

The Educators' **ADVOCATE**



NOV/DEC 2024

Volume 56 | Issue 2

2025 South Dakota Teacher of the Year

Amy Verhelst



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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 2024

Volume 56 | Issue 2

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President's Corner

Why We Love Public Schools!

I want to express my deepest gratitude and admiration for each of you. Your dedication, passion, and commitment to our students and public schools is truly inspiring. As we celebrate American Education Week, I want to recognize and honor the incredible work you do every day to shape the future of South Dakota.

Public schools are the heart of our communities. They are places where children from all walks of life come together to learn, grow, and build the foundations for their futures. Our schools are more than just a place where students learn, they are safe havens where students find support, encouragement, and the opportunity to discover their unique talents and passions.

One of the most amazing things about public education is it is a place that is welcoming to all. Public schools welcome every child, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances. This inclusivity creates a rich and diverse learning environment where students learn academic skills and the values of empathy, respect, and collaboration. Our classrooms teach students to appreciate different perspectives and cultures, preparing them to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

As educators, you are privileged to witness education's profound and transformative power firsthand. You see the spark of curiosity in a child's eyes, the moment of understanding when a difficult concept finally clicks, and the joy of achievement

when a student reaches a milestone. These moments remind us why we chose this profession and why we love public schools.

Our love for public schools stems from our belief in the potential of every student. We are driven by the desire to provide equitable opportunities for all children, ensuring that they have the resources and support they need to succeed. We understand that education is about imparting knowledge and nurturing the whole child, helping them develop into confident, capable, and compassionate individuals.

During American Education Week, let us celebrate the incredible impact of public education and the vital role we play as educators. Let us take pride in our work and the difference we make in the lives of our students. And let us continue to advocate for the resources and support our schools need to provide the highest quality education for every child because we understand that these are crucial for our students' success.

Thank you for your dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to our students and public schools. Together, we are building a brighter future for all.

Loren Paul

SDEA President

605-224-9263

loren.paul@sdea.org



A Word from Our **NEA Director**



Meet SDEA's New NEA Director – Kelsey Lovseth

Kelsey is a High School Social Studies Teacher in Brookings. She recently took time out of the classroom to participate in a SDEA/NEA Fellowship which focused on using the voices of educators to shape public policy. Check out future Educators' Advocates for Kelsey's updates on the work the Association is doing at the state and national level!

September Superweek in the Books



In late September, President Paul and I headed to our Nation's Capital for the National Education Association Super Week. Our primary lobby topic was the "Government

Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)" which deprives more than 2.8 million educators and other dedicated public servants of Social Security benefits they have earned. If you are interested in learning more about

how the NEA is working to protect the Social Security benefits across the country go to:



In closing, I am honored to have been selected by NEA President Becky Pringle to serve on the "Conference Alignment Planning Team". This committee is composed of national conference chairs and NEA governance leaders to ensure overall alignment and evaluation of NEA-sponsored conferences and experiences. The NEA hosts the following national conferences and **if you are interested in attending** email kelsey.lovseth@gmail.com or President Loren Paul at loren.paul@sdea.org.

2024–25 National Conferences

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Minority and Women in Leadership West | December 13–15, 2024 | Seattle, WA |
| Minority and Women in Leadership East | January 24–26, 2025 | Atlanta, GA |
| NEA National Leadership Summit | March 7–9, 2025 | Detroit, MI |
| NEA-Retired Conference | March 9–11, 2025 | Detroit, MI |
| NEA Higher Ed Conference | March 14–16, 2025 | Philadelphia, PA |
| ESP National Conference | March 21–23, 2025 | Louisville, KY |
| Aspiring Educators Conference | June 27–30, 2025 | Portland, OR |
| Conference on Racial and Social Justice | June 29–July 1, 2025 | Portland, OR |



Get to Know Amy Verhelst

2025 South Dakota Teacher of the Year and 2025 SDEA Teacher of Excellence

Let's meet Amy Verhelst, the 2025 South Dakota Teacher of the Year and SDEA Teacher of Excellence. Amy took some time out of her busy schedule to share her thoughts on the greatest challenges facing public school educators, including the pressing literacy crisis, and offers valuable advice for new teachers entering the profession. She emphasizes the importance of building relationships, maintaining a work-life balance, and fostering a growth mindset in students. Amy also reveals a fun classroom tradition that her students love and discusses her approach to self-care. Let's get to know Amy:

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

I grew up in the small town of Parkston, South Dakota. From 2007 to 2014, I served in the Army National Guard with the 153rd Engineer Battalion, the unit based in my hometown. After graduating from Parkston High School in 2009, I attended South Dakota State University, where I earned my bachelor's degree in early childhood education with a Kindergarten endorsement.

