

FR Council

November 18, 2010

Union Bank, 4732 Calvert Lower Level 4:15p.m.

**BUILDINGS NOT PRESENT:** Belmont, Hill, Lakeview, Lincoln Northeast, McPhee, Morley, Park, Saratoga, and Schoo.

**“EARLY BIRD” DRAWING:** Patrick O’Hare, Culler Middle School won a \$25 gift card to Mr. Goodcents.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Jenni called the meeting to order at 4:17 p.m.

**CHECK IN/CELEBRATIONS:** none

**SPECIAL GUEST:** Justin Jones, owner of Raising Cane’s Restaurant

Justin presented the FRs with folders containing information on the various programs they offer to schools, teachers and students. Raising Cane’s distributed free box combo teacher appreciation cards this month.

Raising Cane’s promotes reading through the Bookmark Program, will hold fundraising events for individual schools and has an Achievement Award program where teachers may reward students by presenting them with a certificate for a free kids combo.

Jenni presented Justin with a certificate of appreciation and encouraged FRs to share the information with members in their respective buildings.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The October 22, 2010, FR Council minutes were approved as printed.

Jenni reviewed comments/concerns that arose during the October FR Council and explained the responses she had received from the District office regarding TAS, Pinnacle and assessment. LEA leadership and staff have had several follow-up discussions with the District for clarification and problem-solving. Members were encouraged to email the consultants and others at district office if they have specific questions regarding these issues.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Jan Olmstead

The financial report October was approved as presented.

**INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**

President’s Update—Jenni Absalon

- Association and Membership Update—Jenni shared her calendar with the FRs and stressed the following:
  - ✓ Jenni extended congratulations to Bob Reeker, Scottish Rite Award winner and to those who celebrated 25 years with the district
  - ✓ Interviews for Dawes principal will be next week.
  - ✓ Jenni and Jim will be meeting with Colby Mach and Wanda Caffrey of LIBA as a follow-up to their September meeting.
  - ✓ LEAF Grants—Application for the \$250 classroom grants will be extended until Dec. 1, 2010. Jenni reminded members of the Catastrophic Grants that are available to those in need.
  - ✓ The next 10 N 10 Event will be held on December 10th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at LEA office. The quilt drawing will be held at that time. Please sell your raffle tickets and return the money to the LEA office.

- ✓ Member Relations
  - ✓ District Update—PEP/Strategic Plan Task Force. They are gathering information to be used for the planning. Presentations and information gathering sessions will be held at stakeholder meetings. Once all information has been collected a task force of approximately 100 people will be selected. Jenni asked FRs to contact her if they are interested in being on this task force.
  - ✓ 5-18 Appeal Document—Jenni discussed the form and encouraged members to contact the LEA office if they have questions or concerns. A discussion of the use of plan time was held.
  - ✓ Membership— LEA membership is down about 30 members from last year due to the smaller number of teachers hired this school year. There may be a membership drive again this school year. Jenni asked FRs to contact new hires in your building and encourage them to join.
  
- ✓ Communications
  - ✓ LEAs First Quarter Survey has been sent to members. At this time, around 800 members have completed the survey.
  - ✓ 2010-2011 ProCom will hold their first meeting on November 29.
  - ✓ Health Care—Jenni reminded FRs that certain over-the-counter items will not be an expense that will qualify for flex spending after the first of the year.
  - ✓ Reminder to check the LEARN and the LEAdvocate for more specific information.
  
- ✓ Community
  - ✓ Harvest of Books—7,066 first and second graders. Every first grader received two books, and every second grader received one book for the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the Harvest. Jenni thanked the teachers of the first and second grades, the LEA staff and the numerous volunteers who all made the Harvest a success.

**“The Rights Stuff”** – Dan Studer, LEA UniServ Director

Dan presented FRs information on the new contract language for 2010-2012 regarding Pre-Arranged Leave and Closing of Schools due to inclement weather and Teacher Compensation and Leave.

**Executive Director’s Report**—Jim Rea, LEA Executive Director

Jim informed FRs that the LEA Financial Audit is now complete and that it will be presented to the LEA Board for final approval.

