

*A Basic Right...
A Great
Public School
for Every
Child.*

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LEA-PAC Makes Recommendation in the 2008 State School Board Race

Nebraska has been lucky to escape some of the heavy-duty state school board controversies other states have faced (for example, the neighboring state of Kansas), but the state school board remains an important government body. Their decisions impact teachers on an almost daily basis in regards to what you will teach and how you will teach and assess that information.

The Lincoln area is currently represented by **Bob Evnen** on the state school board. He was appointed to the position by Governor Dave Heineman and Mr. Evnen, though unopposed in the up-coming election, went through the LEA-PAC recommendation procedure, filling out an NSEA questionnaire and being interviewed by a LEA-PAC Interview Team.

Bob Evnen Recommended



Although it might not be a surprise that the LEA-PAC Team recommended Mr. Evnen (**left**) in his race for the state school board, the recommendation process was still taken seriously and Mr. Evnen was “put through the paces” with both he and the LEA-PAC members learning from each other from their time together.

The LEA-PAC Interview Team was impressed by Bob’s qualifications, his knowledge and ability to work with NSEA, and his “passion” for his role as a state school board member and for public education. The Team was also struck by Bob’s articulate communication skills and his leadership. The Team was pleased that Mr. Evnen considers teachers “loaded down with way too much to do” with “unrealistic and unreasonable” demands upon teachers. He is very dedicated to protecting instructional time for teachers and the Team found Bob to be a good listener.

Among Mr. Evnen’s stated positions, he believes:

☼ “live classrooms with certified teachers are almost always better than distance

learning instruction;”

☀ “it is critical that teachers have a strong mastery of the content area that they are teaching... [so] we can have confidence that they are or have the strong potential to become effective teachers;”

☀ educators are entitled to a procedural and substantive due process before their certificate can be suspended or revoked;

☀ mentoring programs should be continued and can be effective tools;

☀ “it is the responsibility of the State Board to consider and address the needs of all children” and that “the best thing that we can do for children of poor and minority families is the same thing that we must do for all children: teach them to read and count, and maintain high expectations for them;” and

☀ there is no place for tuition credits or vouchers for parents who have children in private schools.

Your LEA-PAC Interview Team Members

The interview committee members worked well into the evening following a full day of teaching the first day back from Spring Break to interview Bob and to make their recommendation. The team was made up of the following *dedicated and hard-working LEA and LEA-PAC members all of whom we owe a round of applause:*

- ◆ Sharon Nore, LEA-Retired
- ◆ Jan Olmstead, Lefler
- ◆ Kathy Spahr, Culler
- ◆ and from the Waverly Education Association: **Susan Stake.**

Dan Studer, LEA UniServ Director, is the staff liaison to LEA-PAC.

Now It Is Your Turn!!!!!!!!!!

Please vote in the primary on Tuesday, May 13, 2008!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Oops!!!!!!

Omitted from last issue’s list of hard working LEA-PAC Legislative Contact Team Interview Team members was LEA-PAC Co-Chair **Jan Olmstead**, Lefler. Jan even came in one evening when she did not have to be conducting interviews to help greet the legislative candidates and to help work on proposed LEA-PAC bylaws. *Our sincere apology to Jan for this oversight!*

Urban Myths



Did you know it takes seven years for a swallowed piece of chewing gum to pass through the human digestive system?



Did you know that once shaved, hair grows back in the same spot darker or thicker?



Sorry, these are urban myths. Gum travels through the digestive system at the same rate as other food (although it will not break down to the extent of other foods), and shaving hair off does not promote hair growth (just think of all of those furry “skin heads” if it did!)

Here is another “urban myth” of which you should be aware:

If you file a grievance against a principal, you will be sorry. They have ways of getting back at you!

First of all, grievances are **not** filed against **individuals**. Grievances are filed against actions that have been taken (or not taken) that are a violation of the *LEA-LPS Professional Agreement*, LPS Board Policies and Regulations, other mutually agreed upon LEA-LPS documents (i.e. *The Teacher Appraisal Manual*, *The Best Practices of Student Discipline*, etc.), and/or state law.

The grievance procedure is meant to be a **formal problem-solving process** wherein both parties can reach an acceptable resolution that maintains contract, Board, etc. language. Further, both in the *LEA-LPS Professional Agreement* and Board policy teachers are ensured there will be “no reprisals” and the LPS Board “shall use every means at its disposal to assure every employee the unobstructed use of the grievance procedure without fear of reprisal or prejudice to his/her employment status” (Article 4-2).

If employees fear their supervisor will “get even” by doing small things to them without “stepping over the line,” this too is actionable. Documented “mischief” or revenge that indicates *a pattern of inappropriate treatment of an employee is a violation of both the contract and Board policy and grounds for still another grievance!*

Members are reminded that they have **twenty (20) working days from being harmed** in which to file a grievance and members who suspect they have been harmed or who believe they have grounds for a grievance should always contact the professional staff at LEA as soon as possible to review the situation and possible action. LEA staff take no action on a potential grievance *without the knowledge and consent* of the member and all such conversations are held strictly in confidence!