Take a Look INSIDE:

Vote Online!
It’s time for election of officers and directors for the NETA board. Read a little information about each candidate and then cast your vote by February 19. Voting will ONLY be done online. The instructions for voting are inside.

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ISTE 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia
Learn about special NETA member registration and housing options for ISTE 2014 in Atlanta held Jun 28–July 1. Join more than 13,000 educators from across the United States and several foreign countries to participate in the largest educational technology conference of its type in the U.S.

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NETA Logo for 2014 Chosen
Take a look at the winning student logo contest design for the upcoming spring conference, Mission: Possible, by Jennifer Wichers from the Lincoln Public Schools Information Technology Focus Program.

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NETA Spring Conference Preview
See spring conference highlights and what you can expect to find and enjoy April 24–25 at the La Vista Conference Center.

Read about the invited speakers, poster/gallery sessions, registration discounts, and finally, send in your registration form (or register online).

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Message from the President
Jason Everett—ESU 10, Kearney, NE

Evernote: My Second Brain

I LOVE PRODUCTIVITY APPS and software to help me get things done. Whether that be at home or at the office, I’ll try just about any new utility that claims to help one be more productive. But I have never found one with as much flexibility and that works like this. Welcome to my second brain: Evernote (http://evernote.com).

It’s with me pretty much all the time. Whether I am sitting at my computer, doodling on my iPad, or running errands around town. It’s that app that is on my computers, in the cloud, and on all my devices.

So what are my uses of Evernote?
Here are a few of my favorite uses:

• Random thoughts and ideas. I keep my ideas, blog posts, writing prompts, and just about anything that comes to mind in an Evernote notebook.

• Meeting Notes. I sit through a lot of meetings. Way too many! Although I use Google Docs more when real-time collaborating, I use Evernote for my personal notes. It’s just like my paper notebook, only electronic. And great to be able to tag and organize all these meeting notes in an intuitive way.

• To Do lists and Checklists. Being able to easily create lists is a bonus for me. And an added perk is being able to set reminders and due dates!

• Weekend Planner. There is always something to do around the house. Evernote keeps my projects at home organized.

• Travel Planner. Whether I am going to a conference across the country or a NETA meeting in Omaha, Evernote helps me keep my confirmation numbers, directions, reservations, interesting sessions, and anything else I need at the ready. And I always know where to find it!

• Bookmarks. With the help of the Evernote Web Clipper, this is my bookmark manager. It works in my workflow. I store bookmarks as ideas for certain projects I’m working on. Keeping them organized with tags or in a project folder works well for me.

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If you can share a success story related to technology in the classroom, or a software solution review, we’d love to print it in a future newsletter. For making the contribution, you will receive a 2014 Spring Conference T-shirt.

Contact Julie Moore, phone (402) 540-1904 or email executivedirector@netasite.org with a short summary to see if your story can be included in a future issue!

NETA is an affiliate of ISTE—The International Society for Technology in Education.

NETA Statement of Purpose: The Nebraska Educational Technology Association exists for the purpose of providing leadership and promoting the application of technology to the educational process. Its span of interest includes all levels and aspects of education.

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Message from the President Elect

This is Your Mission Should You Choose to Accept It

One of the duties as President Elect is to build the session schedule for the 2014 Spring Conference. There is a lot of time, dedication and hard work involved in this process. Here is a sneak peak of highlights for the 2014 NETA Spring Conference.

Mission: Possible:

- Over 170+ breakout sessions including
  - Assistive Technology
  - 1:1 environments
  - Technical issues
  - Web tools
  - Gaming in education
  - Google Products
  - Learning Web posters
  - Poster sessions
  - Blended Learning
  - BYOD
  - Flipped Instruction
  - Programming
  - Digital Citizenship
  - Distance Learning
  - and much much more
- 80+ Exhibitors
- Three Dynamic Keynote Speakers
- Assistive Technology Featured Speaker

Create a mission strategy

NETA has several tools that allow you to create a plan—a mission—to tackle during the two days at the conference. As the conference date nears, you will be able to go to the NETA website (http://netasite.org), to view presenter handouts and consider which sessions you may want to attend. All final sessions will be easily searchable on the NETA website.

You can also use the NETA app to create your own schedule. If you have not yet downloaded it, you can go to the iTunes app store or Google Play store and search for NETA. Since the sessions will be available on the app, you will be able to add session times to your personal calendar.

If there are other tools that you think would be helpful for the conference, please let us know so we can include those ideas in planning for the 2015 conference.

Finalize your mission

Whether or not you are new to the NETA conference, there is so much to learn! What is your learning ‘mission’ while at the NETA conference? It may be a new web tool, the latest classroom apps, or information on flipped classroom instruction. Whatever it is, use that to create a road map of learning. Make it your mission to try something new in your classroom as soon as you get back from NETA or the following school year.

