

The Educators'



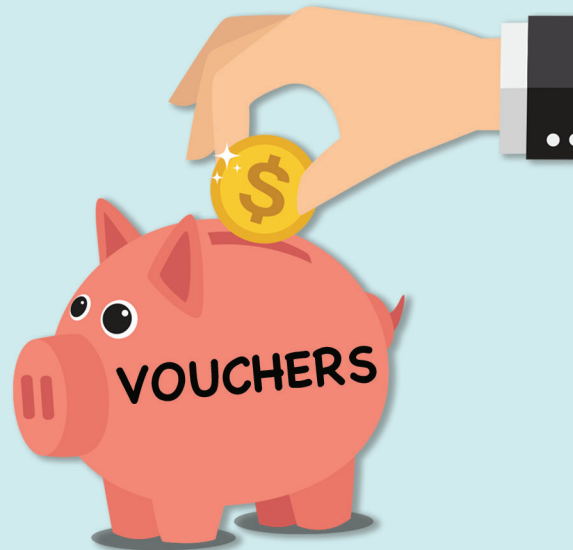
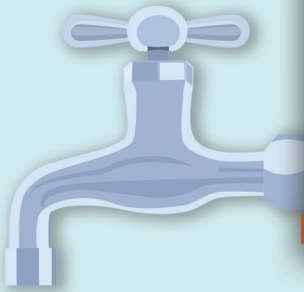
ADVOCATE

JAN/FEB 2025

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South Dakota Legislative Preview

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NEA Member^{*} Exclusive

A trusted and valuable benefit

As an NEA member, did you know you receive \$1,000 of term life insurance at **no cost** to you? You're already enrolled in the NEA[®] Complimentary Life Insurance Plan, but it's a good time to make sure you've selected a beneficiary.

When you do, you can have some peace of mind that your loved ones will receive their benefit in a time of need. This unique benefit helps ensure educators like you have additional coverage beyond what may be provided through your district. It's just one of the many ways your union membership works hard for you.

**Scan the code or go to
neamb.com/mycomp for a
quick and easy path to update
your beneficiary information.**



*Must maintain NEA membership. This coverage is offered to Active, Reserve and Staff members, as well as to Life and Retired members who are actively employed in education.

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Vision

We envision valued education professionals providing quality public education for all students.

Mission

South Dakota Education Association ensures the collective voice for South Dakota public education professionals.



President's Corner

Now More Than Ever, We Need Your Voice

The attacks on public education are real and growing. Governor Noem's \$4 million proposal may seem small, but over time, it will siphon money away from our public schools, devastating small rural schools. This is not just a fight for SDEA; we are united with the school boards, school administrators, and parents. This is an all-hands-on-deck situation.

School vouchers are a direct threat to the integrity and funding of our public education system. Voucher programs divert public dollars to private schools that are not accountable to taxpayers. Unlike public schools, private institutions can select their students and are not required to adhere to the same standards of transparency and accountability. This undermines the very foundation of equitable education that public schools strive to provide.

Our public schools educate all students, no matter who they are or where they come from. Over 85 percent of South Dakota's students attend our public schools. These institutions are the backbone of our communities, especially in small rural areas where alternatives are limited. If we allow voucher programs to drain resources from public schools, we risk devastating these communities and the futures of the children who live there.

We need your voice now more than ever. Here are three critical actions you can take to help protect public schools:

Stay Informed: Sign up for the Lobby Line e-newsletter to receive the latest news and action alerts from Pierre. Staying informed is the first step in making a difference.

Knowledge is power, and by keeping up to date with the latest developments, you can be ready to act when it matters most.

Engage Locally: Talk to your colleagues and administrators. What can you do together to make your voice heard? Perhaps your local association can host a letter-writing party or a forum. Create local activities to bring attention to this issue. We must all work together to amplify our message. When communities come together, our collective voice becomes too powerful to ignore.

Contact Your Legislators: You can send an email to them while they are in Pierre or find them at a local coffee or cracker barrel. Legislators need to hear from their constituents about the importance of fully funding public education. Personal stories and direct communication can have a significant impact on their decisions. Finally, consider attending SDEA's Lobby Day. Your presence in Pierre will show our legislators that we are united and determined to protect our public schools.

