



## NEWS RELEASE

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MARCH 14, 2024

### Nebraska Educators Rising Recognizes State Leaders and Award Winners

More than 350 youth members and adult sponsors from 30 chapters from across the state gathered for the annual Nebraska Educators Rising (EdRising) State Leadership Conference on March 5, 2024 in Fremont on the campus of Midland University. This conference provided students opportunities to engage in breakout sessions, participate in Competitive Events, network with education professionals and postsecondary education programs, be recognized for their work throughout the year, and elect the 2024-2025 State Officer Team. Members heard from keynote speaker and 2024 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, Scott Phillips. Phillips inspired members to pursue a rewarding career in education by sharing about his passion for building relationships with students and empowering them through their learning experiences.

The Opening General Session was kicked off by the 2023-2024 State Officer Team: Ubah Ali, President from South Sioux City; Grace Baker, Secretary from Scottsbluff; MaKenna Benson-Berger, Vice President of Membership from South Sioux City.

Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to attend various breakout sessions focusing on early literacy opportunities for youth, careers in education administration, opportunities in education and training through Career & Technical Education (CTE), and how to engage with students in the classroom. The Opportunity Fair featured nearly 20 colleges, organizations, and businesses for members to connect with. Students also had the opportunity to give back to the Fremont community by writing notes of encouragement for various populations. The Future Educator Career Collective also provided a new and unique opportunity for the high school student members to engage and network with school district leaders from across the state. District leaders were able to share about opportunities available pre-service teachers and young professionals in their district and encourage the future educators to continue their path to a career in education. Similarly, the aspiring educators were able to learn more about the leaders' journeys in education and learn more about multiple districts across Nebraska.

265 students participated in Competitive Events at the State Leadership Conference. Students who received 75% of the total points in the event and placed in the top ten at the state level qualified to compete at the national competition in Washington D.C. this June. Competitive Events have two levels of participation:

- JV – grades 9-10
- Varsity – grades 11-12

*Educators Rising is a student organization that helps ensure students interested in a career in education have the experience and skills they need to be ready for the classroom. Cultivating a new generation of highly skilled educators by guiding young people from high school through college and into their teaching careers. These aspiring educators reflect the demographics*

*of their communities and are passionate about serving those communities through public education. Nebraska Educators Rising has nearly 500 members in 40 chapters across the state. For more information about Educators Rising, please visit [www.edrisingneb.org](http://www.edrisingneb.org).*

*Nebraska Educators Rising is supported through the Nebraska Center for Student Leadership and Expanded Learning at the Nebraska Department of Education.*

### **The 2024-2025 Nebraska Educators Rising State Officers**

Emily Bennett, Bayard

Owen Elsasser, Ralston

Leah Hanson, Omaha Burke

Madison Sparks, Millard Education Academy

### **Nebraska Educators Rising Administrator of the Year**

Jane Luethge, Omaha Public Schools

### **Nebraska Educators Teacher Leader of the Year**

Andrea Burton, Omaha Burke

### **Nebraska Educators Rising Member of the Year**

Aspyn Andreas, Scottsbluff

### **Feed Nebraska Award Winner**

Wakefield

### **2024 Statewide Community Service Project: Book Drive**

South Sioux City

### **Community Literacy Impact Award**

Wakefield

**Education & Training Achievement Awards** recognize students in Education & Training courses who have been active members of Educators Rising for at least two (2) years. There are two levels of recognition for this award:

**Rising Concentrators** have successfully completed or are currently enrolled in the introductory courses in the Education & Training Program of Study. Students must have also been affiliated Educators Rising members for at least two (2) years.

- MaKenna Benson-Berger, South Sioux City
- Jacob Gill, South Sioux City
- Sophia Bouman, Omaha Burke
- Lea Hanson, Omaha Burke

**Concentrators** have successfully completed or are currently enrolled in both the intermediate and capstone courses in the

Education & Training Program of Study. Students must have also been affiliated Educators Rising members for at least two (2) years.

- Samantha Daza, Omaha South

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**Competitive Event Top 10 Finishers** are listed on the following pages. The entries marked with an asterisk (\*) have qualified to represent Nebraska at the National Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. in June.

