

Lincoln Education Association
<http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org>

Approved

FR Council

December 15, 2011

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

BUILDINGS NOT PRESENT: Brownell, Dawes, Hill, Lakeview, Lincoln Northeast, Lux, Morley, Norwood Park, Pyrtle, Saratoga, Schoo, and Zeman.

“EARLY BIRD” DRAWING: Carol Lefeber, Lincoln High School, won a \$25 gift card to Applebee’s, compliments of Candance Specht, Horace Mann Insurance. Deb Rasmussen, Goodrich Middle School, won a \$20 gift card to Indigo Books, compliments of First Nebraska Educators Credit Union.

CALL TO ORDER: President Jenni Absalon called the meeting to order at 4:18 p.m.

CHECK IN/CELEBRATIONS: Jenni announced that LEA was awarded a \$5,000 grant at the National Council of Urban Education Association (NCUEA) conference.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The November 17, 2011, FR Council minutes were approved as printed.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR OCTOBER: Jan Olmstead
The financial report for November was accepted as presented.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

- President’s Report
A copy of the President’s calendar for November/December was given to Faculty Representatives.
- Association Update—Jenni Absalon
 - Member Relations
 - Leave—The LEA staff have been working closely with LPSDO regarding the use of leave before and after a break in the school calendar.
 - LEA Elections—FR’s were given an LEA Election packet and one to post in buildings. The filing deadline for the LEA Elections is February 13 and the filing deadline for the NSEA Election is February 19. Members can file electronically on the LEA website starting January 9.
 - Harvest of Books Logo Contest—the committee met and decided to update the Harvest of Books logo. Jenni announced that the specifics on this contest will be in the LEARN.
 - Grants—Jenni demonstrated how to maneuver through the LEA website and how to find NEA grants and benefits.
 - Member Benefits—PJ’s Baby Cakes has become a new discount provider with LEA.

DRAWING: Numerous gifts from PJ’s BabyCakes were won by Paula Buckner, Scott Middle School; Julia Doerr, Lincoln High School; Becky Hoefling, Meadowlane Elementary School; Lori Waters, Irving Middle School; and Jan Enstrom, Randolph Elementary School. Super Saver coupon books were won by David Williams, Lincoln Southeast School and Denice Hein, Culler Middle School.

- Membership—Jenni announced that LEA gained 8 new members in the last few weeks.
 - Organizing—Jenni shared the NEA Message talking points with FR’s. Cluster Groups will meet at the January FR Council to discuss LEA’s Message.

- Communication
 - First Semester Survey—Over 900 members have completed the survey. Jenni asked FR’s to remind their members to complete the survey.
 - Negotiations Survey—The survey will be sent soon. It is very important that all members take the time to complete this information because it is very useful to the negotiations team.
 - Publications—Jenni reminded FR’s that links to all LEA publications are on the LEA website.
 - Social Media—Jenni has started a Facebook group site for LEA members.
- Community
 - Read Across America—This year in addition to the Cat in the Hat, NEA will be using the Lorax for their Read Across America campaign.
 - Elections—Jenni reminded FR’s that when NEA/NSEA/LEA recommends a candidate for a position it is based on those candidates’ positions on educational issues. Education Votes is an information only site for members. Jenni urged members who live in Senator Haar’s district to contact her to help with his campaign.

“THE RIGHT STUFF” – Dan Studer, LEA UniServ Director

Dan presented information on teaching endorsements, mainly stating that LPSDO is not responsible for reminding staff that their teaching certificate is about to expire. LPSDO Board policy states that the “scent of alcohol on your breath” at work or a school related function is grounds for termination. Dan advised FRs on what to do if they are accused of this. Dan also stressed the importance of following LPS procedures on student assessment.

DRAWINGS: The following FR names were drawn for a Super Saver coupon book: Resa Wiltse, Meadowlane Elementary School; Liz Wysong-Hoffart, Kahoa Elementary School; John Heineman, Lincoln High School; Jules Spickelmier, Everett Elementary School; Kathy Mueller, Clinton Elementary School; Jan Kaiser, Park Middle School; Viphanee Thongdee, Elliott Elementary School; Bobbi Rezac, Calvert Elementary School; Linda Freye, Maxey Elementary School; Kathy Christiansen, TLC; Traci Pettit, Kahoa Elementary School and Sara McMahan, Calvert Elementary School. A \$20 gift card to Indigo Books was won by Diane Lamb, Prescott Elementary School.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT—Jim Rea, LEA Executive Director

Jim discussed the following with the FR’s:

Karen Heafer, Hartley Elementary, described how their members used the \$200 gift cards for their students. In addition, Jim reported on the current legislative races: District # 29, which is an open seat, currently has 3 announced candidates. Filing deadline is March 1 and the primary is May 15. Candidates to date are: Kate Bolz, Susan Scott, and Larry Zimmerman. Senator Ben Nelson has not yet announced if he will run for reelection in 2012. Jim also reported on attending the Urban Executive Directors meeting in earlier in December. He also met with the LEA investment advisor on the status of the LEA portfolio.