Our public schools are a vital part of our society, providing education and opportunities to all children. They deserve our full support and the necessary resources to continue their essential work. Use your educator voice this session. We need it now more than ever.

Loren Paul
SDEA President

605-224-9263
loren.paul@sdea.org



A Word from Our **NEA Director**



Meet SDEA's New NEA Director – Kelsey Lovseth

Kelsey is a High School Social Studies Teacher in Brookings. She recently took time out of the classroom to participate in a SDEA/NEA Fellowship which focused on using the voices of educators to shape public policy. Check out future Educators' Advocates for Kelsey's updates on the work the Association is doing at the state and national level!

The Top 10 Compelling Reasons to Serve as a Delegate to the 2025 NEA Representative Assembly

10 - Explore the Vibrant City of Roses: Portland, OR

Join us from July 2 to July 6, 2025, in Portland, known for its unique charm and welcoming atmosphere.

9 - Represent South Dakota Proudly

Secure one of the 13 critical seats available for the South Dakota Delegation, showcasing our state's voice on a national platform.

8 - Enjoy Fully Funded Positions

The South Dakota Education Association (SDEA) ensures all state delegate positions are fully funded, allowing you to participate without financial worries.

7 - Be Part of a Historic Assembly

Join the ranks of the world's largest democratic deliberative assembly, where your input truly matters.

6 - Shape Our Future

The Representative Assembly (RA) drives key decisions by adopting the strategic plan, budget, resolutions, and the Legislative Program for the entire Association.

5 - Propose New Ideas

As a delegate, you have the exciting opportunity to submit New Business Items that could influence policy and direction.

4 - Experience Portland's Quirkiness

Immerse yourself in the eclectic culture of

Portland, where creative ideas flourish and the motto "Keep Portland Weird" rings true.

3 - Forge Lasting Connections

Build enduring friendships with fellow South Dakota delegates who share your passion for education and advocacy.

2 - Feel a Genuine Sense of Belonging

Join approximately 6,000 educators from diverse backgrounds, all coming together to represent the interests of the education profession.

1 - Be the Voice for Public Education

Take an active role in shaping the policies of the National Education Association and champion the future of public education

Important Information

Candidate declarations are due by **January 15, 2025**. There are 13 seats open for the 2025 NEA RA Delegate election: Western: Two delegates, Plains: One delegate, EGL: One delegate, Eastern Prairie: Two delegates, SEE: One delegate, One Minority At-Large delegate (open to all active members and represents SDEA's ethnic minority members), Five At-Large delegates **Note:** Include a 50-word statement explaining why you're running for NEA RA. For more details, contact SDEA President Loren Paul at Loren.Paul@sdea.org or SDEA Board of Directors Election Staff Liaison Brooke Quinlivan at Brooke.Quinlivan@sdea.org.

Preview of the Upcoming South Dakota Legislative Session

As we approach South Dakota’s 100th Legislative Session, we must be aware of the significant challenges and potential changes for public education. Governor Noem’s budget proposal, her last before transitioning to her new role as National Director for Homeland Security, includes several concerns for public schools.



Education Savings Accounts: A Voucher Scheme in Disguise

One of the most alarming aspects of the Governor’s budget is the proposal to divert \$4 million to “education

Arizona: Started a similar program in 2022 with a price tag of \$65 million. The program is estimated to cost \$429 million in just a few short years and is responsible for two-thirds of the state’s \$1.4 billion budget deficit for the combined 2024 and 2025 fiscal years.

Iowa: Hastily passed a voucher program in the opening weeks of its 2023 legislative session and is now facing a \$200 million budget deficit. More private schools are opening, mostly in urban areas such as Des Moines, while small rural schools are closing.

These are not isolated incidents but rather a pattern we must learn from.

The Impact on South Dakota’s Schools and Communities

If South Dakota follows this path, we can expect similar outcomes. Less money will be available for public schools, forcing local school boards to make the unpopular choice of cutting staff and increasing class sizes. Fine arts programs, career and technical education programs, and other essential services will be at risk. Rural communities will be hit the hardest, with schools facing devastating cuts or closure.