Mission launch

The NETA Spring Conference is held at the La Vista Conference Center on April 24–25, 2014. Each year our conference registration numbers grow because of the awesome learning experience conference attendees enjoy. I encourage you to attend this year’s conference and bring along a peer educator or two! Conference sessions range from basic to advanced tech experience to provide something for everyone!

The Learning Web News

The Learning Web is a year-long professional institute promoting technology integration projects which meet school improvement goals and support proven instructional strategies. NETA has been the sponsor of this project for the last nine years. We should find out soon if we will receive the Improving Teacher Quality grant, which funds this project. The NETA website at http://www.netasite.org will have information on the status of The Learning Web as soon as it is available.
Vote Online!

2014 NETA Officers & Directors

It’s time for election of officers and directors for the NETA board. Read a little information about each candidate and then cast your vote by February 19. Voting will ONLY be done online.

➤ Choose the link at the NETA web site at http://netasite.org
➤ Use your unique membership ID# from the mailing label on this newsletter.

President Elect

This officer serves for one year in this position and then moves into the role of the President. The President Elect is responsible for helping to plan the spring conference.

Josh Allen
Papillion-La Vista Public Schools

In my five years on the NETA Board, I have enjoyed being part of the conference and meeting educators across Nebraska. As president, I will continue the theme laid out by our Twitter account—this is “your” NETA. As we move downtown and develop the fall conference, it’s important that we continue to grow. With your help, NETA will continue growing as an organization and as the premier educational technology conference in the Midwest.

No other candidates at this time.
No other candidates for President Elect were nominated. There will be an opportunity to do a “write-in” vote for another candidate if you wish.

Secretary

This officer is elected every two years. The Secretary keeps records of the meetings of the Board of Directors, tracks Director attendance at meetings and files and distributes changes in policy issues adopted at board meetings.

Robert Jensen
Educational Service Unit #3

In my current role as an Instructional Technology Specialist at ESU #3, I strive for seamless integration of technology into the classroom. I have been a member of NETA since I started in education and have presented at multiple conferences. I feel my experience as a sixth grade teacher, as a Google Certified Trainer, SMART Certified Trainer, working with graduate students or numerous trainings in school districts would make me a good fit for NETA.

Darci Lindgren
Lindsay Holy Family

It would be an honor to continue supporting NETA as its Secretary. As a board of directors member, I have become aware of the hard work needed behind the scenes to make conferences successful. With our big move to Century Link Center in 2015, I am aware even more work will come along with such changes. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and help make it happen for NETA and its members! @dalindg

NOTE: Contact Julie Moore at executivedirector@netasite.org if your membership number is torn or unreadable on the newsletter.
Directors

Directors serve for three year terms. They attend four board meetings per year and one working retreat. Directors serve on planning committees and have special conference duties. Four positions need to be filled.

Joan Ibarra
Alliance Public Schools

Hello! I am Joan Ibarra, “Systems and Data Technician at Alliance Public Schools” and a proud member of NETA. I have never come away from NETA without feeling renewed, invigorated and challenged. I am proud to have contributed to the successful APS technology fairs, “Techcellence Expo 2012 and 2013.” I wear many hats: PowerSchool Administrator, web master, data manager, troubleshooter…and I would be honored to wear the hat of “NETA Board Director.”

Don Kleinsasser
St. Paul Public Schools

My name is Don Kleinsasser, and I am the integration specialist @ St. Paul Schools. I want to be on the NETA Board so I can reach more people and help them discover the use of technology in their school systems. NETA has been my support and I want to give back and be someone else’s support.

Matthew Lee
Westside Community Schools

My name is Matthew Lee and I am the technology integrationist for Westside Community Schools in Omaha. I have been fortunate to serve on the NETA board of directors for the past three years. I am working on my PhD in Instructional Technology and I’m an Apple Distinguished Educator. If I am fortunate enough to be re-elected I look forward to continuing to increase member engagement and expand NETA’s offerings for classroom and pre-service teachers.

Kristina Peters
Nebraska Department of Education

Much like the pioneers who forged their way through Nebraska over a hundred years ago, Nebraska educators have the potential to become educational technology pioneers. As the eLearning Specialist and School Library Liaison at the Nebraska Department of Education, I help Nebraska educators discover the potential that technology holds when student learning is at the forefront of our initiatives. Joining the NETA Board of Directors would extend my efforts and develop this pioneering vanguard.

Tina Sauser
Boone Central Schools

I began my professional journey as an elementary teacher and have spent the last few years assisting teachers and students with the use of technology through my Technology Integration role. I believe technology is a vital part of a successful education and I take pride in implementing technology into the regular classroom curriculum. NETA has provided me with the ideas, confidence, and ability to provide my students and teachers with a successful 21st century education.

