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The Elementary Secondary Education Act otherwise known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was proposed in 2001 and signed into law a year later. This bipartisan reform effort, under former President George W. Bush, promised improved schools and better prepared students for 21st century workplace opportunities. School districts were evaluated by the progress of their students in different categories and ranked according to their performance and/or attendance. With its unrealistic and unfunded mandates, NCLB faced critics in state legislatures across the U.S., from the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and from school districts. Ultimately, NCLB became obsolete, having morphed into competitive grants that pitted states and school districts against each other for a limited pot of money. One positive result of NCLB was the collection of data and the focus of improving instruction to students of color, special education populations, and those students living in poverty.

Twelve years later, enter Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which have been adopted by an estimated 44 states. In Nevada the CCSS are known as the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NACS). The NEA and AFT have been supportive of CCSS intent from the beginning, but recently NEA President Dennis Van Roekel issued a call for a “course correction” after hearing feedback on the challenges faced in the implementation of the CCSS. While the CCSS, if instituted appropriately and with teacher input, would allow flexibility in meeting the educational needs of our students, there loom major obstacles to the success of our students under the CCSS. Local, state and national surveys indicate the vast majority of teachers support the idea of CCSS but are very wary of the lack of resources and training, and how the assessments will impact their students. The main obstacles lie in uneven, haphazard implementation in local school districts and state departments of education, the lack of professional development and training for teachers, the proper utilization of tests with students and educators, and their alignment with the CCSS.

In his article “Common Core Needs a Course Correction,” NEA President Dennis Van Roekel indicated there were two steps for policy-makers to consider with CCSS. “The first step
2014 marked NSEA’s 46th annual Delegate Assembly (DA) held this year in Las Vegas. More than 300 delegates representing 30 NSEA affiliates attended DA at the Riviera Casino and Hotel Saturday, March 22 and Sunday, March 23. This year’s theme was “Building our Base for Success,” a reference to the exceptional organizing work affiliates are doing throughout the state which allows all educators to be the best advocates possible for education, for their profession, and for students.

NSEA President Ruben Murillo, Jr. presided over DA where members set policies, adopted the new budget, tended to the Association’s business, and elected officers. Secretary/Treasurer Brian Wallace ran unopposed and was re-elected. Brian Flick was elected NEA Director.

The Awards Banquet was held Saturday, April 22 and ESEA President-Elect Doug McCain received the Dedicated Educator Award. NV-PERS received the Friend of Education Award, and CREA member Liz Brown received the Marian Conrad Retired Achievement Award. Olivia Diaz was the recipient of the NSEA Human & Civil Rights Award.

The following photos were taken by Washoe Education Support Professionals President Mike Horner (pictured with the camera), who always found a creative perch to capture that perfect DA picture. **
NSEA “Good Idea” Grant Winners

- OCEA •
  James Bean

- LCEA •
  Anna Preiss

- ESEA •
  Jacqueline Whitfield

- WEA •
  Jeffrey Kirst
  Laurie Jones
  Leonard Neidhold
  Debbie Jacobs
  Marilyn Marshman
  Kien Lachelli
  Val Licon

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL THE WINNERS!
Delegate Assembly (DA) ended Sunday, March 23 with a good-old-fashioned pep rally for The Education Initiative (TEI). The rally was preceded by presentations from TEI partners PLAN, Progress Now, Mi Familia Vota, and America Votes. These grassroots organizations are working with NSEA to see TEI pass in November by reaching out to communities throughout the state. Since DA they have held community events to get the word out about the benefits of passing TEI. They will play a critical role in helping turn out the vote when early voting starts in October.

As the rally took place, right next door members gave testimonials on how dedicated, predictable public education funding would help Nevada’s students succeed. Education support professionals and teachers recorded personal stories that are posted on our website nsea-nv.org and NSEA’s youtube channel youtube.com/nseaonline. Educators participating in the video, like ESEA member Autumn Tampa (pictured), represented decades of experience in public education in our state. First-hand accounts of why educators love to do what they do in our schools and how adequate funding will help every day is an important tool in helping Nevadans understand how all of us can make schools better. It’s time for your voice to be heard. Contact NSEA today at contact.nsea@nsea-nv.org, and let’s set up a time when you can tell your story.
Clark County Education Association (CCEA)

2014 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade

Monday, January 20, Clark County Education Association members joined 130 other organizations to march in the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Las Vegas parade. The theme of education as a top civil rights issue was prevalent throughout the 32nd running of the parade honoring the civil rights leader. CCEA members, family, and friends carried the message of adequate education funding as a priority for all Nevada’s families to the hundreds of parade attendees. **

Education Support Employees Association (ESEA)

Good Idea Grant Winner – Jacqueline Whitfield

Friday, April 4, ESEA member and Good Idea Grant winner Jacqueline Whitfield was presented with a check for $1,000 by NSEA President Ruben Murillo, Jr. (pictured) at Basic High School in Henderson. Jackie is one of ten NSEA members awarded the grant this year.

