Next Steps:**

Your participation is crucial to the success of these focus groups. We encourage you to bring your expertise, enthusiasm, and innovative spirit. Together, let's create a transformative educational experience for students and educators alike.



To register for any focus group, please visit the SDEA Bridge website.

Warm regards,

Lisa Weier | Teaching and Learning Coordinator | Lisa.Weier@sdea.org

# SDEA/NEA OPPORTUNITIES

## GRANT, SCHOLARSHIPS, CAREER



### SDEA/NEA Early Career Educator Award

An individual member or a local may nominate an early career educator for this award. Each governance unit may select an Early Career Educator of the Year from nominations submitted in their unit. All the unit winners will be candidates for the statewide award, which will be announced at the 2024 Representative Assembly in Pierre.

**Deadline:** December 1



### Gordon Horgen Memorial Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association/NEA is calling for applications for the Gordon Horgen Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to Native American students who are planning on entering the teaching profession. This scholarship was created by the 2014 Representative Assembly to honor the late Gordon Horgen from Winner.

The Association may annually award up to four \$750 scholarships for each academic year. The scholarships are open to Native American high school seniors or college sophomores who are planning to enter the teaching profession.

**Deadline:** February 15



### Ramia Boersma Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association/NEA awards scholarships to outstanding students who are planning on entering the teaching profession. The Association may annually award up to three \$750 scholarships for each academic year.

**Deadline:** February 15



### 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

**For more information on all grants and awards offered by SDEA, visit SDEA.org.**



# Answering Questions About Your Union

## Someone's Filed a Complaint... Now what?

Parental involvement is a vital part of student success. A good working relationship with parents must include open communication and a mutual respect for each other's roles in a student's life. However, the current political climate is putting a strain on the parent and teacher relationship.

School districts around the state are seeing an uptick in complaints against educators, which are often in response to groups like Moms for Liberty spreading disinformation on the internet. So, what should you do if one is leveled against you or your colleagues?

Here are the six things you should do if a complaint is aimed at you:

- 1. Review and understand your district's complaint policies and procedures.** If you are not aware of any policies consult your local union representative or leaders.
- 2. Contact your Uniserv Director.** They are here to help you. It's better to consult with them at the beginning of a situation.



- 3. Insist that administrators follow the district's complaint policies and procedures.** This may require a meeting between you and the parents to try and resolve the situation.

- 4. Do not post or respond** to any social media conversations regarding the situation.



- 5. Document everything!** This is important if the situation escalates.
- 6. Keep your administrator informed** of any interactions you have with the parent or parents. This ensures they know both sides of the story.

Stay focused on the positives. Remember most parents want to work with you to ensure their students' success, but when a situation arises make sure you seek the support of your local association and Uniserv Director.

### The More You know...

*We continue our series highlighting the lingo of the Association to help our members better understand the work we do. Here are five more words that come up in conversations about your union:*

**GRIEVANCE:** Generally, a violation of the collective bargaining agreement where a formal written complaint is filed with the employer by the grievant (employee or association). Grievance procedures are negotiated and included in the collective bargaining agreement. If unable to resolve at an early step in the process, the dispute is typically resolved with the SD Department of Labor.

**DUTY OF FAIR REPRESENTATION (DFR):** In states with a collective bargaining statute, it is the legal responsibility of the union (or association) to represent all members of the bargaining unit in collective

bargaining and grievances, not just its dues paying members.

**REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY (OR RA):** The annual meeting where elected delegates vote to decide the policy and priorities, and give input on the budget of the union. This may also be called a convention in some unions.

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT (OR CONTRACT):** The resulting legal, binding agreement that codifies the language that was agreed upon in collective bargaining. It becomes effective after union members ratify the tentative agreement.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU):** A signed agreement that can be either a stand-alone agreement or a supplement to the existing collective bargaining agreement. Such an agreement can also be referred to as a memorandum of agreement (MOA).

## SDEA President's Training



SDEA hosted a President's Training on October 6th-7th in Pierre. Leaders from local associations across the state came together to learn best engagement strategies with members, to look at roles and responsibilities within the association, and assess and plan where they want to go next. Included in the training:

Katherine Dethlefs (Custer ESP), Tina Lundy (Custer ESP), Carissa Aberle (McLaughlin), Katie Buchy (McLaughlin), Sara Steckel (Mitchell), Lynn Stein (Oglala Lakota County), Sonja Hanson (Rapid City), Stephanie Hunter (Rapid City), Laurie Wagner (Sioux Falls Clerical), Allison Foster (Watertown), Stephanie Hageman (Watertown), Molly Knutelski (Winner), Ross Patmore (Winner), Alanna Davison (Yankton), Andrea Stanosheck (Yankton)

If you are interested in any leadership training for your local, reach out to Korey Erickson at [Korey.Erickson@sdea.org](mailto:Korey.Erickson@sdea.org) or 605-222-3905



# SAVE THE DATE



## 2024 SUMMER ACADEMY KEYNOTE

### Mark Schumacher

With over 15 years of performance experience, Mark is more than just a keynote speaker. His unique background in stand up comedy, combined with his credibility as a teacher, provides a refreshing break from traditional speakers. In 2015, Mark was selected as one of the top 100 comedians in the country and appeared on NBC's Last Comic Standing. A teacher at heart, Mark spent 10 years in the classroom - in three different countries. He understands both the joys and challenges educators face every day. Today,

he is invited to speak to teachers and administrators about the importance of relationships in our schools and communities. Since leaving the classroom full-time Mark has delivered his keynote message to tens of thousands of educators across the country.