Kent Steen
Lincoln Public Schools

NETA has been my primary professional organization for 16 years. I served as NETA President in 2006. I’ve presented multiple times at NETA, sponsored student contests, and last year was honored to receive the NETA Excellence in Leading with Technology Award. NETA faces new opportunities and challenges with the upcoming location change, and my experience on the board would help guide that change. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to again serve the NETA membership.

Spencer Vogt
Hastings Public Schools

I have been teaching middle school Social Studies for eight years. In that time I have received a Master of Science with a specialization in Educational Technology. I am highly passionate about using technology to educate and mold young minds. Currently, I am working on my Ph.D. in Educational Technology. I would like to serve on the NETA board to help bring Nebraska to the forefront of Educational Technology.

Patty Wolfe
Cozad Community Schools

I have been in education for 26 years with the last three years serving as the Technology Integration Coordinator for the Cozad Community School district. Recent movement in education with technologies and mobile learning have enabled classrooms to advance like never before. Being able to help students and teachers with this journey is exciting. Serving on the NETA Board would allow me to work with others who share my passion for using technology in education.

(More candidates on the next page)
NETA News

(NETA Board of Directors Nominees, continued)

Evi Wusk
Peru State College

I am thankful to have served in a one-year director position, and I sincerely hope to continue to serve—it feels like I’ve just begun! As Assistant Professor of Educational Technology at Peru State College, I teach and co-direct our iPad Virtual Learning Community. My focus as a NETA board member would be to connect and equip not only pre-service teachers, but also teacher educators, so that we can all better serve our Nebraska PreK-12 students.

Nick Ziegler
Educational Service Unit #5

My name is Nick Ziegler, the technology integration specialist at ESU #5 in Beatrice. It is my passion to help teachers integrate technology into their classrooms (K–12, across content areas, all devices). For a clearer understanding of who I am and what I can bring to the NETA Board, check out my ESU 5 tech integration website: tinyurl.com/esu5tech OR find me on Twitter: @senorziegler. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on NETA’s Board.

VOTE!
Choose the link at the NETA web site at http://netasite.org and use your unique membership ID# from the mailing label on this newsletter. Contact Julie Moore at executivedirector@netasite.org if your membership number is torn or unreadable on this newsletter.

2014 NETA Conference Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are a vital part of the NETA Conference each year. They help attendees find their way around the conference floor, help with registration, and they add a friendly smile to the busy hallways. It doesn’t take a lot of skill, just a willingness to give up a small portion of your conference time and an eagerness to help others.

If you are willing to volunteer during the spring conference, sign up on the conference registration form when you register for the 2014 NETA Spring Conference. If you have questions, contact Bob Goeman, NETA Past President and Conference Volunteer Coordinator, at bgoeman@gmail.com.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the conference in April!

Evernote, continued from page 1

- **Paperless Office.** At home and at work, every piece of paper I have (bills, letters, drawings, paper notes, etc.) goes through my ScanSnap scanner and into Evernote. When I am away from my scanner, I take photos of documents, business cards, Post-its, and whatever else I may need. These are then searchable documents that I can go back to where ever I am in the world.

- **Collaboration/Communications.** I not only share certain notes with folks but also use a shared folder with my son. Either of us can add, remove or edit notes. It is a great way for me to share his chore list or for us to share his current projects.

- **Reading List.** I like to think of this as the electronic version of the basket of reading material next to my Lazyboy at home. It’s that place I can store PDFs or websites that I want to go back to and read later.

- **Email Important messages.** If I need to deal with an email message, I forward it to my To Do folder in Evernote. Evernote really becomes not a part of my workflow, but THE workflow.

**Tips to make Evernote more useful:**
1. Use it on all your devices: computer, web, tablet, phone. Evernote automatically syncs with them all.
2. Install the browser plugins: Evernote Web Clipper, Clearly.
3. Save your Evernote email address as a contact in your phone.
4. Be consistent—use it regularly and make it your workflow.
5. Use Notebooks and Tags to help you organize your notes and ideas.
6. Turn on location tracking—more useful than you think!
7. Use other apps like Penultimate and Skitch that integrate with Evernote.
8. Take pictures of documents, business cards, Post-it’s, and hand-written notes.
9. Share notes and notebooks with friends, colleagues, and family.

Evernote can be so much more than just your electronic notebook. Planning a conference? A trip? Collecting ideas? What will you make Evernote do for you?
Welcome to ISTE 2014! Mark your calendars, and plan now to attend ISTE 2014 in Atlanta! Join more than 13,000 educators from across the United States and several foreign countries to participate in the largest educational technology conference of its type in the U.S. The conference will be held June 28–July 1, 2014, at the Atlanta Convention Center.

The NETA Board is providing a special ISTE 2014 housing and registration offer for our membership. This offer provides Nebraska NETA members a block of reserved rooms at a hotel, guaranteed super early bird registration rate of $209, and an opportunity for a Nebraska reception while at ISTE.