Funding Discrimination

Funding vouchers means using taxpayer dollars to fund discrimination. Private

savings accounts,” which are vouchers. These vouchers divert public dollars to private schools and alternative education programs that are not accountable to taxpayers. This move threatens the financial stability of our public schools, which serve over 85% of South Dakota’s students.

The Reality of “School Choice”

While some may argue that this is about “school choice,” the reality is that voucher programs force future legislatures and local communities to make hard choices. Numerous states have started these voucher schemes, and all have devastated state budgets. For example:

schools are not obligated to serve all students. They can deny admission, enrollment, and educational services, including students with disabilities.

Investing in Public Schools

Investing directly in public schools is the best way to strengthen them and ensure a high-quality education for all students. SDEA urges lawmakers to prioritize funding for public education, as their decisions will shape the future of education in South Dakota.

A Lean Budget with Minimal Increases

Due to lagging state sales tax revenues, the Governor has outlined a lean budget that includes only a small increase of 1.25% for state aid to education. More than this minimal increase is needed to meet the growing needs of our schools and students. The good news is this is just the starting point. We must urge lawmakers to find the money to give schools an inflationary increase of 2.9 percent.

Hidden Cuts to Essential Programs

Massive cuts to the State Library and South Dakota Public Broadcasting are buried within the budget details. These drastic cuts will likely lead to the end of both programs, which provide essential educational services to rural schools and communities. The loss of these resources will profoundly impact students and educators across the state. The Governor also proposed cuts to the dual credit and state mentoring

programs and eliminated the National Board Certification stipends.

Get Involved

SDEA is working in coalition with school administrators, school boards, and other community groups to fight against these voucher schemes. Here are three ways to get involved:

Sign Up for Lobby Line: Stay informed and receive the latest updates and action alerts.

Contact Your Legislators: Urge them to reject voucher plans diverting tax dollars away from public schools. Keep emailing them throughout the session.

Work with Fellow Educators: Develop a local plan to educate parents and community members about how vouchers could affect local school districts. Host postcard—writing parties or forums with legislators.

Finally, consider coming to Pierre. SDEA is hosting our Lobby Day on February 24, but we also encourage educators who can't make it on that date to go during another week of the legislative session.

Together, we can ensure that our public schools receive the support and funding they need to provide quality education for all South Dakota students.

LOBBY LINE: The Latest News from the State Capitol



Make sure you stay in the know by signing up for Lobby Line.
<https://bit.ly/3Uklull>



Answering Questions About Your Union

The Benefits of Collective Bargaining

It's that time of the year – bargaining season. Local associations across the state are getting ready to go to the table for negotiations. This is a good time to remember why using the collective voice through the bargaining process is so important to educators.



SDEA/NEA members negotiate for more than their own economic security through collective bargaining. They are also securing vital resources to help communities bring in more public resources to improve education. On average, union members earn higher pay, have better health and pension benefits, and have improved working conditions.

The benefits of unionization are crucial to those who choose to work in education. Through collective bargaining, SDEA/NEA members advocate for more than their own economic security. Union members tend to be more engaged in civic involvement and fight to secure vital public resources to adequately fund public schools. In good or bad economic times, a collaborative public education employer can better serve students and the community by negotiating

in good faith with its union(s).

Working with a broad group of stakeholders, including parents and other community partners during the negotiations process, SDEA/NEA locals develop proposals to secure critical resources for students and ensure that all students have the support they need, no matter where they live.

Bargaining improves student learning and teacher working conditions.

Educators' working conditions are students' learning conditions. By addressing school and classroom issues, everyone wins. In negotiations, educators and their employers collaborate on student-centered issues such as setting limits on class size, identifying time for teachers and paraeducators to share effective classroom practices, addressing school health and safety issues, and ensuring teacher input into their own professional learning—all of which help students thrive.

Collective bargaining helps attract and retain the highest quality employees.