“The NSEA Good Idea Grant was previously seen as a grant for teachers, but this year we are proud to present one of the $1,000 awards to an education support professional,” said President Murillo.

The NSEA Good Idea Grants give members a chance to make their good ideas a reality. The grant is offered to members with innovative ideas to help improve education in Nevada.

Jackie’s idea gives at-risk and disadvantaged juniors and seniors who are career-minded an opportunity to shadow community leaders and labor leaders.

“The program will give these students an opportunity to develop genuine, durable leadership qualities as well as strong advocacy skills to help them become productive leaders,” said Jacqueline.

For more information about NSEA Grants visit the Grants page in the Member Center section of the NSEA website, nsea-nv.org. **

Douglas County Support Professionals

New Website

Eager to engage all members and potential members, the Douglas County Support Staff Organization (DCSSO) created a new website DCSSO.org in April. The website contains essential DCSSO information such as contact information, a copy of the collective bargaining agreement, and a calendar of important dates. It’s a fun, easy site to use on your computer, tablet, or smart phone and it includes lots of candid pictures of DCSSO members. **

Washoe Education Association (WEA)

Good Idea Grant Winner – Jeff Kirst

WEA member Jeff Kirst (pictured) has been busy putting his Good Idea Grant money to work at Washoe Innovations High School. The high school offers physical ed. twice a day, but class is conducted in the cafeteria as there is no gymnasium. “Physical education can also be taken as an online course, but that is really not what getting exercise and physical activity is all about,” wrote Jeff. Without equipment or a suitable space to conduct physical education, it appeared difficult for students to fulfill the physical ed. state requirement at their school. Also, Jeff observed students spending their 30-minute lunch milling around the parking lot if they didn’t eat in the cafeteria.

Like a lot of good ideas, Jeff’s was born to fulfill a need. Jeff knew there was space outside the school and saw an opportunity to, as he wrote in his grant application, provide, “more diverse outdoor activities for our students during the lunch period.” Now instead of relying on an online course or some weights stacked in the corner of the cafeteria, students will have access to basketball hoops, soccer nets, and basketballs and soccer balls to go with them. “The students are most appreciative of the support and it’s a big hit,” said Jeff. We applaud Jeff and all the Good Idea Grant winners on their good ideas and helping to provide our students with the resources they need to succeed. **
How to Manage Your Passwords

Throw out the sticky notes. These programs are a better way to go.

By Jeff Bertolucci

Security experts tell us to create long, complex passwords (think numerals and symbols) for every online account. But how are we supposed to remember all of those mind-numbing character strings?

Enter software that manages your passwords for you. These programs allow you to store your passwords in one file by creating one ultra-secure master password to serve as the portal to all your other user names and passwords. Here are three of our favorites.

Dashlane. This is an excellent choice for the password-challenged. Not only is it highly secure, but it’s also a breeze to use. Dashlane is a free download for Windows and Mac PCs and most smart phones and tablets. Enter a master password (be sure to remember it because Dashlane doesn’t save it) and the app automatically encrypts your passwords and other private information using military-grade AES-256 encryption, which has never been hacked. Dashlane imports new and existing passwords from your Web browser into its “vault”; the program can remember your shipping and credit card information, as well as auto-fill online checkout screens.

Dashlane also works within your Web browser to monitor your online activities. When you log in to your e-mail, for instance, Dashlane pops up and asks whether it should save your user name and password. Plus, it rates the strength of your existing passwords (and tells you if they should be changed), and it generates strong passwords for new sites that you join. If you signed up for two-step verification using Google Authenticator (you need a code generated by an app in addition to your password), you may continue to use it.

Although Dashlane is a dandy password manager, the free version is limited to one device. If you’d like to use it on several gadgets, you’ll need to buy the premium edition ($30 per year), which syncs passwords and backs up data across multiple devices.

LastPass. This is another top-notch free password manager. Like Dashlane, LastPass prompts you to create a master password (it, too, uses AES-256 encryption), integrates with the browser, detects when you log in to password-protected sites and asks whether you want it to remember log-in information. Like Dashlane, LastPass generates strong passwords for new sites and auto-fills credit card and shipping information. And LastPass has added the ability to rate the strength of existing passwords.

