



SPEAK UP for the Schools Our Students Deserve!





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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.



2020 A Year of Challenges and Changes

There are many ways to describe the year 2020: difficult, unprecedented, crazy, stressful, sad, unpredictable and emotional. This has certainly been a year of challenges and changes. Since last March our lives have been anything but routine. When schools abruptly closed on March 13, we had no idea that would be the last we saw of our students in the classroom. From there on its been a very bumpy ride.

Overnight we had to change the way we taught from in person to online which created many challenges. How do we keep students engaged? How do we deliver an education to those who don't have access to technology and the internet? What to do if we haven't heard from our students? Where are my students?

With so much uncertainty, it would be understandable if we decided to just throw up our hands and say, 'I'm done', but you didn't. You kept with it. You put in the long hours. You answered all the texts, emails and phone calls from parents trying to figure out how to help their children learn. You kept adapting and as soon as you figured it out, something happened to make you change what you were doing yet again. But, you did it because at the end of the day, all that mattered were the students.

Life changed for me on July 15 as I became your President. Starting this adventure in the middle of a pandemic has been interesting to say the least. I had to jump in with both feet. Anyone who knows me knows that I like to have a plan. However, the ever-changing environment of Covid-19 has not always made that possible. This

has challenged me to have to adapt and change with whatever the day brings. While it isn't always easy, it has helped me grow personally and professionally. I must give the credit for this personal growth to you, the members of SDEA, who inspire me daily with your true grit and determination to get through this together, and for that I thank you.

Yes, I think we have all grown and learned a lot about ourselves over the last nine months. Covid-19 has tested our limits, made us lose countless hours of sleep, but at the end of the day, we are educators, and a pandemic isn't going to stop us from doing what we love – educating the students of South Dakota.

Christmas break is upon us. I hope you take time to relax and recharge. Even though the virus may limit our plans, don't let it take away the opportunity to reflect on all the amazing work you accomplished in a short period of time. You truly do inspire me.

Finally, thank you – thank you for the opportunity to represent you as your President. Thank you for challenging me. Thank you for all you do for the students of South Dakota. Let's welcome 2021 with open arms...I know better days are ahead.

Soren Frank

Loren Paul SDEA President

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







Educators Asked to Speak Up for Schools Students Deserve

With the 2021 Legislative Session around the corner, the South Dakota Education Association is looking to turn state legislator's attention to SDEA's 2021 Legislative Priorities; which include providing safe and healthy working and learning environments, sustaining and expanding funding for k-12 public education, defending collective bargaining rights for educators, and expanding student and teacher mental health services.



SDEA's priorities always center around students — Everything from better pay for educators to ensuring the right to collective bargain are about making a better learning environment for students. This year's legislative agenda was developed with input from over 500 SDEA members. Now, that the priorities are set, SDEA is asking members to Speak Up to make them a reality.

The Speak Up campaign is designed to give educators a voice in the legislative process. It is important for legislators to hear from their constituents, who are educators, to help them develop a better understanding of

what schools and students need. Engaging local legislators is a way all educators can speak up for schools students deserve. Use your educator voice by writing postcards, sending emails, making phone calls, and attending local legislative coffees or cracker barrels. If you wish to get involved in the SDEA Speak Up campaign visit sdea.org/speakup.

Good News in Governor's Funding Proposal

Funding for schools will always be a priority — but SDEA's hoping to bring some of the focus back to what the Blue-Ribbon Task Force wanted to accomplish — making South Dakota's teachers' salaries competitive with neighboring states. While the halfpenny sales tax did move South Dakota out of last place in average salary rank, the state continues to trail all our neighboring states. According to the latest data for NEA's Rankings and Estimates from the 2018-2019 school year, Wyoming leads the region with an average salary of \$58,618. South Dakota comes in last behind North Dakota with an average salary of \$53,434. NEA reports South Dakota average teacher salary as \$48,486.

Educators received some good news on the funding front when Governor Noem

continued to page 13



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

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**

"We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us."

These words were adopted by the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly to describe who we are as an Association—the largest labor union in America! Our new NEA President, Becky Pringle, encourages all of us to know these words, believe these words, and live these words every day.

So, what exactly do these words mean? **We** are the voice of education professionals.

If I speak up at a school board meeting, I may have an impact. When I show up at a school board meeting and bring five of my colleagues to speak, people start paying attention. When members across South Dakota email their legislators and show up at the Capitol demanding appropriate funding, we pass legislation like we did in 2016. And when 3 million members across America say that the Secretary of Education should have a background in education, that's what we get in President-Elect Joe Biden's new administration.