#### **Interactive Bulletin Board – Elementary (JV)**

- \*1. Kobie Kosek – Centennial
- \*2. Sheridan Ferguson, Kodee Meyer – Scottsbluff
- \*3. Brody Michalski – Ralston
- \*4. Anna Brewer – Ralston
- 5. Karli Knaub – Scottsbluff
- 6. Iris Evans, Sheyenne Glasgow – Omaha South
- 7. Neiska West – Omaha Burke

#### **Interactive Bulletin Board – Elementary (Varsity)**

- \*1. McKinlee Legg, Kiersten Portwine – York
- \*2. Alexia Ramirez, Griselda Zacarias – Wakefield
- \*3. Dalaney Anderson, Coral Collins – Seward
- \*4. Lauryn Breitreutz, Sarah Payne – Centennial
- \*5. Riley Hopkins, Aleah Nesbitt – Bayard
- \*6. Lilly Elsasser, Owen Elsasser – Ralston
- \*7. Emily Bender – Lincoln TCA
- \*8. Carolyn Bac, Karina Rodriguez – Papillion LaVista
- \*9. Lucy Mohr, Kennedy Ritterbush – Papillion LaVista
- \*10. Savannah Clay, Harper Johnson – Omaha Burke

#### **Interactive Bulletin Board – Secondary (Varsity)**

- \*1. Julyssa Ruiz – Westside
- \*2. Jordyn Jackson – Omaha Bryan
- \*3. Paige Amos – Sandy Creek

4. Emmanuella Hall, Ella Lewis – Papillion LaVista South
5. Bailey Kai, Dorothy Sullivan – Wakefield

### **Project Visualize (JV)**

- \*1. Helen Keiser, Mckinnley Kroos – Kenesaw
- \*2. Paarrun Gatdet, Hodhan Mohammed – South Sioux City

### **Project Visualize (Varsity)**

- \*1. Lillian Butzke, Kate Luebbe – Centennial
- \*2. Ireland Beach, Taylor Jamelah – Papillion LaVista
3. Esthefany Contreras-Suarez, Antonio Sandoval Amezcua – Omaha South
4. Samantha Daza – Omaha South

### **Teacher Created Materials (JV)**

- \*1. McKinnley Kroos – Kenesaw
- \*2. Didier Solano – Omaha South

### **Teacher Created Materials (Varsity)**

- \*1. McKinley Avery – Millard Education Academy
- \*2. Lea Hanson – Omaha Burke
- \*3. Owen Elsasser, Anthony Heig – Ralston
- \*4. Allie Abboud – Millard Education Academy
5. Allyson Halverson – Bayard
6. Lizbeth Lopez-Vazquez – Omaha Central

### **Children's Literature K-3 (JV)**

- \*1. Kalista Hopkins, Shelbie McKibbin – Bayard
- \*2. Mikaylah Garcia, Karli Knaub – Scottsbluff
- \*3. Graecyn Benton, Shara Schluterbusch – Scottsbluff
- \*4. Olivia Pearson – Omaha Westview
- \*5. Alexi Nesbitt – Bayard
- \*6. Alexa Hernandez-Francisco, Angelina Rodriguez – Omaha Bryan
7. Ruby Baldwin, Chevelle Cunningham – Omaha Westview

### **Children's Literature K-3 (Varsity)**

- \*1. Eva Philippi – Ralston
- \*2. Meke Herman, Carsyn Jump – Scottsbluff
- \*3. Ava Aaron – Omaha Westview
- \*4. Lauryn Breitreutz, Danika Smith – Centennial
- \*5. Camden Baldassano – Seward
- \*5. Taylor Peters, Lainey Portwine – York
- \*7. Addison Kloock, Annalise Pfeifer – Millard Education Academy
- \*8. Melusi Ngeleka – South Sioux City
- \*9. Sophia Bouman – Omaha Burke
- \*10. Lilia Burr – Kenesaw

### **Children’s Literature – K-3 Spanish (JV)**

- 1. Iker Soloman, Abril Solorzano – Wakefield

### **Children’s Literature – K-3 Spanish (Varsity)**

- \*1. Mia Sanchez Rodriguez – Omaha Bryan
- \*2. Nayeli Lupercio, Yareli Lupercio – South Sioux City
- \*3. Rocio Arellano – Westside
- \*4. Itzel Montoya Hernandez – Omaha Bryan
- 5. Pricila Garcia-Jaramillo, Lilian Rios-Navarrate – Omaha South
- 6. Karol Guerrero Vazquez – Omaha South

