

LEA-PAC Makes Important “Early” Recommendations in Three School Board Races

Following a full work day with students on February 18, 2009, LEA-PAC Board members Kelly Muthersbaugh (Meadow Lane), Sharon Nore (Retired), Deb Rasmussen (Goodrich), Kathy Spahr (co-chair; Culler), and Tammy Schafer (Holmes) held three separate discussions with the incumbent candidates running for re-election for the LPS Board of Education: Kathy Danek (District 1), Barbara Baier (District 3), and Don Mayhew (District 7). Jan Olmstead (co-chair, Lefler) was unable to engage in the discussions due to the death of her father. All three of the school board members were recommended LEA-PAC candidates in the past for the LPS school board. This, along with participating in the LEA-PAC discussion, allowed the incumbents to be eligible for an “early” recommendation by the LEA-PAC Board.

Members of LEA-PAC report that they were impressed by the incumbents’ growth as school board members and by their knowledge of issues of importance to teachers and students. Although the discussions were held separately, LEA-PAC members indicated they could tell there was a real sense of cohesiveness among the school board members, an understanding of what is best for kids, a passion for being a school board member, support for educators, and a real sense of caring about the community. All three incumbents, the LEA-PAC Board members agreed, are articulate individuals.

Given the candidates’ past recommendations, their entire record as a school board member, their support of teachers and students, the qualities listed above, and the evening’s discussion, the LEA-PAC Board unanimously decided that all three candidates deserve and have earned an “early” recommendation from LEA-PAC. Thus, **Kathy Danek, Barb Baier, and Don Mayhew** have been endorsed by LEA-PAC for re-election. As always, LEA-PAC recommendations are based upon educational issues, only.

Kathy Danek (District 1)

LEA-PAC Board members cited a number of qualities from the evening’s discussion that makes Kathy Danek an attractive candidate for re-election including she:



- ✓ has been a consistent advocate for educators,
- ✓ is very visible in the school buildings,
- ✓ looks after her community,
- ✓ does not believe that in order for educators to be given a raise that educators have to have even more responsibilities added to their plates,
- ✓ believes there needs to be improvement in educator benefits,
- ✓ is very knowledgeable about and actively involved in legislature at both the state and national level (even actively lobbying members of Congress for federal aid to the public schools),
- ✓ believes the Board of Education must communicate to the community the importance of the work that educators do,
- ✓ is very knowledgeable about technology,
- ✓ is very much aware of Lincoln’s increase in the numbers of students and families facing poverty and how that impacts the school system and the work of educators, and
- ✓ is not a supporter of merit pay.

LEAdvocate

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- ➔ **To request yard signs or to volunteer to assist with Kathy Danek’s re-election campaign, please contact Terry Danek via email at tcdanek@aol.com.**

Barbara Baier (District 3)

From the evening’s discussion with Barb Baier, LEA-PAC Board members cited as positives Barb’s:



- ✓ advocacy for students to have mental health, drug, and alcohol issues in their lives better addressed with a need for more counselors available to students in the schools,
 - ✓ awareness and sensitivity to the increases in the poverty level of students and families being served by the Lincoln Public Schools,
 - ✓ belief that an appropriate pupil/teacher ratio is essential to success in classroom for both students and educators,
 - ✓ desire to develop better programs, especially in the middle schools, to help prevent drop-outs,
 - ✓ willingness to be accessible to educators, and
 - ✓ her avid belief that the community must understand and support the efforts made by educators and the schools to close any achievement gaps among students.
- ➔ **To volunteer to assist with the Barb Baier campaign, please contact Barb directly by calling 202-1846. Specifically, she is looking for individuals to assist her with walking precincts with leaflets and placing yard signs.**

Don Mayhew (District 7)

The LEA-PAC Board members were impressed by a number of statements and beliefs explained by Don Mayhew including his:



- ✓ belief that teachers need to be free to teach. Too many things are regimented in the classroom today and educators have lost the opportunity to address the “teachable moment.”
 - ✓ belief that educator salaries have not kept up with the demands that have been placed upon educators,
 - ✓ position that the pupil/teacher ratio must be kept low,
 - ✓ belief that essential positions such as counselors, school psychologists, and social workers should not count against a building’s points to hire classroom educators,
 - ✓ belief that only in education are so many so well educated, holding advanced degrees and the expertise to do a great job, yet receiving such low salaries,
 - ✓ opinion that it is the responsibility of the entire Board of Education to do a better job of educating the community on exactly what it is that educators do; teaching is not an 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. job with evenings, weekends, and summers “off,” and
 - ✓ his desire to see more resources put into efforts to improve gaps in achievement among students.
- ➔ **To volunteer to assist with the Don Mayhew campaign, please contact Jennifer Brinkman at 402-525-3958 or jennifer@richtersbrinkman.com**

And What About District 5?