The educator shortage was a crisis well before the pandemic, but the pandemic has made it worse.

Experts like the Learning Policy Institute and the Economic Policy Institute note that low pay, poor working conditions, and lack of support for new teachers all play a role in exacerbating the educator shortage. SDEA/NEA locals, working with school districts and harnessing their members' input, win for higher pay and improved and

safe working conditions, as well as strong mentoring and induction programs for their members.

To read more about the benefits of collective bargaining, click here:



Don't Forget to Sign Up for SDEA Lobby Day 2025!



Mark your calendars for Monday, February 24, 2025! Join us for an exciting and informative trip to South Dakota's State Capitol in Pierre. This is your chance to network with fellow Association members, engage with your elected officials, and gain insights from committee discussions and the afternoon session.

But that's not all! We're also gearing up to fight against school vouchers and advocate for our students and public education. Your voice matters: this is the perfect opportunity to make it heard.

Here's a sneak peek at what to expect:



- **Sunday Evening:** Meet with our SDEA Lobby Team.
- **Monday Morning:** Head to the Capitol bright and early for a day full of impactful activities.

SDEA will cover your hotel costs! About a week before the event, you'll receive a detailed agenda and hotel information.



Sign Up for Lobby Day TODAY!

<https://bit.ly/4eSZiPu>

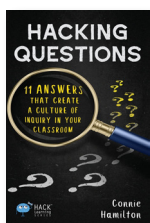
SDEA BRIDGE
Bringing Resources, Innovation,
Development & Guidance to Educators

Register on Bridge
<https://bit.ly/3Pnntdh>

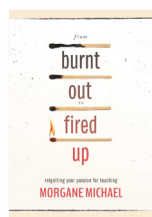
SDEA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Lisa Weier
Teaching and Learning Coordinator
Lisa.Weier@sdea.org

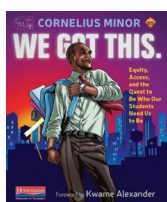
Book Studies (free for members and \$50 for non-members)
Earn 15 continuing education contact hours for free or one graduate credit from Augustana University for an additional \$50.



Jan. 6 – Feb. 14
Hacking Questions
11 Answers That Create a Culture of Inquiry in Your Classroom
by Connie Hamilton



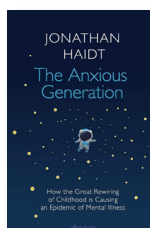
Apr. 7 – May 16
From Burnt Out to Fired Up
Reigniting Your Passion for Teaching
by Morgane Michael



Feb. 3 – Mar. 14
We Got This.
Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be
by Cornelius Minor



Jan. 6 – May 16
Podcast PD
Create your own learning! We picked the podcast series, but you pick the episodes.



Mar. 3 – May 16
The Anxious Generation
How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness
by Jonathan Haidt
This book study is worth 2 graduate credits or 30 CECH)

January 13 – May 2
Cooperating Teacher Experience
(Spring, '25)
This course initiates the purpose and direction of student-teacher relations to fully conceptualize teaching and learning in this context. Fundamental understanding of building relationships, communication practices, student teacher needs, strategies and planning for collaborative efforts, and recognition of professional teaching attributes will form the core of this course.

Those whose student teachers have split placements (fine arts, SPED, etc.) may also register for this course; there is a condensed course schedule recommended for split placements.

***This is a dual-enrollment course. You**

must also be enrolled through USD:

EDFN 592 UE1 28707
Cooperating Teacher Experience

You must register with both USD and SDEA by January 21, 2025

Where Does SDEA Stand on Closing the U.S. Department of Education?

“The U.S. Department of Education plays a crucial role in protecting our most vulnerable children, ensuring they receive the quality education they deserve. Programs such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) are designed to support low-income and disabled children and are vital to their success and well-being. Transferring these programs to other departments would expose these children to bureaucracies where their specific needs are not the primary focus, leaving them vulnerable and underserved.

Now, more than ever, we must uphold the support systems that Congress has established to meet the needs of our most

vulnerable students. We must continue to maintain and strengthen the mission of the U.S. Department of Education to protect and advocate for these children, ensuring they have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for their educational success.