DRAWING: The following names were drawn for poinsettias that were given away: Krystina Luther, Bryan School; Dianne Smith, Health Services; Chris Martin, Campbell Elementary School; Jan Olmstead, Lefler Middle School; Matt Erb, Kooser Elementary School; and Cheryl McMurtry, Roper Elementary School.

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FROM JENNI ABSALON, LEA PRESIDENT:

Each month I send the FR questions to the District to answer. I do not edit the responses. I sometimes add more to the answer. This month several of the answers are “work with your building administrator”. LEA knows members do work with their building administrators all the time to find answers and solutions. We also know there can also be issues regarding the outcome.

Very specific data and documentation needs to be kept regarding situations. The more details the better solutions we can develop. The same is true for building administration. Conversations, plans, data, documentation, and feedback must be kept showing your effort to work toward a solution and the response you were given. Share precise and detailed summaries of meetings and conversations. If the person, team or administration does not agree with the summary they should share their concerns. Please contact the LEA office with specific situations. We are willing to work with any member to advise and relay contract, policy and past practice regarding the situations.

Group Concern/Comment, West Lincoln Elementary School

Teacher concerned about leave time deducted from holiday break during maternity time off.

RESPONSE FROM LEA:

Specific member concerns should call the LEA office for assistance. Emailing Jim or Dan is also best for specific situations.

Building Concern/Comment, Belmont Elementary School

Staff at elementary building with LPS assignments at the other buildings, (i.e. coaches) are getting mixed messages. Principal at one building says, “You must be here or else for all meetings.” The principal at the other building allow the same types of commitments to miss meetings. Assignments are a commitment and a job. Can we get some consistency of policy across the district? Meanwhile, what should individuals be saying to their primary school principal to be sure the message gets across that if coaches can’t leave, kids can’t play?

Response from District:

The rules for all coaches and sponsors of extra-standard activities and athletics regardless of their building assignment are below.

Mandatory staff meetings and PLC meetings: Coaches and sponsors of extra-standard activities and athletics must attend unless they are involved in a competition (not a practice). If they miss a mandatory staff meeting or a PLC meeting due to a competition, the coach or sponsor is responsible for securing the information discussed at the meeting and completing all activities missed.

Parent-teacher conferences: Principals may release coaches and sponsors of extra-standard activities and athletics to hold practices during scheduled parent-teacher conference time as long as the coaches and sponsors are available to parents for at least 50% of the scheduled time for parent-teacher conferences either before or after their practice. Coaches or sponsors may be released from more than 50% of the conference time for competitions. If a coach or sponsor misses time from parent-teacher conferences due to a practice or a competition, the coach or sponsor must make up the missed conference time communicating with parents or other parent-teacher conference duties during non-contractual time and document the time made up to the principal.

Group Concern/Comment, Scott Middle School

Teachers are concerned about dealing with BIST procedures/protocol. The District BIST representative states BIST works for 95% of the student population. There is a percentage for whom BIST does not work. There are students who present a danger to themselves and others. Protocol states that you call the office to get this student some help. At times, the help comes 10 to 15 minutes later, which requires a code red for your classroom in that you move your classroom to a safe place. Other times when the help comes, the student refuses to leave with the administrator and the administrator stays in the classroom with the student who continues the same behavior which continues to disrupt the classroom. For these students who present a danger to themselves and others, what alternatives are available so that all students and staff have a safe environment for learning and teaching?

Response from District:

Teachers must confer with their building administrators when they believe the BIST system is not adequately addressing behavior issues of a particular student.

RESPONSE FROM LEA:

We are hearing more and more concerns about severe behavior in buildings and we KNOW members are working with their building administrators and seeking help from LEA. Behavior management was part of the first semester survey. We will be sharing those results with the District. Please read Dan's "The Right Stuff" on the LEA website addressing behavior concerns and policy regarding the District's policies.