My first teaching job was at Brandon Elementary as a Junior Kindergarten teacher. The following year, I discovered my true passion—teaching Kindergarten. I then had the opportunity to teach Kindergarten for two and a half years in Brownsburg, Indiana.

My husband's job eventually brought us back to South Dakota and we settled in Brookings, where we had met. During my first few months in Brookings, I substituted in the school district and worked as a long-term teacher assistant in the Early Childhood Program. In the fall of 2019, I started my current position as a Kindergarten teacher in Volga, SD.



Growing up, my family has always placed a strong emphasis on community and education. My father, Leonard Nolz, served in the military for 39 years, and my mother, Deb Nolz, worked in various school districts as a secretary and special education assistant. All my siblings have continued this tradition—my brother Tyler is a high school teacher and wrestling coach, my brother Brady is a wrestling and baseball coach, and my younger sister Tanna works as an elementary behavioral technician.

My husband, Jon, and I currently live in Brookings. We have two children, Cameron (4) and Luke (2), and another baby on the way in February!

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



I felt an overwhelming sense of relief and gratitude. I had hoped for this moment, not just for the recognition but for the opportunity it brings to share my passion for teaching

and advocate for students and educators. This platform means so much to me, and I'm honored to represent our profession in this way.

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

I'm looking forward to engaging with future educators, building strong networks, and participating in leadership and learning opportunities. What excites me the most, however, are the state's initiatives to improve literacy. I'm especially eager to advocate for changes grounded in the Science of Reading and support efforts to ensure all students have access to effective literacy instruction.

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

The public education system faces many substantial issues, but none as pressing as the literacy crisis. Without the ability to read, individuals encounter obstacles in all aspects of life, hindering their potential for success and well-being. Literacy is the first domino in a chain reaction of detrimental consequences, leading to mental health struggles, low test scores, high dropout rates, increased poverty, and a growing prison population. By advocating for evidence-based curricula, raising awareness about dyslexia, and prioritizing teacher training, we can create a future where all students become proficient readers and have the opportunity to lead successful lives.

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

I think new teachers are coming into the profession at an exciting time for education. There are going to be many challenges ahead and finding a work life balance will be hard at first. Find your person or team that will support you at school and to help you grow as a teacher. Be curious and ask lots of questions. Building relationships trumps all when setting up your classroom.

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

If you've been a student in my class over the past 11 years, you'll know that every October, I reveal my true identity: I'm actually a real witch (a good witch of course), and my other job is to be a teacher for the rest of the year. I attended "Witch University" with my friend Hilda, a motion-sensor hanging witch, who comes to visit our classroom the week of Halloween. She knows kids can get a little wild during this time, so she's there to help me out and keep an eye on the kids. On Halloween Day, I arrive in full witch costume,

— continued to page 12

2025 SDEA/NEA Election

Board of Directors Positions

OFFICER:

Treasurer (1) 3-year

BOARD:

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

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

2025 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, 2025 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, 2025**.

Members who wish to serve as a delegate to the 2025 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 Portland, OR**. Candidate declarations are due **January 15, 2025**.