### **Children’s Literature Pre-K (JV)**

- \*1. Taylor Langan – Omaha Westview
- \*2. Nathan Robles – South Sioux City
- \*3. Helen Keiser – Kenesaw
- \*4. Emilee Houchin, Alexi Nesbitt – Bayard
- \*4. Mackynzie McNeal, Emily Nelson – Scottsbluff
- \*6. Denise Hernandez – Omaha South
- \*7. Muna Mohammed, Kelly Zepeda – South Sioux City
- 8. Denise Acevedo Jara, Camila Martinez Gutierrez – Omaha South

### **Children's Literature Pre-K (Varsity)**

- \*1. Julyssa Ruiz – Westside
- \*2. Emily Bennett, Carlie McKibbin – Bayard
  - 3. Alexis Holdsworth – Doniphan-Trumbull
  - 4. Caroline Buresh – Lincoln TCA
  - 5. Xain Burley – Omaha North
  - 6. Griselda Zacarias, Alexia Ramirez – Wakefield
  - 7. Maria Montalvo, Shea Nalty – Papillion LaVista South
  - 8. Adrianna Hebert – Omaha North
  - 9. Hodan Muuse – South Sioux City

### **Children's Literature Pre-K Spanish (Varsity)**

- \*1. Yuliana Corazon, Sunny Thang – Omaha Westview
- \*2. Estefani Aguilar Rodriguez, Neftaly Aguilar-Martinez – Omaha South

### **Creative Lecture (Varsity)**

- \*1. Keziah Etse – Omaha Burke
  - 2. Brian Rivera – Ralston

### **Educators Rising Moment (JV)**

- \*1. Emily Huarcas – South Sioux City
- \*2. Grace Johnson – Ralston
- \*3. Emily Tindall – Ralston
  - 4. Natalie Anderson – Omaha Northwest
  - 5. Aaliyah Torres – South Sioux City

### **Educators Rising Moment (Varsity)**

- \*1. Lilly Elsasser – Ralston
- \*2. Abigail Jarrell – Omaha Bryan
- \*3. Reese Bouges – Millard Education Academy
- \*4. Kaylynn Saltzman – Ralston
- \*5. Sydney Fuqua – Kearney
  - 6. Nastasia Orr – Omaha Burke
  - 7. Aidyn Jones – Papillion LaVista South

### **Educators Rising Moment – Spanish (JV)**

- 1. Claudia Ruvalcaba – South Sioux City

### **Educators Rising Moment – Spanish (Varsity)**

- \*1. Daisy Altamirano – Omaha Bryan
- \*2. Sonia Alonzo – Omaha Burke
- \*3. Kenya Calderon – Omaha Buena Vista
- 4. Anai Morales – Omaha South

### **Ethical Dilemma (JV)**

- \*1. Grace Johnson, Emily Tindall – Ralston
- 2. Sudd Ahmed, Bushra Mohamed – South Sioux City
- 3. Jacob Hartnett, Justin Thornley – Omaha Westview
- 4. Anastazia Barritt, Easton Lieberman, Maria Reyes, Hailey Robertson – Omaha Northwest
- 5. Amelia Nielsen, Evangeline Walton – Omaha Buena Vista

### **Ethical Dilemma (Varsity)**

- \*1. Kaia Kohles, Josephine McPhaul, Benjamin Sedivy – Millard Education Academy
- \*2. Maelee Bruce, Aidyn Jones – Papillion LaVista South
- \*3. Gabriella Dykhous, Tyler Hansen, Jaclynn Smidlein – Millard Education Academy
- 4. Ava Martinez, Brooklyn Michael, Makayla Peterson, Lance Stovall – Lincoln TCA
- 5. Tye Hatfield, Isaiah Jacobson – Omaha Burke
- 6. Ashley Antunez, Analisa Thomas – Omaha Bryan
- 7. Ty Boyer, Raeanna Henderson, Alexandria Ihnen – Omaha Northwest

### **Exploring Education Administration Careers (JV)**

- 1. Shara Schluterbusch – Scottsbluff

### **Exploring Education Administration Careers (Varsity)**

- \*1. Jacob Gill – South Sioux City
- \*2. Naomi Garrido – Omaha Burke
- \*3. Preston Fixemer – Millard Education Academy

### **Exploring Non-Core Subject Teaching (JV)**

- 1. Lando Puglisi – Ralston

### **Exploring Non-Core Subject Teaching (Varsity)**

- \*1. Chloe Price – Omaha Burke
- \*2. Capria Rogers – Scottsbluff
- \*3. Amy Albro – Bayard