The conference organizers have reserved a block of rooms for Nebraska NETA members in the Embassy Suites Hotel, 267 Marietta Street, Atlanta, GA 30313. This hotel is a short walk from the Convention Center. The rates are $209 for a single or double room. This hotel offers free breakfast and an evening manager’s reception. All accommodations are subject to state and room taxes.

NETA Reserved Housing
To take advantage of the Embassy Suites Hotel housing arrangements, go to the reservation web site: http://bit.ly/1haR4Q1

1. You will need to enter the arrival and departure dates you wish to book. Click Search to check your hotel sub-block availability.
2. Select the hotel (Embassy Suites) and confirm the room type. You will need to check the box confirming you agree to the cancellation policy.
3. After providing name, address, email address and any special room request, click Next to proceed.
4. You will need to click on the Pay Now button on the right hand side to guarantee the reservation with a credit card.

NOTE: Your hotel reservation will not be confirmed unless you provide credit card information. All unused rooms in the NETA block will be released for general sale on March 26, 2014.

Cancellations received by 5:00 p.m. EST on April 9, 2014, will not be charged a cancellation fee. Reservations cancelled after 5:00 p.m. EST on April 9, 2014, will be assessed a $150 cancellation fee, unless specific alternative arrangements have been negotiated with ISTE. Beginning June 6th you will need to work directly with the hotel.

PLEASE NOTE: NETA rooms fill early, so please register as soon as possible.

NETA Super-earlybird Registration
Complete your conference registration separately using the ISTE 2014 Website online registration. Register by May 1, 2014 to qualify for the Super Early Bird rate (if you choose the NETA affiliate as outlined below).

Go to: https://www.isteconference.org/2014/attend/ and click Register. Begin by logging in if you are a current ISTE member or create an account (conference discounts for ISTE members offset the ISTE membership fee). NOTE: It is important that you select Yes, I am a member of an ISTE Affiliate and choose NETA: Nebraska Educational Technology Association from the Affiliate list while registering. Identifying yourself as a NETA affiliate attendee makes it possible for us to communicate with you before the ISTE conference with any additional up-to-the-minute information about NETA social hours or other events you won’t want to miss. Conference registration is frozen for you at the super early bird price, $378 ($269 for ISTE members), through May 1, 2014.

International Networking! National conferences, although perceived by some as a luxury, can provide an opportunity to exchange ideas with educators from other states or countries, learn from national educational technology leaders, and preview a wide array of technology solutions through the exhibitor area.

You may want to consider sharing a room to reduce travel costs. Atlanta promises to be an interesting conference city and we do hope that you can travel to take advantage of this summer learning opportunity with other NETA members. The housing block will fill quickly so don’t delay!

If you have any questions about registration or housing for ISTE 2014 in Atlanta, please contact Julie Moore at 402-540-1904 (executive-director@netasite.org). We hope to see you at ISTE in Atlanta! ❖
Skip the Essay: Have Students Make Prezicasts

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Let’s Face It: Telling your eighth graders that they have an essay due next week provokes the same reaction as when my wife reminds me taxes are coming up. Sure, general schoolwork dread is part of it, but I think students feel that writing an essay is outdated. Few jobs—except for a couple of positions at Harper’s or The New Yorker—exist for essayists anymore, so students are not being entirely unreasonable when they ask why the standard five-paragraph essay is so important.

I respond to such questions in a predictable way: The essay is a tool that allows writers to present their thoughts in a clear and structured way. Even if students are right—that the essay is not the exact product that they will be asked to create in the “real world”—writing one remains an invaluable process for organizing and communicating an argument. The essay is not the end of learning but the means.

Yet, in answering these questions, I came up with another: If the essay is a means to an end, is there a better way to teach the same skills? After years of playing around with Prezi as a way of organizing and presenting my own thoughts, and of using screencasting to make quick explanatory videos, I recently combined both tools to create “Prezicasts.” Think of it as a Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup for the digital age: two great tools that work well together.

In my unit on U.S. governmental structure, I asked the students to make three-minute Prezicasts explaining the relationships between the three branches of the federal government and evaluate the pros and cons of this system. My teaching partner and I saw significant levels of engagement and learning compared to previous iterations of the unit, which culminated with a standard five-paragraph essay.

Nuts and Bolts
Putting a Prezicast together is simple, once you are comfortable using both parts:

Prezi (http://www.prezi.com). This presentation tool replaces the standard sequential slide format of PowerPoint with a kind of unbounded whiteboard. Users place text, images, videos, or graphic objects on the Prezi workspace and then link those elements by defining the order of elements the viewer will see. It is a wonderfully creative tool that many use now as their preferred presentation software. It has other potential uses in the classroom too—for example, as a notetaking tool, mindmap creator, or organizer.

To be fair, there is a learning curve with Prezi, and not all students will like it initially. I have found, however, that students get used to it, and most eventually appreciate the creativity it allows.