## Contact a UniServ Director today! 605-224-9263

### Shannon Maxon

Western UniServ Director  
Shannon.Maxon@sdea.org

### Rich Mittelstedt

SEE UniServ Director  
Richard.Mittelstedt@sdea.org

### Phil Moore

Interim Eastern Prairie  
UniServ Director  
Philip.Moore@sdea.org

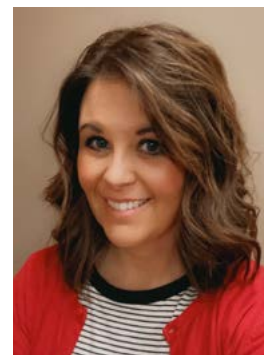
### LouAnn Jensen

EGL UniServ Director  
LouAnn.Jensen@sdea.org

### Sandy Arseneault

Plains UniServ Director  
Sandy.Arseneault@sdea.org

## New SDEA Staff



### Shannon Maxon

#### What is your role?

I am the UniServ Director for the Western Unit.

#### What did you do before SDEA?

I was a School Counselor for

the last 20 years; my first two years at Piedmont/Stagebarn Elementary schools and the last 18 years at Douglas High School. I was a long-time member of Douglas Education Association and served as a Building Representative and President of DEA.

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

I take pride in helping others and building relationships with members. In my spare time I love to cook, am an avid reader, and enjoy time outdoors in the Black Hills.

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

My husband Eric and I have two

daughters, Nyah and Reese, who are both college students. We added Piper, our Goldendoodle, to the family earlier this year.



### Lisa Weier

#### What is your role?

Teaching and Learning Coordinator

#### What did you do before SDEA?

Prior to this position I taught middle school

engineering in Brookings.

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

I always have two or three books being read at one time and I absolutely love to travel.

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

My husband and I will be married 30 years in May and we are excited to welcome our third grandson in January.

Take advantage of huge savings on continuing education courses by purchasing a subscription for only **\$225!** Subscription is only available for SDEA members and credits are granted through Augustana University.





now be sent to the SDEA office at 411 East Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501. We will pick them up there. Any change of phone number, address or non-school email should also be sent there. Thank you for keeping us informed on how to reach you.

Please put February 26 on your calendar as our Lobby Day and April 5 as our Retired Annual Meeting. The SDEA Representative Assembly is April 5th and 6th if you would like to stay and attend it as well. The Rapid City/West River Retirement/Pre-retirement seminars will be March 9. Watch for dates of additional seminars. I look forward to seeing you at many of these.

Mary Jane Chiles  
SDEA Retired President

**ADDITIONAL CONTACTS**

SDEA Retired Staff Liaison:  
LouAnn Jensen | 605-220-1688  
LouAnn.Jensen@sdea.org

Happy Holidays! I hope your life is going well as this year winds down. We would like to know what you are doing now that you are retired. Are you finally doing the travel you always promised yourself? Are you hiking? writing? painting? subbing? mentoring? Please take a minute and write as a note letting us know so that we can highlight a few in future newsletters. (I finally got in my African safaris and Nile cruise that I'd promised myself as a teenager). You can send these to the SDEA office to the attention of LouAnn Jensen.

Please be aware that we have closed our post office box. All dues payments and correspondence will

**NAEP is recruiting in South Dakota to work in the upcoming 2024 assessment.**

**NEW TRAVEL positions, including out-of-state opportunities, have opened up with a possible bonus upon completion of the assignment. For more information about working for NAEP go to [www.workNAEP.com](http://www.workNAEP.com)**