LastPass stores your data online, which lets you access your credit card numbers from any Web browser. (The downside: You may be uncomfortable with having your sensitive personal data stored in the cloud.) The app also supports Google Authenticator, but you’ll need the premium version ($1 a month) to use LastPass on a variety of smart phones and tablets, including Android, BlackBerry, iOS (Apple) and Windows Phone devices.

Keeper. If all you want is a free password manager and little more, Keeper is appealing. Like its competitors, the app uses bulletproof AES-256 encryption. The app supports two-step verification, but it doesn’t rate the strength of your passwords. The free version works well on a single device, but you’ll want Keeper Backup ($10 per device per year) to sync among several PCs, tablets and phones.

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Still Using Windows XP?

Tuesday, April 8, Microsoft officially cut off support for their operating system Windows XP. That shouldn’t be a big deal considering XP is about three operating systems old. We asked members if they were still using XP and here are some responses we received:

“According to PC World (bit.ly/1tqwm5B), you can continue running Windows XP, but Microsoft “will no longer produce security patches for critical vulnerabilities in the operating system.” It’s not impossible to keep XP running and certain districts’ software and older versions of software will only run on XP. Educators and support professionals do a great job every day educating students, the question isn’t how well we’re doing with less; it’s how much better could our kids and educators do if every classroom had access to the most up-to-date technology?”

“All but a handful of our computers are running XP. At this time we have nearly 250 computers that will not run Windows 7 at all. There is no plan to refresh our computers in the foreseeable future.”

“I have a computer lab with 36 computers. One is broken and will not be fixed. The other 35 are still running XP. Our tech told me these machines will not run Windows 7.”

“My computers were upgraded to Windows 7.”

“All good here...We are using Windows Vista.”

“XP is more or less foolproof. Solid operating system.”
TEI Letter to the Editor Campaign

Dear readers, did you see that article in the paper today about education? How did it make you feel? Did it accurately capture your experience at your work site? Each day throughout Nevada you can find some article tied to education and even education funding. In the January 22 edition of the Nevada Appeal, manufacturing business owners lamented about their lack of competitiveness with China. They said a better-educated workforce would take away China’s edge and make Nevada a major competitor. Yet, in the same article, those same businesspeople criticized the only plan on the table to provide an investment in public education—The Education Initiative.

NSEA is working with members to identify opportunities to get our voice heard. Through our Letter to the Editor campaign we are using our voice to make our point, correct mistakes, and/or highlight contradictions like those found in the manufacturing article in the Nevada Appeal, so readers will have all sides. Some of our members and even non-members who believe in a strong public education system are already in the trenches both online and in print. This is a great start and their passion is appreciated, but they can’t do it alone. Send an email today to contact.nsea@nsea-nv.org and get on our list. When we spot something, we’ll send out an email and ask if you can respond. We’re all in this together. Educators are the respected voice when it comes to issues concerning public education and what Nevada’s kids need to succeed. Participating in the Letter to the Editor campaign is one way we can ensure our voice is heard.

TEI Puppets Bob and Meredith Get Nod from Ralston

They’re just a pair of puppets, but Bob and Meredith hit the big time in April when pundit Jon Ralston tweeted about them and then KNPR played a segment of the video on their State of Nevada radio program. The video was first featured on NSEA’s Facebook page, facebook.com/nseanv. More than 15,000 viewers watched the merry marionettes banter back and forth about education funding. After the local media found out about them, the video featured on the NSEA YouTube channel, youtube.com/nseonline jumped to more than 21,000 views. Expect more videos from Bob and Meredith as the TEI campaign continues.

“See? It’s just like my classroom at school!”

TEI will pay for critical needs like class size reduction.
TEI Member Polling

Member Polling Reveals Strong Support for TEI

Noted pollster Harstad Strategic Research conducted telephone interviews with NSEA members statewide to gauge current support for The Education Initiative (TEI). Interviews were conducted from Tuesday, March 18, 2014 to Thursday, March 20, 2014.

After hearing the following description of TEI, 83% of members said they would vote for it.

“This measure would establish a 2% tax on business revenue. Only companies that have more than a million dollars in revenue will pay the tax. Businesses can deduct either the costs of goods sold or employee salaries and benefits. All funds from this tax would be dedicated to Nevada’s Kindergarten-through-12th grade public schools.”

Decisive member support for The Education Initiative is especially impressive given that, as of mid-March, a one-third bloc of members say they know nothing at all about TEI. Strong support for TEI cuts across key member groups:

- 85% of teachers and 79% of education support professional members would vote for the initiative.
- Members in each of Nevada’s four Congressional districts favor TEI by 80% or higher.
- 88% of members who are Democrats, 78% Republican members, and 82% Independents would vote for the initiative.