Screencasting. Like a screenshot, but in video format, screencasting allows users to create a video file that records what is being shown on the user’s computer along with voice narration. From a student’s perspective, it is as easy as hitting Record and Stop. There are dozens of screencasting applications, but I recommend two. If you are a Mac user, screencasting is included in Quicktime X. If you are a PC user or just want a web-based program, I recommend Screencast-o-matic (www.screencast-o-matic.com). It is free, has many cool features, and is simple to sign up for and use.

Bringing the Two Together
Students simply make a Prezi and then create a screencast while they click through their Prezi. For my social studies class, I have students complete the assignment in four basic steps:

1. First, I created and distributed a Prezi template with sections for the Constitution, as well as the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. In class, we did a thorough reading of the Constitution, using the original source to understand each branch’s role and powers. Next, we undertook targeted WebQuests to address particular questions regarding the branches. Throughout the unit, class discussion and direct teacher instruction helped students fill in their Prezis. In the beginning, most stuck with the structure provided by the template, though as the unit went on, students added additional vocabulary and elaborated on concepts.

2. Once students collected the notes on the Prezi, I gave them a series of prompts that required them to organize their Prezis in a new way. Along the lines of a mind map, I specifically asked them to make a visual representation of the three branches that showed the powers that each branch had over each of the others. In prior lessons, I spoke of the federal system as having three sides, so it was not surprising that my students chose a triangle to represent the system of checks and balances. This is a great stage to review student work to verify their understanding.

(Continued on the next page)
3. After they organized their Prezis, I provided additional, higher-order prompt questions to extend their thinking. Once students had a handle on what the three branches were, where their powers came from, and how they interacted with each other, I asked them to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. governmental system.

4. To complete the Prezicast, students simply opened their Prezis in one browser tab and opened the screen casting software in another. They pushed “record” on the screencast and then narrated the diagram that they had made on Prezi.

To guide the students at this stage, I provided assessment rubrics as well as technical parameters for the final version regarding time limits and preferred video format. I expected them to structure their narration like a standard essay: introduce the topic, assert a thesis statement, use evidence to support the argument, and conclude by integrating all the evidence to support the thesis. Students submitted the finished movie file and then posted the Prezicast on their own learning reflection blogs.

Findings
The Prezicast was a challenge for some. For example, most students wanted absolutely no verbal mistakes in their recording, and for some it took a dozen tries to get it right. Make sure you let kids know that a few “ums” and “ahs” in the narration is not a big deal.

Still, the Prezicast is an effective tool for student learning. I noticed higher levels of engagement compared to an essay assignment earlier in the year. This impression was borne out in student feedback. One student wrote: “It was not the old long essay, but a new way to learn things, and I had fun while I made it.”

Another added that it was much more “creative and interesting” compared to typical assignments. A few students highlighted the fact that Prezi is so visual that it helped them understand the material and convey it to the audience.

Seth Blodgett, my teaching partner, agreed that the students were enthusiastic about the project and achieved greater understanding of the material compared to years past. Finally, students seemed to have a sense of ownership with their Prezis that they rarely felt with essays: “A Prezicast can show more understanding of the topic because you are explaining it with your own voice and words,” a student said.

Prezi was especially effective at helping students organize the material, both in the prewriting stage and the creation stage. Typically, students can have difficulty organizing their wide-ranging notes into a streamlined essay, but using Prezi at the early stages to collect the notes, assemble them as evidence, and even manipulate their location on the Prezi made this task easier. One student wrote that the Prezi allowed him “to see the visual relationship between different objects and topics,” and that it helped him organize his “paragraphs” better. Students often struggle to wrangle large amounts of notes into a tightly structured essay, but the screencast made it a smoother transition between notes, ideas, and expression.

Prezicasting now has a place in my toolbox to help students develop their perspectives on an issue; craft a persuasive, supported argument; and convey it to others. In this case, thinking about the essay in a new way increased student engagement in the process and helped with their organizational abilities. I will not abandon the essay, but I see the Prezicast as a complementary tool that approaches the same goal from a different angle: advancing students’ abilities to get their points across.

Acknowledgment
— Justin P. Jacobson teaches eighth grade social studies in Tokyo at the American School in Japan. Read his class blog at blogs.asij.ac.jp/ss8jacobson. He would like to thank his middle school colleagues, Seth Blodgett, Mark Burpee, and Pete Dohrenwend, for their help with this article.
NETA’s Technology Grant Program
Final Reports from 2013 Winners

Derek Babb
Bellevue East High School
3D Printing in the Classroom

When the 3D printer first arrived, it was a novelty. My classes loved to see it in action. It didn’t matter what we were printing. It began with a phone case, then a phone stand and a light switch cover. Eventually every surface of my room will be augmented by something plastic off of the printer.