There is power in our membership, and it grows stronger with each voice that joins us. We must never sacrifice our right to speak on behalf of our profession. Legislators are not the voice of education. Armchair critics writing comments on the local

news Facebook page are not the voice of education. We are. We must continue to band together to elevate our voices and demand the working conditions that we deserve and the safe learning environments our students deserve, because we know better than anyone what that means.



Our work is fundamental to the nation.

COVID-19 has highlighted this for us more than ever. Schools are the backbone of society. We educate the future of our communities and our country. We feed those experiencing the crisis of poverty. We provide love, safety, and acceptance—sometimes as the only place our students experience it. Our economy depends on schools. We are fundamental to each town and city in South Dakota, and we must continue to leverage that.

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SDEA/NEA OPPORTUNITIES

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, CAREER



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

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.

Educator Bill of Rights

During COVID-19

Right to Teach:

Educators have the right to teach in a safe, secure, orderly environment.

Right to Organize:

Educators have the right to organize individuals to address concerns, including engaging a school district's safety committee if you have them, school board members, other elected representatives, community members, and/or parents.

Right to Reasonable Accommodations:

Educators have the right to ask for reasonable accommodations if they have an underlying health condition that puts them at greater risk for infection, serious illness, or death if infected with the COVID-19 virus.

Right to Assistance:

Educators have the right to ask for assistance from colleagues, the district administration, school board, superintendent and their local association in dealing with the challenges of COVID-19.

Right to Request:

Educators have the right to request colleagues uphold district mandates, including the wearing of masks and physical distancing during the workday.

Right to Technology:

Educators have the right to employerprovided technology devices and professional development to provide highquality remote instruction.

Right to Bargain:

Educators have the right to bargain protection of pay and leave benefits if an educator exceeds the allowable entitlements under the FFCRA.

SDEA Members:

Educators who are SDEA members have the right to SDEA representation in accordance with the SDEA legal assistance policy.

Questions or Concerns — Contact a UniServ Director today!

800-529-0090 | 605-224-9263

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







SAVE THE DAT



Virtual Conference Feb. 6th

Educating Students Who Live in the Crisis of Poverty

A student in poverty is less likely to gain an education today than they were in the 1940s. If a student from poverty makes it to college, only 11 percent leave with a degree and/or certificate of completion. Studies show that 83 percent of students from generational poverty will stay there unless we are able to gain the knowledge and tools needed to meet them where they are, not where we want them to be.

Part of the problem in breaking poverty barriers to education is that most of the research and trainings on poverty are provided by people who have not lived in poverty—generational, working-class, immigrant, situational, or any other type of poverty. Dr. Donna M. Beegle brings an insider perspective of being born into generations of migrant-labor poverty, dropping out of school at age 15 to marry, as well as a doctorate in Educational Leadership. She has researched and worked for 30 years with educators in all 50 states to improve education outcomes.

This set of four interactive trainings are designed to provide the foundation for understanding poverty along with practical, usable tools that allow for immediate action. Dr. Beegle engages the audience with activities and breakout discussions to allow for a deeper dive into how we can make a difference for students and families who live in the crisis of poverty.

SESSIONS

- · Poverty, Students, Families and Covid-19
- From 9th Grade Dropout to Doctorate: **Breaking Poverty Barriers to Education**
- Defining the Many Types of Poverty, Their Impacts, and Tools For Meeting **Students and Families Where They Are**
- · Shattering the Myths and Removing Stereotypes that Get in the Wav of **Education Success**

MORE INFO: bridge.sdea.org/blogs/14

Ouestions? Contact: Rich Mittelstedt, Teaching and Learning Coordinator

800-529-0090 | 605-886-4800 | richard.mittelstedt@sdea.org



ATTENTION ESP: We want your feedback! Go to www.sdea.org/espsurvey for a quick survey. **Important Information on**

Governor Noem's Executive Order on Teacher Evaluations

On December 9th, Governor Noem signed Ex. Order 2020-33, providing flexibilities for schools during the 2020–21 school year. Here are five things you need to know about this order.

It suspends the need Student Learning Objectives as a part of teacher evaluations for the current school year (2020–2021).

Teachers with continuing contract status (in your 4th contract or more with your district) are not required to be evaluated by the district this year. Similar flexibility has been given for principal evaluations.

School districts will not report teacher evaluation data to the South Dakota Department of Education in the spring.

Districts are still required to evaluate



teachers who are in their first three years, but SLOs are not required to be part of the evaluation.

This Executive Order is permissible. Final decisions about teacher evaluation are still

left up to the local district.