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

Return completed forms by one of the following methods:

Mail:

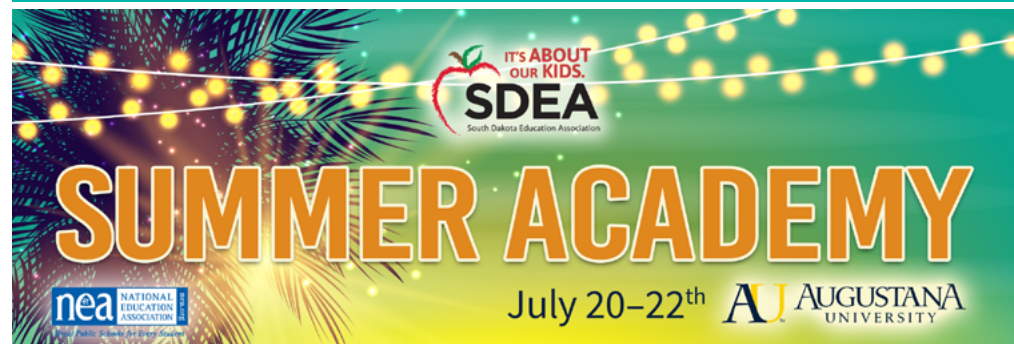
SDEA President
 Attn: Elections
 411 East Capitol Avenue
 Pierre, SD 57501

Scan & Email:

Loren.Paul@sdea.org
 or
Brooke.Quinlivan@sdea.org

All necessary election forms and policies may be found online at www.sdea.org.

SAVE THE DATE



SDEA Presidents' Training



SDEA hosted a Presidents' Training on September 27–28 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:

Stephanie Hageman (Watertown), Pamela Gunner (Oglala Lakota County), Nicole Ruud (Harrisburg), Jessica Magelky (Kadoka), Jennifer Van Pelt (Kadoka), Amanda Gauer (Aberdeen), Corey Reagle (Todd County), Ethan Duncan (Todd County), Jeremy Schultz (McLaughlin), Penney Ivey (White River), Toni Kuntz (White River), Laurie Wagner (Sioux Falls ESP-S), Danielle Erdmann (Mitchell), Monique Routezen (Todd County), Betty Sokol (Todd County), Nicole Whipple (Todd County), and Melissa Walther (McLaughlin).

If you are interested in any leadership training for your local, reach out to **Korey Erickson** at Korey.Erickson@sdea.org or **605-222-3905**

American Education Week 2024

American Education Week presents all Americans with an opportunity to celebrate public education and honor individuals making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.

NOVEMBER 18 – 22, 2024

Monday: **Kickoff Day**

Tuesday: **Parents Day**

Wednesday: **Education Support Professionals Day**

Thursday: **Educator for a Day**

Friday: **Substitute Educators Day**





Answering Questions About Your Union

Fact Finding — How One Local Used the Process to Build Support

The West Central Education Association (WCEA) negotiation team faced a challenging bargaining season with the school district. The district's proposal to cap unused sick leave at 45 days without compensating those with balances exceeding this cap was a significant point of contention. Under the current contract, employees could bank an unlimited number of sick leave days, and many had balances well over 45 days, with some exceeding 200 days or more.



The SDEA sat down with the negotiations team including Connie Schumacher, Nancy Shade, Matt Evans and Ashley Payne to talk about the experience and the team made it clear that this negotiation process would be much different than previous negotiations.

The two sides exchanged proposals just before spring break. While WCEA presented four proposals, the district came with a hefty 36-page document, including the controversial sick leave cap. Additionally, the district wanted to consecutively enforce the six weeks of parental leave, preventing new mothers and fathers from splitting their leave to accommodate family needs.

Determined to fight for their members, the WCEA team decided to push back. The board remained firm despite only three bargaining sessions and quickly declared an impasse. The next step was mediation, but after a brief and unproductive session, the team faced a tough decision: accept the board's imposition or move to Fact Finding with the South Dakota Department of Labor.

Fact Finding in South Dakota is non-binding, and the administrative law judge does not provide a rationale for their decision, simply siding with either the board or the association. Despite the odds, the WCEA team decided to proceed, driven by their members' encouragement and a desire to show the board they wouldn't back down.

Fact-finding in South Dakota can be dubious because an administrative law judge's decision is not binding and does not provide any rationale. More often than not, school districts just impose their will on their employees for the next year and meet back at the table for more negotiations in the spring, but for this team, going through the process was about standing up for the members.

“Going through the process was very important. I mean, to so radically reshape our leave,” said Schumacher. “We couldn’t leave it unanswered, and membership wanted us to do it.”

The hearing took place in late summer in Pierre and focused on six key issues, including the sick leave cap and parental leave. Both sides presented their cases, and then the waiting began. Historically, administrative law judges in South Dakota tend to side with school districts, making it an uphill battle for WCEA.