When less-informed members hear the description of TEI, they favor it by the same margins as their better-informed colleagues. Moreover, the survey suggests that as members learn more about TEI, their support for it solidifies and their vote becomes more definite.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote Against</th>
<th>Vote For</th>
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<td>All Members</td>
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<td>Definite Voters</td>
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PERS Records to be Revealed

by Warren Wish, NSEA-R President

By the time Carson City District Court Judge James Russell made his bench ruling on Friday, April 11, 2014, the lawsuit pitting the Reno Gazette-Journal against the Nevada Public Employees’ Retirement System had been going on for 2 ½ years and had already been argued twice in his court and once in the Nevada Supreme Court.

Once again, Judge Russell listened patiently for nearly two hours to oral arguments before delivering his final ruling. His decision stunned all the retirees in the courtroom; PERS officials sat in silent resignation. In the Court’s decision, the confidentiality of retiree public pension records was shattered in favor of the public’s right to have full access under the state’s open governmental records law.

Since the parent organization of the Reno Gazette-Journal filed suit against PERS for the release of individual retiree pension information, the RGJ contended that the same open access to wage/benefit information it had for active public employees also pertained to retired employees. The RGJ stated for the record that it wanted the release of PERS information to “expose wrongdoing, wasteful practices, and ensure accountability.”

In the coming weeks, retirees can expect to see a full disclosure in the media of PERS benefit records including the names of all individuals receiving a benefit—including minor children and ex-spouses, the names of all former employers, hire and departure dates, years of service, and total retirement benefit. The only PERS data remaining confidential will be Social Security numbers and medical records.

Understandably, all through the legal proceedings, PERS cited the special confidential status given to PERS records in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). When the confidential law was enacted in the early 1970’s, there was no such thing as computerized records. At the time all retiree information was contained in individual files. Though in subsequent years PERS had transferred all retiree data into a digitalized data system, it considered computer files to be the equivalent of a confidential individual file. In hindsight, PERS had no choice but to test in court whether computer records had the same confidential protections as individual files. This was especially true given the broad ranging scope of the open records law.

Judge Russell agreed with the RGJ’s opinion that former PERS Executive Director Dana Bilyeu was not completely truthful when she testified that PERS records were in self-contained files and unavailable for data analysis. PERS could only counter by saying that Ms. Bilyeu had walked a very fine line and protecting the confidentiality of her members was her foremost priority.

Subsequent depositions to the Court revealed a number of reports were regularly created outside the individual file containing all the RGJ requested information: the monthly benefit report, the actuarial report, the monthly employer report, and potentially a customized PERS report. Though the Supreme Court omitted the customized report option, Judge Russell instructed PERS to turn over all the necessary documents with Social Security numbers redacted or, if necessary, voluntarily create a customized report.

In his summation, Judge Russell upheld the concept of a broad interpretation of the public’s right to know and to more narrowly focus the boundaries of governmental confidentiality. He declined to order sanctions against PERS, but he described their actions as “stonewalling and over-reaching…with the good intention to protect its members.” Judge Russell ordered PERS to pay the newspaper’s attorney fees and to open its records to the RGJ immediately.

For PERS this was a legal fire it could not avoid. If PERS had given in to the demands of the RGJ without first getting clarification by the courts, it would have opened itself to a class action retiree lawsuit trying to protect the confidentiality of pension records. Though in defeat, PERS stood tall in upholding its mission “dedicated to all who serve Nevada.”
is to treat educators as professionals and listen to what we know is needed, and the second step is to properly determine how to use assessments.” In Nevada, the Washoe Education Association and the Clark County Education Association have been proactive with their local school districts by working together to provide professional development to educators and discussing the enactment of the NACS. Linda Hunt, a member of the Washoe Education Association, serves on NEA’s CCSS work group and has provided CCSS/NACS training to teachers and support professionals across Nevada and the United States. Linda’s involvement is an optimistic sign ensuring educators are an integral part of the process and, while these efforts to involve educators is to be applauded, it’s simply not enough and doesn’t address the concerns regarding testing.

Building Our Base for Success, continued from page 3

Membership Committee has begun to place greater emphasis on capacity building that will empower educators and, in that regard, greater emphasis on the need to build an organized union presence in each and every site where teachers and support professionals work. All of this will require a greater reliance on data- and research-driven organizing that starts with identifying targeting worksites and identifying leaders more strategically than we have in the past.