You can read the entire Executive Order here: https://covid.sd.gov/docs/2020-33.pdf. Whether your negotiated agreement addresses your district's evaluation process, or not, your local association can work with your district to suspend evaluations and/or SLOs for this year. Please contact your UniServ Director if you have questions or need assistance with this process.

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2021 SDEA/NEA Election

Board of Directors Positions

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

Note: Please include 50-word statement of why you are running for the Board of Directors positions. In addition to a statement, please submit a candidate photo.

2020 NEA RA Delegate Positions

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

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

January 15, 2021 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.

Members who wish to serve as a delegate to the 2021 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 2 – July 6** in **Denver, CO**. Candidate declarations are due **January 15, 2021**.

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.

2021 SDEA/NEA Election

January 15, 2021 is the last day to notify Loren Paul, SDEA/NEA President of your intent to run in the upcoming election.

New SDEA Staff

Holly Frederick

What is your role? Manager of Finance and Membership

What did you do before SDEA?

Before coming to SDEA I was working for a private accounting firm Stulken Petersen,



I have 20 plus years of accounting experience between accounting firms and a business management position.

Something you want the members to know about you?

I enjoy working with and helping people. I am looking forward to helping move this Association forward Financially.

Anything you want to share about family? I am married and have 3 children. My oldest daughter is 24 and lives in Kansas. I have a 15 year old son and an 12 year old daughter that go to school here in Pierre.

Grace Gill

What is your role? Eastern Prairie UniServ Director

What did you do before SDEA?

I taught government at Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls.



Something you want the members to know about you?

I enjoy reading, drinking coffee and the occasional camping excursion.

Anything you want to share about family? Proud dog mom.



Ashley Griese

What is your role?

I am a Data Strategist for SDEA. I will be working with local leaders, field staff, and the SDEA Membership and Finance departments to analyze and reconcile data, membership and dues.

What did you do before SDEA?

For 12 years, I worked in healthcare as an x-ray tech. Looking for a more family friendly work schedule, I previously worked as the Membership Tech for SDEA. Most recently, I spent the last year as a very busy substitute teacher and Oral Interp coach in Hoven, SD, both of which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Something you want the members to know about you?

I am very excited to be back at SDEA working with members and staff again.

Anything you want to share about family? My husband. Andy, and I live in our

My husband, Andy, and I live in our hometown of Hoven, SD with our three children, Addison, Ava and Alec. We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of our fourth child around the beginning of February!



continued from page 5

announced she was proposing a 2.4 percent increase in state aid to education and Board of Regents. State statute only requires a 1.5 percent increase, but because of CARES Act money and higher than expected revenue collections, South Dakota is in a financial position to boost funding for schools and universities. The Governor also proposed an additional \$11 million in one-time dollars to provide a "bridge" for schools as they work through the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"SDEA is pleased with Governor Noem's budget proposal. An increase above the statutor required 1.5 percent will help districts get back on track with offering competitive salaries and benefits to attract qualified and caring staff. This is good news for the students of South Dakota," said SDEA President Loren Paul. "The additional \$11 million is also welcome as schools struggle with the impacts of COVID-19. The school year has been a struggle with a lot of extra burdens for students and teachers alike. If this proposal is adopted by the legislature, we hope these dollars will be used to lighten the load and reward staff for their extra efforts.

"We know this is only the beginning of the process, but it's a good place to start. The budget process is a long one. However, we are looking forward to working with Governor Noem and state legislators to ensure the final numbers benefit the students of South Dakota," said Paul.

SDEA Ready to Defend Collective Bargaining

SDEA is also keeping a close eye out for any legislation that would take away educators' right to collective bargaining. The state legislature has a recent history of taking it away from employees at the state's technical schools and the faculty of the Board of

Regents. The make-up of the legislature is even more conservative after the 2020 election with Republicans now holding 94 of the 105 seats.

SDEA President Loren Paul warns educators that we need to be ready. "Collective bargaining is how educators truly have a voice in their working conditions and their students' learning conditions. There are some who don't believe you should have that right, and we have to be prepared should they decide to act on it," said Paul. "They silenced the educators at the state's technical schools and universities. It is only a matter of time before a legislator decides to come after k-12 educators and we must be prepared."

Legislative Action Teams Ready to Open Dialogue

To help stave off any attempts to take the right to collectively bargain away, SDEA is creating Legislative Action Teams (LAT) consisting of local members who will be tasked with educating their local law makers on the importance of collective bargaining for educators and students.