\*4. Rocio Arellano – Westside

\*5. Audrey Brown – Omaha Burke

6. Albert Rodriguez Nunez – Omaha Bryan

### **Exploring Support Services Careers (JV)**

1. Vanessa Lemus – South Sioux City

### **Exploring Support Services Careers (Varsity)**

\*1. Story Keffer – Gretna

### **Impromptu Speaking (JV)**

\*1. Maria Reyes – Omaha Northwest

\*2. Macaiah Dodd – Westside

### **Impromptu Speaking (Varsity)**

\*1. Jackson Pommer – Wakefield

\*2. Macy Miller – Hampton

\*3. Brayden Taylor – Omaha South

4. Jacob Gill – South Sioux City

### **Inside Our Schools Presentation (JV)**

\*1. Desirae Bacon, Aaliyah Torres – South Sioux City

### **Inside Our Schools Presentation (Varsity)**

\*1. Caroline Buresh, Jacquelyn Douglas – Lincoln TCA

\*2. Emily Bender, Elliana Witt – Lincoln TCA

\*3. Makenna Benson-Berger, Nayeli Lupercio, Muna Mohammed, Hodan Muuse – South Sioux City

4. Violet Casady, Freda Mia Moore – Omaha South

5. Karen Estrada Gamez, Maya Lagunas Perez – Omaha Bryan

6. Leah McCall, Morgan Wessel – Millard Education Academy

### **Job Interview (JV)**

1. Maria Perez – Wakefield

2. Natalie Anderson – Omaha Northwest

### **Job Interview (Varsity)**

\*1. Abigail Jarrell – Omaha Bryan



\*2. Kate Luebbe – Centennial

\*3. Sha'nai Wellon – Omaha North

\*4. Lilia Burr – Kenesaw

\*5. Daisy Altamirano – Omaha Bryan

\*6. Nyomi Faulkner-Lee – Omaha North

\*7. Brissia Diaz – Scottsbluff

\*8. Jasmine Tran – Omaha Burke

\*9. Joshua Buike – Papillion LaVista

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – Arts (JV)**

\*1. Chade Dol – Omaha Bryan

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – Arts (Varsity)**

\*1. Emma Naimoli – Westside

\*2. Veronixa Orellana Castro – Ralston

3. Grace Voorhees – Omaha Burke

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – CTE (JV)**

1. Gracyn Keagle – Wakefield

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – CTE (Varsity)**

1. Ethan Becker – Ralston

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – Humanities (JV)**

1. Bushra Mohamed – South Sioux City

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – Humanities (Varsity)**

\*1. Dalaney Anderson – Seward

\*2. Jolie Dittman – Millard Education Academy

\*3. Kerri Bazis – Millard Education Academy

4. Hailey Scholten – Omaha Burke

5. Kaylynn Saltzman – Ralston

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – STEM (JV)**

\*1. Yazmin Dominguez – Omaha South

\*2. Emely Carabantes – Ralston

**Lesson Planning & Delivery – STEM (Varsity)**

\*1. Hannah Blackburn – Millard Education Academy

- 2. Phoebe Fanciullo – Ralston
- 3. Sania Childs – Omaha Northwest

**Public Service Announcement (JV)**

\*1. Desirae Bacon, Paarrun Gatdet, Hodhan Mohammed – South Sioux City

**Public Service Announcement (Varsity)**

\*1. Ubah Ali, Melusi Ngeleka, Nathan Robles – South Sioux City

- 2. Amber Aiken, Mia Henka – Millard Education Academy

**Public Speaking (Varsity)**

\*1. Tanatswa Chivero – Westside

\*2. Albert Rodriguez Nunez – Omaha Bryan

\*3. Lucy Mohr – Papillion LaVista

- 4. Christopher Estrada – Omaha Bryan
- 5. Haley Edmunds – Bayard
- 6. Destiny Viktora – Omaha North

**Researching Learning Challenges (Varsity)**

\*1. Kayleigh Dougherty-Dunklau, Lenka Dwight, Hannah O’Neal, Samara Ross – Millard Education Academy

\*2. Jordan Blake-Oxley, Lyric Gans, Jacey Ryan – Lincoln TCA

\*3. Ava Gregalunas, Katelyn Jurgensmeier, Sofia Schommer – Millard Education Academy

- 4. Zachary Havlovic, Faith Metcalf – Omaha Westview

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