Once the novelty began to wear off, the real task of designing 3D models began. With our football team in the playoffs, I thought this was a great time to market our new device. I had a student design a 3D model of our school’s logo as a keychain. When printed in school colors, it looks pretty nice and copies can currently be found in our school store.

In another situation, one of the little plastic tabs that elevate a keyboard had broken. Using exact specifications, a student was able to recreate that part and we now have a model in case any more break.

The most useful example of the 3D printer’s utility involves some students I have working on a project with UNO’s computer science department. They are building an assistive technology product that dispenses medication. This involves a very specific gear, which was easily manufactured with a 3D model and our printer.

Ashton Bohling
Conestoga High School
Stop Wasting Water Project

Water is a foundation for vegetable and fruit production. Currently, Conestoga operates a ½ acre garden, as well as a 30-foot by 50-foot high tunnel. With the drought and water restrictions in recent years, the Conestoga agriculture education students started thinking about ways to reduce their water consumption. With the NETA grant, students selected and purchased WaterMark sensors. These sensors are solid state electrical sensing devices that are used to measure soil water tension.

The sensors were installed inside the high tunnel where tomatoes and peppers were planted. Students used the WaterMark sensors to determine the soil moisture levels inside the high tunnel. By using this technology, students were able to develop an irrigation schedule. In turn, this helped to reduce overwatering in the high tunnel.

This project had several positive outcomes. First of all, students were able to reduce water consumption and reduce the frequency of overwatering in the high tunnel. Secondly, students were able to recognize the connection of using technology in agriculture. The WaterMark technology helped students to see how using technology helps to solve or reduce real problems. This technology also incorporated math and science skills. Thirdly, this project helped Conestoga to maximize produce growth by monitoring water levels and maintaining ideal moisture levels. The students were able to donate over 2,100 pounds of produce to the local food bank, approximately 400 pounds to the high school cafeteria and over 190 pounds to the elementary back pack program.

Kim Hilbers
Carriage Hill Elem.—Papillion
Jump Start Literacy at Home and School

Through the grant we received from NETA last year, we have been creating increased opportunities for technology integration and use by both teachers and students. We have utilized our iPads and literacy apps for student use during the school day within literacy centers in each of our first grade classrooms. The iPad apps have been used to provide individual and differentiated literacy activities, for instructional practice, as reading resources, and as a way for students to create products that demonstrate learning. Teachers continue their professional development, looking at best practices for iPad and app integration to support literacy instruction.

On weekends, the iPads are circulated to students for literacy use at home. As a result, student time spent on literacy instruction and practice, as well as interaction with technology, has increased. An additional benefit is increased

(Continued on the next page)
parent/child time spent together at home on literacy activities. Through this home use, parents have been introduced to fun and effective ways to work with their children to improve literacy skills and enjoy learning together.

Carol Nickerson
Blair Community Schools

Making Books Come Alive Through QR Codes

Making Books Come Alive Through QR Codes has become an idea to a reality. The students have seven new 5th generation iPods to create and record book trailers. The QR codes are linked to video endorsements for school library books that promote reading. Students read a book of their choice, then created a video book trailer, wrote a review, or created a recorded puppet show about the book. The reviews the students created are linked by QR codes that are placed on the cover of the books. Students use iPods to scan the codes to listen, watch, or read a book promotion.

Video is a familiar format for students, so they are at ease creating book promotion video clips. The older 4th generation iPods already owned by the schools were also utilized for the project. There are now 18 iPods for student use. The biggest challenge was finding a reliable and student friendly place to upload the videos for retrieval. SchoolTube has worked well for posting videos. The other challenge was finding time to record the videos. Students worked individually and in small groups to create video book promotions. The older students assisted the younger students helping write and record their reviews. Students now find websites for authors and create a QR code for the book to link to the author.

We have not reached the goal for each and every student to create a code. Second semester kindergarten and first grade will be the focus now that older students can create a book talk and edit with iMovie. Second semester teachers and staff members are being asked to make a recommendation for a few favorite books. The project has been easily adapted to students and will be one that we continue year after year.

NETA Logo for 2014 Chosen!

The winning design for the NETA Logo Contest is by Jennifer Wichers from the Lincoln Public Schools Information Technology Focus Program. Jennifer is a senior, and the sponsoring teacher is Steve Carr. Thanks to the contest coordinator, Evi Wusk from Peru State College, and everyone who submitted a logo entry.
Calendar of Technology Conferences & Seminars

Events of every type for educators, technicians & administrators

February 2014

Midwest Educational Technology Conference (METC)
February 10–12, 2014
St. Charles, MO
metcconference.org

Nebraska Association for the Gifted (NAG) Conference
February 20–21, 2014
Embassy Suites, Old Market
Omaha, NE
www.negifted.org

March 2014

NDLA (Nebraska Distance Learning Association)
March 6–7, 2014
Holiday Inn Downtown
Lincoln, NE
ndla.org