The District 5 Board of Education seat is currently held by Keith Prettyman who has indicated he will not seek re-election. Four candidates, to date, have filed for that seat in the up-coming election. LEA-PAC will launch its full recommendation process for those candidates running for the open Board of Education

seat for District 5 following the close of the filing deadline, March 2, 2009. All candidates running in that district will be invited to fill out a lengthy questionnaire and follow that up with an interview with a LEA-PAC Committee. Only by going through **both** parts of the process can a candidate be considered for a LEA-PAC recommendation. Interviews for the candidates have been tentatively set for March 11, 2009. Members will be notified shortly after March 11 as to any recommendation(s) LEA-PAC makes in the District 5 race.

LEA-PAC members who would like to be considered to be on the interview committee are urged to contact LEA UniServ Director Dan Studer who is the staff liaison to LEA-PAC at dan.studer@nsea.org. If you currently are not a LEA-PAC member, you can easily become one by donating to the PAC. Contact Teresa Greve at LEA teresa.greve@nsea.org or call 489-7500 for information.

The primary election in Lincoln is April 7, 2009.

The general election is set for May 5, 2009.

Please join the LEA-PAC Board in recommending and supporting the re-election of Kathy Danek, Barb Baier, and Don Mayhew to the LPS Board of Education.

COPING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE: Part Eight



If you think having a **SUPERAGREEABLE** or a **BULLDOZER** (see our last two articles) in your life is difficult—it could be worse. You could have to deal with a **NEGATIVIST**. This article has been revised from information from Robert M. Branson from the homepages of wmich.edu.

NEGATIVISTS are people who, while at times are personally quite capable individuals, have a deep seated conviction that any task that is not placed in their own hands will fail. Their negativism is provoked by other's attempts to

solve a problem or by efforts to improve a procedure or plan. Because **NEGATIVISTS** believe that others in power don't care or are self serving, the negative statements made by **NEGATIVISTS** are almost always made *with conviction*.



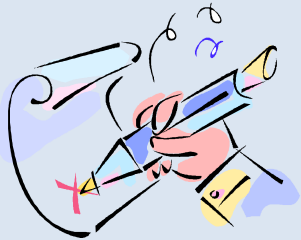
So how do you cope with NEGATIVISTS?

1. Be alert to the potential in yourself and in others in your group to be dragged down into despair by negativity.
2. Make optimistic, *but realistic* statements about past successes in solving similar problems or with your predictions of future success.
3. Don't try to argue **NEGATIVISTS** out of their pessimism. For them, it is a way of life!

4. Do not offer alternative solutions *until* the problem has been thoroughly discussed.
5. When an alternative solution is being seriously considered, beat a **NEGATIVIST** to the punch and quickly raise the question yourself of possible negative events or consequences that might occur if the alternative were implemented. Take charge of the discussion right away to do problem solving in a positive fashion.
6. Try to anticipate the *doom* sayings of the **NEGATIVIST** and keep them in perspective as potential problems to be overcome.
7. If need be, be ready to take action *on your own* and leave the **NEGATIVISTS** behind. If this becomes a reality, announce your plans to move forward without equivocation.
8. Beware of eliciting negative responses from highly analytical people if you ask them to act before they feel ready.

Sometimes you have to simply realize that some people get a charge out of being negative.

Continuing LEA/NSEA/NEA Membership



By both the personal contract signed by educators when they become members of the Association and through the LEA/LPS *Professional Agreement*, membership in the LEA/NSEA/NEA is automatic and continues each year unless a member requests their membership be revoked by sending a letter to the LEA Office between March 1 and April 15th for the following school year. Members who have a change in employment that moves them into an administrative position outside of the LEA bargaining unit after the April 15th deadline, may drop their membership by contacting the LEA office in writing up to September 1st. An explanation of their change of assignment needs to be included with the written request to drop membership.

Individuals considering dropping their membership need to consider that by doing so, they lose **all** Association rights and privileges including job protection and legal services, access to discount programs, payroll deductions to organizations and life insurance policies implemented through the Association, and the free NEA Dues Tab life insurance benefits (which increase in value every year you're a continuing member without a break in membership) allotted to all members.

In these difficult financial times, the dollars spent on Association membership are some of the best dollars you spend considering the benefits, resources, representation, and protection LEA/NSEA/NEA provides in regards to a member's profession and livelihood.

Members going on leave for the next school year are strongly encouraged to continue their active LEA/NSEA/NEA membership. As per NEA policy, only by doing so will members on leave be able to retain all Association rights and legal services should the member encounter concerns upon returning to their district employment.