When the decision finally came, the judge sided with WCEA on three issues. Although it was a moral victory, the board still imposed its language on two issues. However, strategic social media posts by a community member informing parents and community members about what was going on put enough pressure on the school board to reconsider the sick leave bank.

The board hastily called a meeting with minimal public notice, but WCEA quickly mobilized its members and the community. Initially planned for a small conference room, the meeting had to be moved to the gymnasium due to the overwhelming turnout of teachers and community members, a clear testament to the unwavering support for WCEA.

After an executive session, the board made some concessions. They increased the sick leave cap to 60 days and allowed those with over 100 days to retain their balance up to 100 days. However, teachers with balances between 60 and 100 days were still at a loss. The board did agree to put half of the days they took away from staff into the sick leave bank, but it also imposed the other two contested items.

While it was a small victory, the board's decision still meant some teachers lost leave without compensation. Nevertheless, the WCEA team saw it as a starting point for future negotiations. The imposed contract could only be enforced for one year, giving WCEA another opportunity to negotiate in the spring.

The fact-finding process, though frustrating, demonstrated WCEA's commitment to fighting for its members. It sent a clear message to the board that WCEA would not back down and showed the district that the community supported the teachers. These factors strengthen WCEA's position for future negotiations.

The critical lessons learned were that fact-finding is not just about winning a decision but about standing up for members and showing the district the association's resolve. Engaging with the media early in the process ensured the community was informed and supportive, which was crucial in applying pressure on the board.

While the team said it was an exhausting process, they all agreed that it comes down to standing up for the members and showing the value of being a member of WCEA. “We did gain some members through this process just because we were visible. It showed what we do and how we try to advocate for members,” said Schumacher. “Going through it shows that you're willing to stand up to your administration, and it shows the value to your members that you are willing to fight for them.”

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 and Lathie Under Baggage at lathie.underbaggage@sdea.org to set up your training date!

— continued from page 7



and my students help me make a 'witch's brew' potion with dry ice and other creepy ingredients. This brew is said to protect them for up to 10 years on Halloween night!

This tradition has been part of my classroom for years, and former students still come back to ask when Hilda will return or if they can get more of the 'witch's brew'. I cherish these magical memories from my elementary school days, and I love creating similar experiences for my students.

Best method of self-care?

The best form of self-care is maintaining open communication with those who support and care about you. Surrounding yourself with a positive circle, both at school and outside the classroom, is crucial. I firmly believe that social-emotional learning for educators can have a huge impact on your ability to be your best for your students, remain resilient when facing challenges, and ultimately lead a happier, more balanced life at school and home. For me, self-care involves listening to audiobooks and podcasts, and connecting with colleagues, friends, and family.

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

The most important lesson I want my students to learn is that they are capable

of amazing things. I work hard to instill a growth mindset. I also prioritize building their resilience, so they know setbacks are opportunities to grow, not reasons to give up. I want my students to believe in themselves and their potential. With the right mindset and effort, there's no limit to what they can achieve.

Any parting words of wisdom?

One of my favorite quotes is from Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." The more knowledge you have about your students and their social and academic needs the better equipped you will be to support and uplift them on their educational journey.

SDEA President Loren Paul presented Amy in October with the 2025 SDEA/NEA Foundation Teacher of Excellence Award. This award, jointly presented by the NEA Foundation and SDEA, recognizes outstanding teaching and advocacy. Amy will receive a \$1,000 grant from SDEA and a trip to the NEA Foundation's 2023 Salute to Excellence in Education Gala in Washington, DC. Additionally, five awardees will be selected for The Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence, each receiving \$10,000, with one recipient earning the NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence and \$25,000.

"Amy is a great example of the dedication and passion that define excellence in teaching. Her commitment to improving early literacy and her innovative approach to education make her an outstanding role model for educators across South Dakota. Amy's classroom is a place where kindness, optimism, and a love for learning thrive, setting her students up for success in school and life. She deserves the SDEA Teacher of Excellence Award because of her dedication to her students and her contributions to the teaching profession and to SDEA." — Loren Paul, SDEA President.

Get Ready for SDEA Lobby Day 2025!