Please get together with others in your building and bring concerns to your administrators. Document all behaviors, discussions with BIST facilitators and administrators. Request district level assistance with severe behaviors. Members must be willing to contribute to building plans and stand up for the integrity of the classroom. Contact LEA with specific concerns.

Group Concern/Comment, Park Middle School

1. Is a Title 1 Coordinator, whose job description is not an administrator, able to do teacher observations and appraisals?

Coordinators can be appraisers only if they have an Administrative Certificate. The NDE website has information regarding all certifications. Anyone can access that information.

2. Can a Title 1 Coordinator, who does not have a Special Education endorsement, be able to suspend Special Education students?

Yes.

Building Concern/Comments, Lefler Middle School

Members have submitted emails to Dr. Biggs requesting permission for leave. In one instance, a member was requesting leave to attend a conference and Dr. Biggs did not respond until after the conference had already occurred. In another instance, the member did not receive a reply at all.

RESPONSE FROM LEA:

Concerns regarding leave and the procedure regarding prearranging have been the topic of ongoing meetings with the District leadership. LEA has conveyed member's concerns and timeliness. An email was sent to all staff regarding the change in procedures when requesting leave. LEA continues to discuss solutions and the contract language will be discussed in Negotiations.

Group Concern/Comment, Humann Elementary School

1. Guidelines were sent out regarding leave before and after break. For some teachers these guidelines apply and for others they do not. Some are approved for vacations, others not. *See answer above.*
2. Crosswalk—Issues with traffic not responding to crosswalks. We were walking into street and stopping traffic for children to cross. I consulted regarding policy that says not to go into street. Now being told to stand on corner and tell students to go without being able to see. How do other schools handle this?

Response from District:

LPS employees are not allowed to stop or direct traffic on a public street. Staff may walk with the students across the street or remain on the sidewalk and monitor the students from the sidewalk. As this is an assigned duty, the teachers are covered by district insurance as they would be when completing other assigned duties.

If problems develop due to drivers not properly yielding to pedestrians, staff should notify the building principal. Depending upon the nature of the issue, the principal may contact the police.

Group Concern/Comment, Goodrich Middle School

1. Grading—Per Liaison meeting (Language Arts 6th grade) they want Language Arts Theme 3 grades posted by January 6th at “end of day”. Is this feasible given grades are due January 10th @ 4:00 pm?

Response from District:

The district reading office does not establish a date that Reading Theme Tests should be posted. The requirement is that they are posted. There is a pacing guide that indicates when a theme should be finished and the next theme started. The pacing guide indicates that Reading Theme 3 should be done by the end of the first semester. Buildings may establish a time when theme tests should be posted but this is not a district requirement.

2. Sub Coverage—When a Special Ed/Resource Teacher is gone the Regular Ed teacher can opt out of having a sub and get the pay that would have gone to a substitute. Can Special Education teachers do the same if Regular Education teacher is going to be gone, either by period or day?

Response from District:

The Professional Agreement (Section 5-9) addresses class combining in the absence of a substitute. Class combining should be done only when a substitute is not available or for a short-term absence during a day.

When teachers are co-teaching a class and one of the teachers is absent, the remaining teacher may be compensated as outlined in the Agreement. If a special education teacher is scheduled to co-teach with another teacher for the full period but is absent and a substitute teacher is not available, the remaining teacher may be compensated. If the classroom teacher is absent and a substitute teacher is not available, making the special education teacher responsible for the entire classroom, the special education teacher may be compensated.

Other Questions:

Elementary school has a monthly Kid Talk, monthly PLC team meeting (in addition to the District PLC hour) and team weekly meetings. The Resource teacher must find time to meet with the team or teachers of students on their caseload during that team’s plan time or before or after school. What is a reasonable meeting expectation SpEd teachers who have several grades to cover?

Response from District:

*Special Education teachers, as all other teachers within the district, have multiple meeting expectations. If a resource teacher believes he/she has an extraordinary number of meetings to attend, he/she should contact the building administration first to remedy the situation. If questions persist, the staff member may contact the Special Education Department. Written guidance for related issues is found in within the **Procom Best Practices in Special Education** document (<http://www.lps.org/hr/procom/>).*

Prescott Elementary: Handicapped parking is the same as the bus turn around, so staff members and parents are asked to move. Is there a better solution? Is the District or City responsible?

Response from District:

This issue should be discussed with the building principal. The building principal may call upon the Maintenance Department to discuss possible solutions.

DRAWING for ½ day of Guest Teaching: Tammy Schafer, Holmes Elementary School.

ADJOURNMENT: Jenni adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Olmstead

Secretary-Treasurer