**For more information about NAEP, go to [About | NAEP \(ed.gov\)](http://About|NAEP(ed.gov))**

**Below are flyers with additional information regarding these positions:**

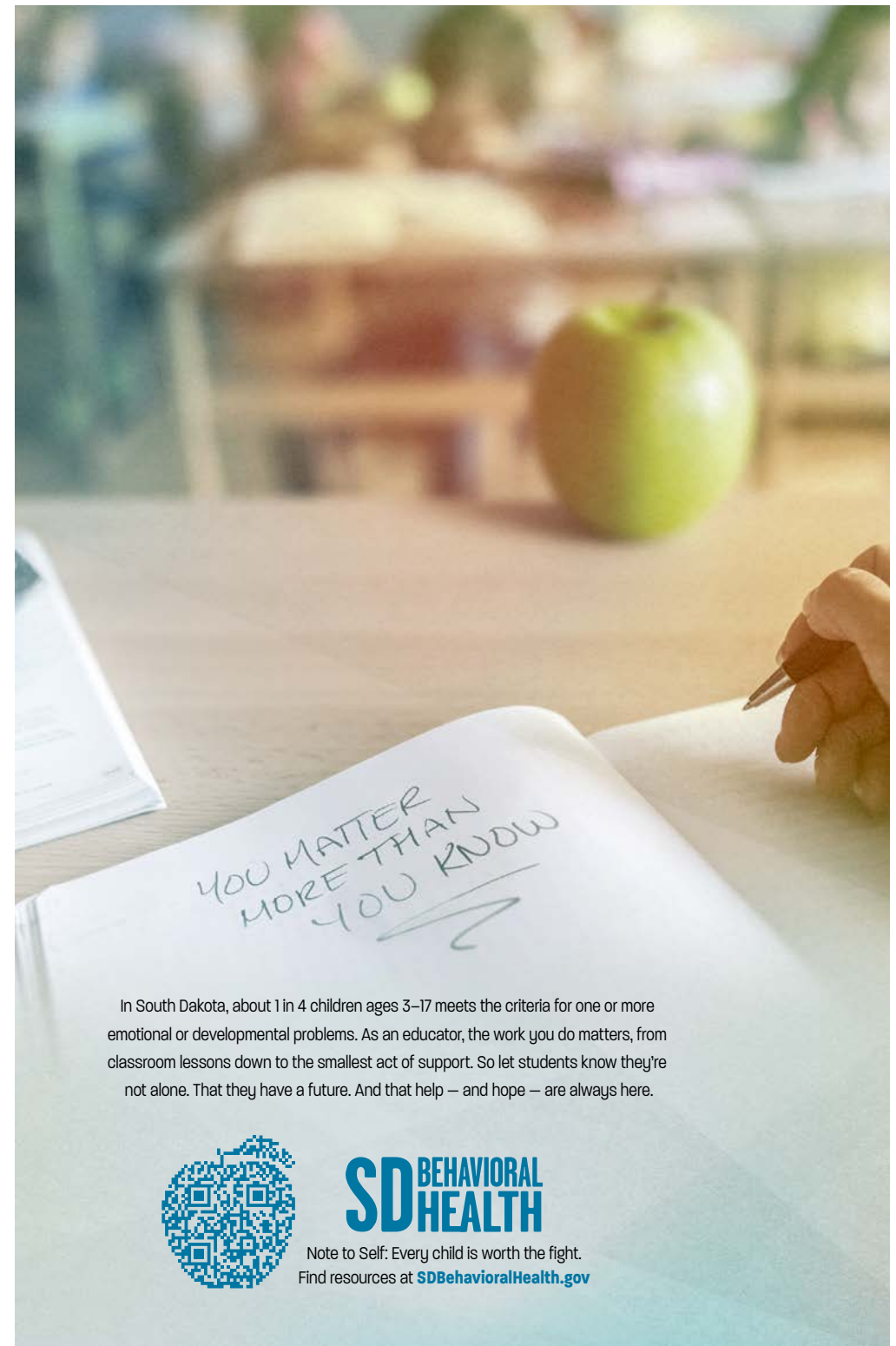
**Assessment Coordinator Position**  
(team leader)

[bit.ly/3MbsqVF](http://bit.ly/3MbsqVF)



**Assessment Administrator Position**  
(proctor)

[bit.ly/45ATyo6](http://bit.ly/45ATyo6)



In South Dakota, about 1 in 4 children ages 3–17 meets the criteria for one or more emotional or developmental problems. As an educator, the work you do matters, from classroom lessons down to the smallest act of support. So let students know they're not alone. That they have a future. And that help — and hope — are always here.



**SD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Note to Self: Every child is worth the fight.  
Find resources at [SDBehavioralHealth.gov](http://SDBehavioralHealth.gov)



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## November

- 9 Eastern Prairie Unit meeting
- 10 Veteran's Day (SDEA offices closed)
- 11-14 NCSEA Fall Conf./Gen. Membership Mtg /Regional Mtg
- 13-17 American Education Week
- 23 Thanksgiving (SDEA offices closed)
- 24 Thanksgiving observed (SDEA offices closed)

## December

- 2 Budget Committee
- 8-10 MLT/WLT West
- 11 NEA BOD meeting (virtual)
- 22-29 Christmas vacation (SDEA offices closed)

## January

- 1 New Year's Day (SDEA offices closed)
- 9 SEE Unit meeting
- 9 1st day of SD Legislature - State of the State
- 11 Eastern Prairie Unit meeting
- 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (SDEA offices closed)
- 15 SDEA Bylaws/ Candidacy declarations due
- 16 Western Unit meeting Zoom @ 5:30pm
- 20-21 Budget Committee meeting
- 22 EGL Unit meeting @ 6pm
- 27 Plains Unit meeting
- 27 Beresford Bargaining Conference

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