CoSN’s School Networking Conference
March 19–22, 2014
Washington, DC
www.cosn.org/events/

April 2014

MacWorld Expo
March 27–29, 2014
Moscone Center North
San Francisco, CA
macworldexpo.com

National School Boards Association (NSBA)
April 5–7, 2014
New Orleans, LA
annualconference.nsba.org

Infotec (by the AIM Inst.)
April 15–16, 2014
CenturyLink Center
Omaha, NE
infotec.org

June 2014

Nebraska Career Education Conference (NCE)
June 3–5, 2014
Younes Conference Center
Kearney, NE
nceconference.com

Innovative Education Colorado (InnEdCO)
(Formerly Technology in Education T.I.E)
June 17–19, 2014
Copper Mountain, CO
innedco.org

ISTE Conference
June 28–July 1, 2014
Atlanta, GA
www.isteconference.org/2014/

CoSN’s School Networking Conference
March 19–22, 2014
Washington, DC
www.cosn.org/events/

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)
March 17–21, 2014
Jacksonville, FL
site.aace.org/conf/

United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)
May 4-7, 2014
St. Louis, MO
http://www.usdla.org

October 2014

ITEC (Iowa Technology Education Connection) Conference
October 12–14, 2014
Iowa Events Center
Des Moines, IA
itec-ia.org/en/conference/
NETA Spring Conference Preview—April 24–25, 2014
La Vista Embassy Suites & Conference Center—12520 Westport Parkway, La Vista, NE

“Mission: Possible”

As a NETA member, you have the benefit of receiving advanced Spring Conference information and the registration form in this newsletter before the information goes out to the public.

Invited Speakers

Angela Maiers
Keynote Thursday
Liberating Genius

Liberating Genius is not an inspirational or utopian hope for our students; nor is it a quick-fix program to building a better system. It’s a movement designed to help leaders and learners break free from the addiction of security and acceptance of mediocrity and rekindle the genius within. We can no longer afford as individuals or as a nation to allow our best talents to remain buried beneath well-intentioned but lifeless rules of school. Liberating Genius is a framework and system that fuels innovation, creativity and ability to impact our learning and the world. There is genius within; together let’s unleash it.

Choose your own Friday Keynote from these two speakers:

Erin Klein
Sharing Student Voice
Erin Klein has spent the past year capturing inspirational moments of children shining through helping others learn. Klein shares examples of children who are helping one another in creative ways. See how highlighting student voice can support classroom practices and create a more student-centered learning environment.

Dean Shareski
Whatever Happened to Joy and Other Stuff that Really Matters
In a data driven, achievement focused system, does joy in learning matter anymore? Not that these are mutually exclusive but in our attempts to see results we often forget that joy and other things should not be a means to an end but a worthy and important goal on its own. So how do we insure our students experience joy and other things that really matter everyday? What role can technology play to help learners experience a richer, more deeply human experience? Let’s examine some practical ways to be intentional and make our schools places of joy.

Featured Speaker

Dave Edyburn
Dave Edyburn teaches in the areas of mild disabilities related to learning and behavior. His research investigates the use of technology to enhance teaching, learning and performance. He has authored over 150 articles and book chapters on the use of technology in special education. His work spans the 36-page booklet, What Every Teacher Should Know About Assistive Technology to the 900-page Handbook of Special Education Technology Research and Practice. Dave is sponsored by Assistive Technology Partnership/Education.
Gallery of Poster/Playground Sessions

On Thursday afternoon, watch for the gallery of Poster/Playground Sessions. The sessions will highlight the state-wide Learning Web projects and teachers who received NETA and Century-Link grants last year, with additional poster and playground sessions addressing a variety of topics. Stroll freely through the gallery of poster/playground sessions where all presenters will informally display projects in one session room and be on hand to answer your questions.

Student Attendance

Full-time college students must submit proof of full-time enrollment at check-in to be eligible for a student pass. High school students must meet the following guidelines in order to attend: students must be directly involved in a presentation and supervised at all times by an adult. Student presenters are considered guests of the conference and their names must be submitted to Julie Moore [executivedirector@netasite.org] by April 4th.

Lunch Tickets!

Lunch tickets will be available for purchase during check-in Thursday and Friday mornings. Tickets will be sold just outside of the Gatsby room. Purchase your ticket in advance so that later at lunch time you can quickly pick up your lunch without having to wait in line to pay.

Again in 2014! Barcodes on Name Badges

This year your name badges will again have bar codes on them. This will allow exhibitors to easily scan your name badge and you won't need to complete forms to give them your information. When the exhibitors scan your badge, these are the fields of information they will receive: your name, organization, address, phone, and e-mail.

At this point we do not know how many exhibitors will participate in badge barcode scanning. We anticipate quite a few since many have suggested that we add this option.