The Nebraska Legislative Session will be a 90-day session beginning January 5 and ending on June 8. Important items to watch this session include the budget deficit which currently is \$494 million and “cliff effect” and when the Federal stimulus money runs out.

State Aid—this year there will be \$95 million dollars less for state aid to schools. The state aid is certified on April 1, 2011 and the amounts are given to school systems so they can complete their budgets.

The Retirement system in Nebraska is a defined benefit plan. Retired members can plan monthly on what they will receive. The forecasting board estimated the increase in profits to be 6% and it was 13%. Retirement funding is still open for debate and it could cost members more again next year. The teachers are the biggest part of the fund, which also includes state patrol and judges.

There is continual discussion over the Commission of Industrial Relations in the Legislature. Jim reminded FRs that there has to be a way to come to a settlement because we cannot strike in the state of Nebraska. NSEA will be closely monitoring the debate over the CIR.

**DRAWING:** Lori Waters, Irving Middle School; Deb Rasmussen, Goodrich at Dawes; Shari Anderson, Everett; Connie Lacy, Lincoln High; and Marlyce Carlson, Lincoln High won grab bags in the drawing. A \$20 gift card to Indigo Bookstore was won by Rachel Bark,

**OLD BUSINESS:** none

**NEW BUSINESS:** none

**COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Individual Comment/Concern, Culler Middle School:** The academic connections and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Health are on a six week and twelve week class schedule and this does not work with the Pinnacle system.

***District Response:***

*From Kirk Langer:*

*ACES courses for 6th grade are either 6 week or 12 week in length so very few of them actually end at the time of the other courses which end at 9 week intervals. We must keep in mind that the gradebook has been transformed from a teacher's repository for entering grades, to an environment where we fulfill operational tasks such as attendance and final grade reporting, and one that feeds a parent portal. Those operational tasks, in particular, make it very difficult to accommodate variations such as 6 and 12 week courses. Secondary teachers no longer have to enter final grades as they are pulled right from the gradebook and reported. In order to accomplish that we must have standard times to pull grades that will be reported and deviations from that must be reported in an alternative fashion. Also, if we kept 6 week courses active for an additional three weeks until marking period we would have to keep them active in the previous course which would create host of attendance issues as they would no longer be attending that course.*

*These aren't limitations of Pinnacle, they are consequences that surfaced once we had a single system for housing and reporting grades along with managing attendance. When we discussed these consequences prior to implementing Pinnacle the consensus was that while some rotations would land on quarter and could be reported on the quarter/semester report card, it would be a more consistent message to parents that all reporting for 6th grade ACES courses are done via the student assignment report.*

*From Barb Jacobson:*

*The Middle School Committee spent much time and effort to develop a middle school program that reflected current research and best practice. One of the tenants of an excellent middle school program is to provide students with an opportunity to experience a variety of subjects in order to help them define their interests. The committee felt it was important for 6th and 7th graders to have several experiences in art, vocal music, family consumer science, industrial technology, informational technology and world language. In order to ensure that students had these experiences, the 6 and 12 week classes were developed. If we went to only quarter and semester opportunities, students would not get all of these experiences and teachers would not have the opportunity to work with students in their content area.*

**Group Comment/Concern, Health Services:** Many of the nurse members are not receiving building information from the FR. Many nurses did not get the Raising Cane's certificates. It appears there is a belief that as the health services FR we are getting this information to share, when it is supposed to happen at the building level. Because our mailbox is shared with all other health services employees, health technicians and treatment nurses are getting copies of some information and not the LEA nurse member in buildings where information is being put in mailboxes not specially addressed to the member.

***LEA:*** *A follow-up e-mail was sent to all nurse members. Nurses were asked to choose a building they wanted their information sent to. The nurses will have their mailings sent individually to each of them through school mail. The building FR will not need to give the nurses the LEA items any longer. Nurses were also encouraged to contact the LEA office directly to address any concern in a timely fashion.*

**DRAWING for ½ day of Guest Teaching:** Greg Widdick, Goodrich at Dawes

**ADJOURNMENT:** Jenni adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jan Olmstead*

Jan Olmstead  
Secretary-Treasurer