Mark your calendars for Monday, February 24, 2025! Join us for an exciting and informative trip to South Dakota's State Capitol in Pierre. This is your chance to network with fellow Association members, engage with your elected officials, and gain insights from committee discussions and the afternoon session.

But that's not all! We're also gearing up to fight against school vouchers and advocate for our students and public education. Your voice matters: this is the perfect opportunity to make it heard.

Here's a sneak peek at what to expect:

- **Sunday Evening:** Meet with our SDEA Lobby Team.
- **Monday Morning:** Head to the Capitol bright and early for a day full of impactful activities.

SDEA will cover your hotel costs! About a week before the event, you'll receive a detailed agenda and hotel information.



Sign Up for Lobby Day TODAY!

<https://bit.ly/4eSZiPu>



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. <https://bit.ly/3Uklul1>

Jeopardy: Contract Edition!



Do you want to help educators better understand their contracts? We have a game for that. Get ready to dive into the ins and outs of your local negotiated agreement in a thrilling game of Jeopardy: Contract Edition! Test your knowledge on key topics like:

Personal Days: How do they work?

Extra Work: What additional tasks are required during the school year?

Union Powers: What authority does the union have in decision-making with the district?

Ask your local association to host this interactive, exciting training session to help each member become a contract whiz! Contact Korey Erickson at Korey.Erickson@sdea.org or your UniServ Director to set up this engaging and informative game. Let's make learning about your contract fun and interactive!

Contact a UniServ Director today! 605-224-9263

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Steve.Binkley@sdea.org

Register on Bridge
<https://bit.ly/3Pnntdh>

SDEA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Lisa Weier

Teaching and Learning Coordinator
Lisa.Weier@sdea.org



PODCAST PD

Podcast PD is an asynchronous and new format for professional development and learning that is being offered by SDEA. You listen and reflect as time allows without having to meet weekly deadlines, meet in person, or access Zoom meetings.

Podcast PD allows educators to make personal choices for their learning based on their content area and professional interests while helping them to earn up to five credits.

With five different podcasts to choose from you can choose any of the sessions that relate to education, professional interest, content that work for you. Each session requires a reflection paper. Participants can mix and match podcasts to meet the requirements for credit.

The five podcasts that can be used for credit:

- School ME neaToday
- Angela Watson's Truth for Teachers Podcast
- The Cult of Pedagogy
- The Resilient Teacher Podcast with host Brittany Blackwell, M.Ed.
- Special Education for Beginners with Jennifer Hofferber

Is 2025 your certificate renewal year? Join our Renewal Cohort webinars as we go through the renewal process together.

We will kick off the cohort in December with an overview of the process, determine what documentation you will be needing, and make sure you have access to the SD Educator Portal.

Register for either session on the SDEA BRIDGE website.

Monday, December 2 @ 7 – 7:30pm CST

Wednesday, December 18 @ 5 – 5:30pm CST



SDEA Members Only: Sign up and log into the new [SDEA.org](https://sdea.org) to access Members Only documents and information like the SDEA Board of Director minutes and Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program documents.

Exciting Opportunity for Future Educators: The Educators Rising Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association (SDEA) Board of Directors is thrilled to announce the creation of the **Educators Rising Scholarship**. This four-year scholarship is designed to invest in the future educators of South Dakota, providing vital support to high school seniors who are passionate about pursuing a career in education.

Scholarship Details:

- **Eligibility:** High school seniors attending a South Dakota public education institution.
- **Duration:** Four years.

Application Criteria:

To be considered for this scholarship, applicants must:

- Be an active member of a South Dakota Educators Rising Chapter.
- Have a GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or be in the top half of their class as of January of the application year.
- Be accepted and/or enrolled in a South Dakota college or university with a School of Education.

- Participate in local and statewide Educators Rising activities.
- *The selection committee will give special consideration to students who have volunteered for SDEA activities.*

Important Dates:

- **Application Deadline:** February 15 of the student's senior year.
- **Membership Requirement:** Scholarship recipients must enroll in the SDEA/NEA Aspiring Educators Program and submit their membership number to SDEA/NEA by July 1.

Scholarship funds will be awarded to the college or university the student enrolled in before the start of the fall semester, provided all criteria are met.