Not only have we dedicated substantial funding to the Membership Grant Fund, we have also taken other steps to ensure we are doing everything possible to build our union’s base so we can successfully advocate for better working conditions for our members. As we all know, better working conditions for educators mean better learning conditions for students—because our working conditions ARE their learning conditions. Here are some things NSEA is doing to support more robust organizing within our ranks:

- We are gearing our Summer Leadership Conference in late July toward providing training for attendees that will help them enhance the knowledge and skills needed to be more effective organizers in their workplaces and in their communities. We have engaged the services of Wellstone Action to do this training. Wellstone is a non-profit organization that promotes progressive social change by teaching people how to organize more effectively around issues of concern to them.

- We have hired an experienced Organizing Director, Samantha Galing. Samantha comes to us with a record of success running union and issue-based organizing campaigns. She is currently assisting ESEA in its efforts to grow membership and to broaden and deepen its presence in worksites throughout Clark County. She will soon be devoting some of her time to working in a similar way with other ESP locals around the state.

- We have also contracted with an Internal Campaign Coordinator, Justin Minton, who will work closely with NSEA Deputy Executive Director Debbie Cahill and the NSEA team to lend support in the field to our local affiliates that have developed detailed plans for doing member-to-member engagement and community outreach to ensure The Education Initiative (TEI) passes in November. TEI will establish a stable, dedicated source of funding for K-12 education by imposing a 2% margins tax on big businesses, with all revenues going into Nevada’s Distributive School Account. The key to winning the TEI fight is to ensure that as many of our members, parents, and other community members who share our concern about an underfunded K-12 vote for the initiative in November. In the process of building support for TEI, we can strengthen our union by growing membership and building relationships with community allies who are supportive of NSEA’s mission.

Using these tools to build a strong base will help, but the key to our Association’s strength lies with its leaders and members. We can achieve great success in our advocacy work on TEI, collective bargaining agreements, legislation, and other things that advance the cause of public education and of educators by mobilizing and engaging members. This is the essence of an organizing model—one that rests on active and involved members in every facet of the union’s work. We are more than 23,000 strong, our strength and our power depend upon this kind of activism. Together, we can and we will lead the fight for better schools that give children the chance to succeed. **
In Memoriam

Over the past few months, Nevada has suffered great losses to its education family. These stalwarts of public education were beacons, particularly in these troubling times. Saturday, March 22 at NSEA’s Awards Banquet, NEA Director Natha Anderson gave a stirring tribute that captured our profound sadness but also our gratitude for the exemplified service and selfless commitment each had for public education. Each voice is carried on by the work of our association which pays tribute to their spirit and leadership.

Kathy Foresythe Wilson served CCEA and its members in several capacities for more than twenty years and was a tenacious advocate for teachers and public education. She did not back down. Kathy was always available to answer members’ questions and fight for their rights.

Michael Soden was a teacher-leader before becoming a UniServ Director at CCEA. Michael’s dedication to the members and the profession was unwavering. His belief in educator’s rights was exhibited in just about everything he did.

JJ Jackson was a close friend of our association and of education in Nevada. JJ relished working with the NSEA Lobby Team because he believed in the cause. His optimism was felt throughout the legislative session and brought many legislators to see beyond just a bill’s language and to really understand its impact by making the information personal and relevant.

Cindy Knew was a passionate advocate for support professionals. Her caring nature tore down walls between job titles. She was a true leader who fought for the rights of all.

Former Assemblyman, NSEA member, and statewide leader Bernie Anderson mentored many throughout the years. Bernie represented Washoe County and served as Chairman of the Assembly Judiciary Committee. He dedicated his life and career to education and helped NSEA become stronger. Bernie’s presence and guiding hand in our association was felt every day and will be missed.

Former Speaker Joe Dini always stood with educators. He was NSEA’s 1973 Outstanding Citizen and its 1986 Friend of Education. In 1999 he sponsored a bill for NSEA addressing the issue of disruptive students. “It is time for us to do something to help teachers regain control of their classrooms,” said Dini. AB521 was passed and signed into law.

Former NSEA Executive Director Dick Vander Woude’s humor and belief in our organization helped to strengthen us. Vander Woude served as NSEA Executive Director from 1982 to 1988. He was compassionate, caring, and considerate. You may not know the name, but you likely heard the term he coined: Every kid deserves a great school.
NSEA Membership/Discount Card

This card doubles as both your membership card and as a valuable savings card which gives you large savings on many purchases.

Among the places you can save, you’ll find restaurants, stores, movie theaters, appliances and more—all ready to save you money, just for being an NSEA member. From top national brands you know and trust to thousands of businesses, there are savings for every NSEA member.

We hope you are enjoying this valuable benefit and all the other services you receive as an NSEA member. It's just one more way to say thank you for your hard work and valuable service.