The SDEA stands firm in its unwavering commitment to advocate for the rights and education of all students, particularly those who are most at risk. We urge our lawmakers to consider this legislation’s profound impact on our children and prioritize their well-being above all else.”

— **Loren Paul**, SDEA President



DON'T WORRY

Even though the subscription fee is now \$275, it is still a HUGE discount for SDEA members!
Up to 9 grad credits for \$275 >>> virtualeduc.com/sdea





2025 Bargaining Workshops

Statewide Bargaining Workshops:

(The following workshops are available to all members.)

Jan. 11 | **SEE**

10:00–3:00pm CST
BankWest - North
1920 N Sanborn Blvd,
Mitchell, SD
in the conference room

Jan. 25 | **Plains**

10:30–4:00pm CST
SDEA Headquarters

Feb. 1 | **SEE**

10:00–3:00pm CST
Yankton Community
Library

Feb. 15 | **Western**

9:00–3:00pm MT
Western Dakota Tech
Rapid City, SD

Eastern Prairie

Contact
Steve Binkley
Steve.Binkley@sdea.org

EGL

Contact
LouAnn Jensen
LouAnn.Jensen@sdea.org

Please contact your UD if you want your local to host a bargaining workshop specific to your group's needs.

Workshop Registration:

<https://bit.ly/3CZgJ2L>

Registration is open to SDEA members only.



Contact a UniServ Director today! 605-224-9263

Shannon Maxon

Western UniServ Director
Shannon.Maxon@sdea.org

Sandy Arseneault

Plains UniServ Director
Sandy.Arseneault@sdea.org

Rich Mittelstedt

SEE UniServ Director
Richard.Mittelstedt@sdea.org

LouAnn Jensen

EGL UniServ Director
LouAnn.Jensen@sdea.org

Steve Binkley

Eastern Prairie UniServ Director
Steve.Binkley@sdea.org



Keynote Speaker | **Jennifer Berkshire**



I’ve been writing, podcasting and opining about the intersection of education and politics for more than a decade now. (Though some of

my loved ones will insist that it has been much longer!) My interest in the politics of education began when I took a part time job editing the statewide newspaper for AFT Massachusetts. I went on to start a humorous blog chronicling the follies of the education reform movement. Along the way, that morphed into something more serious, and my strong opinions have now appeared in the New York Times, the Nation, the New Republic, the Baffler, and

many other publications. I’ve also managed to produce three books: More Worlds to Negotiate, about former Secretary of Labor John Dunlop; A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door and The Education Wars, both of which I wrote with education historian Jack Schneider.

These days I divide my time between podcasting, writing, and teaching in the Education Studies program at Yale and at a medium security prison in Massachusetts through the Boston College Prison Education Program. I’m also fortunate enough to get to travel around the country talking to groups about the threats to public education and how they fit into our broader political context. My specialty is a big picture talk that alternates between grim reality, whimsical humor, and plenty of inspiration. And when I’m not obsessing over public education, I’m enjoying life as a Midwestern transplant in Gloucester, Mass. Did you know that Gloucester is America’s oldest seaport?

Local Treasurer’s Training

- Responsibilities as an Association Officer
- Reporting Association Income and Expenses
- Important Tax Topics
- Membership Dues/Reconciliation
- ACH payment option

Contact Holly Frederick at holly.frederick@sdea.org and Lathie Under Baggage at lathie.underbaggage@sdea.org to set up your training date!

SDEA/NEA OPPORTUNITIES

GRANT, SCHOLARSHIPS, CAREER

SDEA/NEA
GORDON
HORGEN
SCHOLARSHIP

Gordon Horgen Memorial Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association/NEA is calling for applications for the Gordon Horgen Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to Native American students who are planning on entering the teaching profession. This scholarship was created by the 2014 Representative Assembly to honor the late Gordon Horgen from Winner.

Deadline: *February 15*

SDEA/NEA
RAMIA
BOERSMA
SCHOLARSHIP

Ramia Boersma Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association/NEA awards scholarships to outstanding students who are planning on entering the teaching profession. The Association may annually award up to three \$750 scholarships for each academic year.