The goal of the LAT teams is to create a more open dialogue between SDEA and state legislators. LAT leads are responsible for communicating with local legislators on a regular basis throughout the legislative session and beyond. They will also work to engage members in legislative activities as well. If you are interested in being a part of the team contact SDEA's Statewide Field Organizer, Ryan Rolfs at Ryan.Rolfs@sdea.org.

Members can always stay on top of all the developments from Pierre by signing up for Lobby sdea.org/Lobbyline.

Survey of South Dakota Educators Indicates Increased Workloads and a Decrease in Feeling Respect

Educators are seeing increased workloads as a result of the many adjustments being made to schools during the COVID-19 pandemic; this is happening at the same time many don't feel they or their input is being valued by their local school district. That is according to a recent survey conducted by the South Dakota Education Association (SDEA) of 1,178 South Dakota educators. Seventy-six percent of the respondents indicated they have seen an increased workload since the beginning of the school year. When it comes to who is listening to their concerns, a majority (57.72 percent) say it is not their local school district. SDEA says between the increased workload and their concerns not being heard, many educators are not feeling valued or respected and this could exacerbate South Dakota's teacher shortage.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rank how safe you feel at work with the COVID-19 precautions your district has adopted. (1 is 0% safe, 5 is...

SDEA President Loren Paul says schools must get creative and work collaboratively with educators as we all try to manage this current crisis. "SDEA acknowledges that administrators are also seeing increased workloads especially when it comes to contact tracing, but the data shows a real morale problem that must be addressed

before we start losing our educators," said Paul. "In the short term we are urging administrators to hear the concerns of educators and work together to develop creative ways to address workloads. It all comes down to finding better ways to support our teachers as they try to find creative ways to reach students, whether they are in their classrooms or learning online. We have to work together to lighten the burden for everyone."

The survey also shows that educators don't feel prepared to be successful in a constantly changing environment. Sixtytwo percent of educators who responded to the survey didn't feel they were provided with the training necessary to be successful at teaching as they try to navigate both inperson and online lessons leading many of the respondents to ask for help in managing workloads.



"The two things our educators made perfectly clear in our survey is they want help with workload, and they want to be heard," said Paul. "Teachers

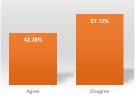
love their jobs and they want to do the best job possible so they can help their students. We need to remember that the support they are asking for is really help for their



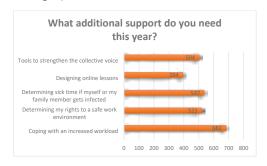
students. The more we help teachers; the more we help our students."

Paul says
educating during a
pandemic will also
have long-term
costs that won't
be fixed overnight.
"Schools will
need more
funding to help
meet the social



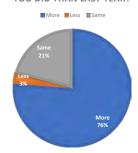


and emotional needs of students and staff whose lives continue to be upended by an education system that changes daily." He also warns the long-term cost of educating during a pandemic is a loss of educators.



"South Dakota already struggles to attract and retain teachers, and we fear the effects of educating during the pandemic will only exacerbate this problem. We must be proactive and work together as a community to make sure our educators know they are valued. South Dakota must also renew its commitment to our teachers and students by providing the necessary funding levels to ensure districts can offer our educators professional pay," said Paul. "Unfortunately, the state's efforts to raise teacher pay has stalled, and now would be a good time to rev up those efforts if we want to reward our educators for their hard work."

ARE YOU WORKING MORE/LESS/ABOUT THE SAME AS YOU DID THAN LAST YEAR?



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We accept the profound trust placed

in us. We accept. These words tickle something in my soul, and I hope they do for you, too. When families send their children through our school doors, they are trusting us with those they love, likely the most important people in their lives. They trust us, not only to teach their children, but also to love them as they do, to help them learn to be good people, to pick themselves up when they fail, to push through

difficulties. Few professions have such a profound ask of its professionals, but we accept this duty with devotion and pride.

I hope you all will heed the guidance of our President, Becky Pringle, and keep these words in your heart. Use them to ground yourself each day as you do the important work of teaching the children of South Dakota.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December

23–1/4 Christmas vacation (offices closed)

January

- 11 Western Unit Meeting
- 12 First Day of the SD Legislature / State of
- 12 SEE Unit Meeting Yankton
- 14 Eastern Prairie Unit Meeting Dell Rapids 15 SDEA/NEA Election candidate
 - 18 SDEA Board of Directors Teams Meeting declarations deadline
 - 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (offices closed 22–23 SDEA Board of Directors Meeting
 - 23–24 Budget Committee Meeting 30 Plains Unit Meeting 25 EGL Unit Meeting

February

6 Educating Students Who Live in the Crisis of Poverty – virtual conference



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605-224-9263