Registration Discounts

Register with the form on a later page in this publication or online at http://netasite.org. Groups of ten or more participants qualify for a $10.00 discount off each full conference registration or a $5.00 discount off each one-day registration.

All qualifying registrations must be on the same check, charge card or purchase order and mailed together or entered under the same group name online. Register online at http://netasite.org.

Direct questions about the processing of registrations to:
1.800.280.6218 toll free
541.346.3537 direct (M–F, 8am–5pm PT)
netareg@ce.uoregon.edu

For non-registration questions, contact:
Julie Moore, executivedirector@netasite.org, phone 402.540.1904
Conference Registration

La Vista Embassy Suites & Conference Center, LaVista, NE (Omaha area)—April 24–25, 2014
Register with this form or online at http://netasite.org

If paying by check, use this form and mail to the address below, or register online at http://netasite.org with PO or charge card.

• Early bird registration discount ends March 21, 2014 (postmarked).
• Pre-registration deadline closes April 4 (Both online or mailing postmarks). After April 4, please plan to register onsite.
• NETA does not support shared registrations. Each registrant must have their own name badge and packet. Please be ethically responsible.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY TO AID IN PROCESSING

Name ______________________________________________________ Position _________________________________________________
School/Organization __________________________________________ District (optional) _____________________________________
Is the mailing address listed below at school [work] or home?  ☐ School [work] ☐ Home
Street __________________________________________ City _______________________________ State ______   Zip ________________
Wk Ph _________________________ Hm Ph  _________________________ E-mail address ________________________________________

Would you like your name, email address, and address released to vendors? [No response indicates permission.] ☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: One-year NETA membership included for each participant [except student pass and vendor pass]. Registrations may be paid by check, purchase order, MasterCard, American Express or VISA. Note registration increases listed below after March 21.

Conference Registration Amount [Please check the appropriate box below.] $________________

☐ Full conference, both days [early bird rate] $125.00
   [Includes all sessions and exhibits. After March 21 cost is $150.]
☐ Thursday ONLY [early bird rate] $100.00
   [Includes all sessions and exhibits. After March 21 cost is $125.]
☐ Friday ONLY [early bird rate] $100.00
   [Includes all sessions and exhibits. After March 21 cost is $125.]
☐ Lead Presenter $25.00
   [one per session—additional presenters must pay full registration]
☐ Student conference pass (for Higher Education students—not for K–12) $25.00
   [Includes full conference and inclusion on NETA listserv. Full-time student ID Required.]
☐ Vendor Exhibits ONLY (now includes membership) $40.00
   [Includes full conference and inclusion on NETA listserv. Full-time student ID Required.]

Refund Policy: Conference registration refunds will be made only if notification is made to the registration office listed below by April 4, 2014. A $15.00 handling fee will be subtracted from the refund.

NOTE: BYOD [bring your own device] sessions will not require pre-registration this year and will be 45 minutes in length.

Conference Registration begins February 1, 2014

Enter your registration rate (depending upon early bird rate or after March 21st) $________________

Group Discount [Subtract $10 for a full registration or $5.00 for one-day] $________________
   [Must be in groups of 10 or more registrations paid with the same check, PO, or charge card]

Total Amount Enclosed [conference registration - group discount] $________________

Payment Method: ☐ Check ☐ Purchase Order [enclosed]  ☐ Credit Card [pay on-line only at http://netasite.org]
   *American Express, Visa or MasterCard accepted online only. If you would like to pay by credit card do not complete this form!

☐ Would you like to volunteer? Please check if you would be willing to volunteer to assist the NETA Board during the conference.

Mail to: NETA14 Conference Registration
   1277 University of Oregon
   Eugene, OR 97403-1277
   or 541.346.3545 fax

Questions to:
   1.800.280.6218 toll free
   541.346.3537 direct [M–F, 8am–5pm PT]
   netareg@ce.uoregon.edu

Make checks payable to NETA.
Fed. ID number #47-0775766

http://netasite.org

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Membership Form

Neta Statement of Purpose: The Nebraska Educational Technology Association exists for the purpose of providing leadership and promoting the application of technology to the educational process. Its span of interest includes all levels and aspects of education.

Name ___________________________ Position ___________________________

Preferred Address ___________________________

City ___________________________ State _______ Zip ___________________________

Home Phone ___________________________ Work Phone ___________________________

School/Agency Name ___________________________ Email ___________________________

If you attended the Spring Conference in April 2013, one year of membership was included with your registration. If you would like to be a member, but cannot attend the Spring Conference, membership dues are $25.00 and are good through April 2014. Make checks payable to NETA. To become a member, please fill out the above form and mail with check to:

NETA Membership
PO Box 484
Gretna, NE 68028

☐ I am a new member

☐ I was recruited by this current NETA member

Address changes should be sent to the above address or emailed to: executivedirector@netasite.org