Deadline: *February 15*

SDEA/NEA
EDUCATORS
RISING
SCHOLARSHIP

Educators Rising Scholarship

The South Dakota Education Association (SDEA) Board of Directors is thrilled to announce the creation of the **Educators Rising Scholarship**. This four-year scholarship is designed to invest in the future educators of South Dakota, providing vital support to high school seniors who are passionate about pursuing a career in education.

Deadline: *February 15*

SDEA/NEA
EDUCATIONAL
INNOVATION
GRANT

SDEA/NEA Educational Innovation Grant

The SDEA/NEA Educational Innovation Grant Program provides grants to members in support of innovative educational and student-oriented projects. The grant program funds new member-led projects. It does not fund projects on an on-going basis. The SDEA/NEA Educational Innovation Grants give preference to proposals that address student achievement, cultural diversity issues, include community partnerships, and can be duplicated by others.

Deadline: *May 1*

For more information on all grants and awards offered by SDEA, visit SDEA.org.



SDEA Members Only: Sign up and log into the new SDEA.org to access Members Only documents and information like the SDEA Board of Director minutes and Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program documents.



Retired RA in Pierre on April 4.

MARY JANE CHILES
13448 SIENNA MEADOWS LN
RAPID CITY, SD 57702
mjchiles3004@gmail.com

Welcome to 2025! I hope your new year is off to a good start. If you missed any of our retirement/pre-retirement seminars we will be doing a statewide virtual seminar on January 28. You can sign up by contacting:

**SDEA Retired Staff Liaison,
LouAnn Jensen at 605-220-1688
or LouAnn.Jensen@sdea.org.**

We lost several of our pro-public education advocates in the last election. Please attend your local cracker barrels, invite your local politicians to have coffee with you and your friends, and consider attending the SDEA Lobby Day on February 24. SDEA will cover the cost of a double hotel room for you and another member to attend.

Speaking of elections, SDEA-Retired will hold elections for the positions of President and Secretary in 2025. January 15 is the last day to notify us of your intention to run. Please contact Mary Jane Chiles by mail or email to inform us of your intent to run. Elections will be held at the

I would also like to remind anyone with a child or grandchild pursuing a teaching degree that SDEA awards three scholarships of up to \$750 to outstanding students planning on entering the teaching profession. Applications are available on the SDEA website, the application deadline is February 15. NEA-Retired also awards five Jack Kinneman scholarships of \$3,500 to college Sophomores, Juniors or Seniors who belong to Aspiring Educators. They are eligible to apply through NEA. Please direct them to our website if you know of anyone eligible to apply.

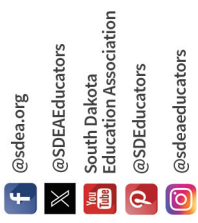
Mary Jane Chiles
SDEA Retired President

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

SDEA Retired Staff Liaison:
LouAnn Jensen | 605-220-1688
LouAnn.Jensen@sdea.org



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 sdea.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

January

- 11 SEE Bargaining Workshop
- 14 Start of Legislative Session
- 15 SDEA Bylaw proposals/Candidacy declarations due
- 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (SDEA offices closed)
- 21 SEE Unit meeting
- 25 Plains Unit meeting
- 25 Plains Bargaining Workshop
- 27 EGL Unit meeting
- 31-2/1 SDEA BOD meeting

February

- 31-2/1 SDEA BOD meeting
- 1 SEE Bargaining Workshop
- 15 Western Bargaining Workshop
- 15 Educators Rising Scholarship Workshop
- 15 Gordon Horgen Memorial Scholarship deadline
- 15 Ramia Boersma Scholarship deadline
- 15 SDEA Budget Committee deadline
- 24 SDEA Lobby Day

March

- 1 SDEA Budget Committee meeting
- 9 SDEA BOD meeting
- 11 Eastern Prairie Unit meeting
- 15 Plains Prairie Unit meeting
- 24 EGL Unit meeting
- 25 Western Unit meeting
- 27 SEE Unit meeting