

FR Council

January 20, 2011

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

BUILDINGS NOT PRESENT: Belmont, Campbell, Elliott, Hill, Holmes, Humann, Kahoa, Lakeview, Lincoln Northeast, McPhee, Morley, Norwood Park, Park, Pershing, Riley, Rousseau, Saratoga, School, West Lincoln.

“EARLY BIRD” DRAWING: Becky Hoefling, Meadowlane Elementary, won a \$20 gift card to Misty’s.

CALL TO ORDER: President Jenni Absalon called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

CHECK IN/CELEBRATIONS: Faculty Representatives shared personal celebrations.

SPECIAL GUEST: Jerry Hoffman, Lobbyist, Nebraska State Education Association

Mr. Hoffman spoke to the FRs about NSEA’s four priority legislative issues:

1) State Aid to Education. Prioritize funding for P-16 education. NSEA is hopeful for a freeze of state aid at the current \$950M, which can be achieved with \$891M in state funds and \$59M in federal Education Jobs funds. Governor Heineman proposed in his budget \$810M in state funds which is a cut of \$140M from this year. This cut of \$140M corresponds to 2,000 school employees.

2) Preserve the Integrity of the Commission of Industrial Relations. NSEA believes it is important to maintain the fair, effective, and reasonable dispute resolution system that has been in place over the last 40 years.

3) Retirement. The current defined benefit retirement plan is less expensive to manage and provides better investment returns than defined contribution plans. NSEA would like to preserve the current plan.

4) Tuition Reimbursement Program (Enhancing Excellence in Teaching). NSEA would like to see 1.5M in this program, which is an increase of 0.5M. This would allow more teachers to participate and earn Master’s Degrees in shortage areas and improve their teaching skills.

Mr. Hoffman emphasized that it is time for everyone to get engaged and not sit on the sidelines. Jerry shared numerous ways that members can become involved in the legislative process including: cyber lobbying, receiving text alerts, and writing directly to state senators. Karen Kilgarin and Brian Mikkelsen, NSEA staff, are willing to meet with members and senators at local contact team meetings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The December 16, 2010, FR Council minutes were approved as printed.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Jan Olmstead

The financial report for December was approved as presented.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

President’s Update—Jenni Absalon

Jenni presented FRs with information of the Lincoln showing of *Waiting for Superman* that is opening on February 11, 2011, at UNL’s Mary Riepma Ross Theatre, 313 North 13 Street. A panel discussion will be held at 2:30 P.M. following the conclusion of the 12:40 P.M. showing on Sunday, February 13th.

- Member Relations

- District Update—Jenni informed FRs about issues on which LEA staff and LPSDO staff have been working.
- Appraisal—Teachers are currently being trained as trainers for the proposed appraisal system that will be utilized during the 2011/2012 school year. These trainers will be providing the 3.5 hours of staff development to all teachers this fall.

Linda Freye has been appointed to the Educator Standards Drafting Committee at its meeting on January 7, 2011. Linda will be working with other teachers and administrators to create a draft of teacher and principal standards.

- Class size—FRs were asked to visit with their school board members on class size and the effect it has on instruction.
- Membership— LEA membership is down about 40 members from last year, 23 of those are full time active members. LEA is considering a possible membership drive.

- Communications

- Maddie Fennell of Omaha was appointed to the NEA Commission of Effective Teachers. Jenni announced that there will be a survey in the LEARN this Friday regarding Teacher Effectiveness and she encouraged members to complete the survey.
- 2011 Elections— FRs were given a preliminary slate for the general election. Jenni thanked those who had already entered their names and encouraged others to run for positions. The filing deadline is 4:30 P.M. on February 14th. LEA will take nominations from the floor of the February 17th FR Council. Jenni encouraged members to think about running for some of the Capitol District and NSEA positions.

- Community

- LEAF—FRs were given information on the Barbara Buckingham Patronsky Scholarship, the Christa McAuliffe Scholarship, the Certificated Professional Grant, and Catastrophic Assistance Grant and were asked to post it in buildings and to encourage members to apply.
- LPS Strategic Plan—Dr. Bess Scott will present at the February FR Council meeting. There are different meetings scheduled for input from the staff and community and members are encouraged to attend.
- NSEA Children’s Fund—Jenni reminded FRs that this fund is really hurting and NSEA would appreciate any donations.

“The Rights Stuff” — Dan Studer, LEA UniServ Director

Dan presented FRs with information on Pre-Arranged Leave before and after a break. LEA staff met with LPSDO staff on this issue. The district expects that if a person knows far enough in advance that they will be gone a day before or after a break, that they need to pre-arrange that leave. Teachers never have to pre-arrange sick leave.

Dan also reminded Special Education Teachers that they must be certain to follow timelines for IEP completion.

DRAWINGS: Sherry Paden, Prescott Elementary won a \$20 gift card to Misty’s. Jan Enstrom, Randolph Elementary won a \$25 gift card to HyVee (compliments of Candance Specht and Bryan Nieman of Horace Mann Insurance).

Grab Bags were won by Cheryl McMurtry, Roper Elementary; Cindy Swanson, Pound Middle School; Jan Olmstead, Lefler Middle School; PJ Nelsen, Meadowlane Elementary; and Deb Coyle, Sheridan Elementary.

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

Jim updated the FRs on the following bills of interest that have been introduced in the first few days of the Nebraska Legislature:

- 1) LB 12 Senator Heidemann—Cyberbullying bill. The major concern is how and to what extent should the law cover such activity.
- 2) LB 148 Senator Avery—this bill deals with lobbyists hired by entities that are supported by taxpayer dollars.
- 3) LB 235 and 236 Senator Adams—both of these bills deal with how state aid may look at the end of the year. LB 235 is more optimistic than LB 236. One change may be that the State Dept. of Education may need to

certify on or before July 1 instead of the current deadline of February 1. This will have an effect of the April 15th deadline for districts to notify their employees regarding reductions in force.

4) LB 439 and 440 Senator Heideman—both of these bills propose changes to the state aid formula.

5) LB 463 Senator Ashford—this bill deals with truancy issues in the schools.

Other bills to watch:

6) LB 516 Senator Christensen—this bill would allow administrators and teachers to carry concealed handguns to school.

7) LB 616 Senator Harr—this bill would authorize security personnel to carry hand guns.

8) LB 564 Senator Fulton—this bill would change some provisions to the CIR.

9) LB 664 Senator Nelson—this bill would not allow any collective bargaining what so ever as well as no work stoppages (strikes).

Also introduced was a Constitutional Amendment that would prohibit all collective bargaining. If this advances, it would become a ballot issue.

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Individual Concern/Comment, Calvert Elementary:

A member's student teacher waited 6 months to be approved as a substitute. Do all applicants have to wait this long? If so, why?

Response from District: Cases differ, it may be because of references, or other issues. If there are questions in the process, have them call in and check on their status with Linda or Darbi (in Human Resources).

DRAWING for ½ day of Guest Teaching: Doreen Ainslee, Mickle Middle School

ADJOURNMENT: Jenni adjourned the meeting at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Olmstead

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Secretary-Treasurer