This scholarship represents a significant investment in the future of education in South Dakota. We encourage all eligible students to apply and take advantage of this incredible opportunity to support their journey toward becoming the next generation of educators.



For more information and to apply, please visit the SDEA website using the QR Code below or contact your local Educators Rising Chapter advisor. Let's build a brighter future for education together!

Aberdeen Education Association's Kerry Konda Wins National Award!

Congratulations to Kerry Konda of the Aberdeen Education Association for being named the 2024 National Speech and Debate Coach of the Year by the National Speech and Debate Association! The James M. Copeland High School Coach of the Year honors high school coaches who demonstrate exceptional leadership and dedication to speech and debate activities.

Konda, a dedicated debate coach in Aberdeen, has made significant contributions to the debate community. His commitment to fostering excellence in speech and debate, as demonstrated through his active involvement as a member of the Aberdeen Education Association and an NEA Global Fellow, has brought pride to SDEA. This recognition is a testament to his dedication and is sure to inspire countless students to achieve their best.

Congratulations once again to Kerry Konda for this well-deserved honor!



Kerry Konda

Aberdeen Central High School
2024 National High School
Speech and Debate Coach of the Year

DON'T WORRY

Even though the subscription fee is now \$275, it is still a HUGE discount for SDEA members! Up to 9 grad credits for \$275 >>> virtualeduc.com/sdea



SDEA/NEA OPPORTUNITIES

GRANT, SCHOLARSHIPS, CAREER

SDEA/NEA EARLY CAREER EDUCATOR AWARD

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.

Deadline: December 1

SDEA/NEA GORDON HORGEN SCHOLARSHIP

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.

Deadline: February 15

SDEA/NEA RAMIA BOERSMA SCHOLARSHIP

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 EDUCATORS RISING SCHOLARSHIP

Educators Rising Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association (SDEA) Board of Directors is thrilled to announce the creation of the **Educators Rising Scholarship**. This four-year scholarship is designed to invest in the future educators of South Dakota, providing vital support to high school seniors who are passionate about pursuing a career in education.

Deadline: February 15

SDEA/NEA EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION GRANT

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.



Happy Thanksgiving! Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays! It's hard to believe that another year is nearly over.

NEA-Retired is asking that we make sure that we have given SDEA-Retired our non-school email addresses as soon as possible. Beginning next August and every August thereafter, they are going to do a special online version of *NEA Today*, especially for retired members. At present, we only have about 45% of our members' email addresses. You will not only miss these special *NEA Today* magazines, but you are currently missing the SDEA-Retired updates that we put out between the

update your email address, call 605-224-9263.

We are in the middle of our retirement seminar series. By the time you receive this, the event in Rapid City will have been held. We have scheduled events in Vermillion, Aberdeen and Sioux Falls in November. Our virtual presentation will be held in January. If you have questions about SDEA-Retired, please reach out to LouAnn Jensen at 605-220-1688, or email her at louann.jensen@sdea.org.

By now, you should have received your annual dues renewal. I hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to have your yearly membership dues automatically taken from your bank account. Please take this opportunity to update your address, email, and phone number. You are appreciated and we don't want to lose track of you!

Statement of Ownership

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Mary Jane Chiles
SDEA Retired
President

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UPCOMING EVENTS

November

- 9-12 NCSEA Fall Conf./Gen. Membership Mtg /Regional Mtg
- 14 Eastern Prairie Unit meeting
- 18-22 American Education Week
- 19 SEE Unit meeting
- 28 Thanksgiving (SDEA offices closed)
- 29 Thanksgiving observed (SDEA offices closed)

December

- 1 SDEA/NEA Early Career Educator Award nominations due
- 7 SDEA Budget Committee
- 24-31 Christmas Vacation (SDEA offices closed)

January

- 1 New Year's Day (SDEA offices closed)
- 9 Eastern Prairie Unit meeting
- 14 Western Unit meeting
- 15 SDEA Bylaw proposals/Candidacy declarations due
- 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (SDEA offices closed)
- 21 SEE Unit meeting
- 25 Plains Unit meeting
- 27 EGL Unit meeting
- 31-2/1 SDEA BOD meeting



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