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Useful Communications and News

Take the Legislative Priorities and Program Survey

Log on to the NSEA Web site to have your voice heard about Legislative issues! By following the link below you will be able to review the current Legislative program from NSEA and take a brief survey to provide input about the issues you want to see addressed during the next Legislative session. It's a fantastic opportunity to provide information to NSEA about issues that are important to you. Plus, you'll be entered into a drawing for fabulous electronics and gift card prizes just for participating in the survey!

Follow the link below to log on and complete the survey.

<http://www.nsea-nv.org/legsurvey.htm>

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NSEA Re-Files Initiative Petition to Save Our Schools

(from the NSEA website)

Feb. 5, 2008 - After careful consideration and analysis, NSEA re-filed the Initiative Petition now entitled "Save Our Schools With Additional Funding for Salaries and Student Achievement". NSEA re-filed the petition because waiting is not an option. Nevada's schools are in dire need of additional funding and we are the only ones willing to step up to the plate to save our schools.

NSEA carefully reviewed Judge Miriam Shearing's decision on the legal challenge posed by the gaming industry surrounding our initiative petition designed to raise the gaming tax by three percent to save our schools with additional funding. You may recall, the courts became involved when the gaming industry challenged our petition with hopes of having our petition thrown out. In turn, the section of the petition which dictated how the money would be spent was severed on the basis that the single subject rule was violated. In addition, the 200-word description was slightly re-written to make it consistent with the new changes mentioned above.

The decision was clear and easy—we must move forward with the fight to increase funding for K-12 public education.

"The need for increased funding for K-12 public education becomes more and more critical every day," said NSEA President Lynn Warne. "Not only does Nevada rank at the bottom of the list in per pupil funding, but threats of budget cuts loom with a governor not willing to make any changes to preserve already-limited funds."

We continue to emphasize in our petition that the new money will go to salaries for teachers and support professionals as well as student achievement.

Gaming consultants and obstructionists have tried to stall the process by challenging our initial measure—a move to turn their backs on Nevada's students one more time. This will not stop us. We are determined to move forward to save our schools!

"We are confident we will get the necessary signatures to qualify the petition and get it on the ballot in 2008 and again in 2010," concluded Warne. "The public has consistently supported our efforts and coupled with our membership, we are sure to be successful in the months ahead."

[Click here](#) for a look at the new petition language. Here is a direct link:

<http://www.nsea-nv.org/documents/finalpetition.pdf>

What Can We Do Together?

By Steve Fargan

“What Can We Do Together?” was the question that the team from Nevada came up with at the NEA Creating Strong Affiliates conference, held in Austin, Texas from November 1-4, 2007. I feel very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to attend a conference that had a different approach from others I have attended in the past. Instead of providing answers and materials, this conference had a creative, supportive, atmosphere for coming up with questions and sharing a vision of what we would like to see. Some of the highlights for me were the World Café, the ClancyWorks Dance Company, and the Using Appreciative Inquiry to Create Strong Affiliates session.

The World Café approach was an enjoyable experience. Throughout the conference we sat in groups of four, much like having a discussion at a café. However, each time we went on to a new question to discuss, we changed groups. This allowed for more sharing, progressive depth to discussions, and more opportunities to meet amazing people from all over the country.

The two performances by the ClancyWorks Dance Company, Shifting Perspectives and On Taking Steps To Climbing Mountains, were inspirational. Seeing how the dancers used many different sized ladders in the On Taking Steps To Climbing Mountains performance was uplifting. I spoke with Adrienne Clancy, the Artistic Director, after the performances to show my appreciation. If you ever get a chance to see a performance by the ClancyWorks Dance Company, I highly recommend that you attend. Visit <http://www.clancyworks.org> for more details on the company and other upcoming events.

I felt that I got a lot out of the Using Appreciative Inquiry to Create Strong Affiliates session facilitated by Linda Manny and Rose Ann Hubbard. Here is a brief overview: The questions we ask are fateful. They set the course for our conversation, which then becomes our agenda for action. The questions which produce the best and longest lasting change are the ones that are fundamentally affirmative. This session definitely made me think and gave me hope for the possibilities we have before us.

The evidence of how this conference was different was in what I brought home with me. Instead of a bag full of the typical materials, paper hand-outs, and brochures, I returned with an expanded mind that contained questions and ideas about possibilities for the future. I look forward to sharing these questions and experiences with others in order to create stronger affiliates that work together to create a positive change.

"Good Idea" Grants

NSEA's IPD Committee is pleased to offer grants of up to \$1,000 to Association members with innovative ideas to help improve education in the state of Nevada. The NSEA Good Idea Grants may be used in a wide variety of ways and help make the recipient's good idea a reality. Association members may use the funding, for example, to develop a special unit or project for use with students, to present a workshop or class for other teachers, or to create materials or lesson plans for widespread use. Total awards for 2008 will not exceed \$10,000.

Education reform issues, including but not limited to, standards-based teaching, testing and alternate forms of student assessment, and innovations in technology are currently focal points in education and are a few topics around which good ideas can be generated. Keep in mind, however, that NSEA encourages members to submit any type of proposal that can help meet specific educational needs.

Grant proposals must be submitted no later than February 15, 2008, without exception. Submission means post-marked, fax dated, or hand-delivered on or before February 15, 2008. All applications received in the NSEA office after the above-noted deadline will be rejected – there are no exceptions. The IPD Committee will review all properly submitted applications during March 2008 and make final recommendations to NSEA President, Lynn Warne. Grant money will be distributed in April 2008.

NEA's Priority Schools Initiative has challenged the education community to address the cultural, language, and economic differences of students in ways that build a learning environment that supports every student reaching their fullest potential. The IPD Committee this year is encouraging members to submit proposals which address this challenge. A guide has been created called Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap which is available on this website: <http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/careguide.html>

Should you or any interested member have questions or need further assistance, please contact Rose Brennan in the NSEA Reno office at 1-800-232-6732, extension 3021. [Click here](#) to print an application. (Here is a direct link to the .pdf file: <http://www.nsea-nv.org/documents/2008applicationforwebsite.pdf>) All applications can be submitted via fax or U.S. mail. Remember, February 15, 2008, is the deadline.

Important Message: All winners will need to provide pictorial documentation to demonstrate how the grant money was used.

Submit an article for the next UCN Newsletter

Are you an aspiring novelist, writer of short stories, or do you just have a message to get out? Please submit an article for the next UCN Newsletter.

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