Take a Look INSIDE:

Have You Heard About… Five Great Chrome Extensions
This article showcases the top five Chrome extensions the author has recently learned about through friends or has shared with other friends because they are so exciting!

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Vote Online!
It’s time for election of officers and directors for the NETA board. Four director positions need to be filled, along with the president elect and secretary. Read a little information about each candidate and then cast your vote by February 17. Voting will be done online.

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Get in the Game
A growing number of educators are turning to game-based learning as a way to better engage today's students and do just that. And we're not talking about a round of Sorry!

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NETA Spring Conference Preview
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. Find out how you will be able to Embrace Your Passion on April 21–22 at this year’s NETA Spring Conference.

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Message from the President
Josh Allen, Lewis Central Community Schools

Why Did You Get Into Education?

At EdCamp Kearney this past November, Jamey Boelhower asked us, “Why did you get into education?”

I never considered education as a career while growing up. I wanted to be a journalist. My junior year of high school, I was “voluntold” to go assist a second grader who struggled with writing his spelling test and other assignments instead of relaxing in a first hour study hall. I was hooked. I loved the kids. I loved watching them learn and seeing that “light” come on.

What about you? Is why you got into teaching the same thing that keeps you coming back to your room year after year?

I still love learning with kids. I love learning about new ways to engage kids and make classroom instruction better. Nothing gets me more excited than seeing students excited about learning. Nothing gets me more hooked than seeing a teacher sharing their passion for their content with students. A teacher who embraces their educational passions and infuses that into their instruction can have students in the palm of their hand.

One of the things I hear year after year about the spring NETA Conference is that “it recharges my batteries.” The people who attend are passionate about their topics. They are sharing an idea or tool with you because they’ve seen how it has positively impacted their classroom, and they hope it can do the same for your classroom.

This April, there will be approximately 300 workshops, breakout and poster sessions at the NETA conference where you can learn about something new to you or a new way to maximize something you already know about. I encourage you to go to http://netasite.org, click on the Spring Conference Information link, and then find the Conference Schedule. We think that when you browse

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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.

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

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NETA Newsletter
Published four times yearly.
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Message from the President Elect

“Have You Heard About…”

Five Great Chrome Extensions
My Friends Shared with Me

One Tab
If you are like me and always have too many tabs open, OneTab is for you. Just click on the extension that looks like a funnel and it collapses your tabs into a nice list you can access again and again—opening one or all of them at the same time—your choice. Depending on how many tabs you have open, it can also speed up your computer by reducing the CPU load. The list of tabs can also be exported to easily share with your students or to a website.

Clearly
Clearly is always one of my favorites for students and teachers. You click on Clearly’s icon, which resembles a desk lamp, and it cleans up the webpage, no more ads or extra stories on the sides. The clutter disappears. It also makes it easy to print only the article you need. The two images pictured on the next page are both of the same web page on Free Technology For Teachers. As you can see, after applying the Clearly extension, all of the clutter on the page is removed, leaving just the main article on the page.

(Continued on the next page)
(Chrome Extensions, continued)

**Free Technology for Teachers**

The one thing every teacher wants more of, besides salary, is time. I can't give you more time in the day. What I can do is point you to some tools and techniques for completing routine tasks more efficiently.

**9 Google Apps Productivity Tools & Tips for Teachers**

The one thing every teacher wants more of, besides salary, is time. I can't give you more time in the day. What I can do is point you to some tools and techniques for completing routine tasks more efficiently.

**1-click timer**

This extension is great for a quick timer, right in your browser. I use it in workshops when we take breaks and for a timer to get up and move! I sit too much at my desk! When the timer goes off, soft music plays and this alert pops up in the corner of your screen as a nice reminder that time’s up!

**Google Hangouts**

I use Google Hangouts for NETA committee meetings, Great Plains Summit planning meetings (planning for the first summit in 2012 was done with zero in-person meetings), troubleshooting technical problems through screen sharing with colleagues, and chatting with teachers and friends.

By adding the Hangout extension you can easily move from tab to tab in your browser and you do not have to toggle between tabs. The hangout window is a stand alone item in the bottom right corner of your screen.

Teams of teachers and administrative assistants use hangouts to “text/chat” the daily schedule, schedule changes, and student absences. This way communication is instant and communication does not rely on teachers checking their email during class to see if the announcements are there.

**AdBlock Plus**

Like many of you, I hate the annoying popups on so many websites. AdBlock Plus can block tracking, banners, and pop-ups even on Facebook and YouTube including the video ads that usually play before your favorite YouTube videos. Teachers love AdBlock Plus mostly because they can show their favorite YouTube video without having to worry about what advertisement video will start as they pull up the video they want to share during the class.

A little number will appear on the corner of the extension to show you how many ads or popups the extension is blocking. A site like CNN may have 15 or more ads it will block as you are reading an article.

**Please share!**

Give these five popular Chrome extensions a try and see if they streamline any daily activities for you. If you have some favorite extensions you’d like to share, email me at jackie.ediger@netasite.org.
Vote Online!

2016 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 17. 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.

Matt Lee
Westside Community Schools
My name is Matthew Lee and it would be my privilege to serve as NETA President Elect. I am the Coordinator of Technology Integration for Westside Community Schools in Omaha, NE and I received my Ph.D. in Instructional Technology from UNL in 2014. I’m currently serving my second term on the NETA board and am excited about where we are going. NETA has grown tremendously and I would be honored to help lead NETA into the future!

Nick Ziegler
Educational Service Unit #5
The purpose of NETA is to provide leadership for enhancing education through instructional technology. We have two goals: expand membership benefits and collaborate with other educational associations. I played a direct role in expanding access to NETA membership by moving toward a FREE membership model. It would be my goal to triple membership within three years by enhancing NETA’s involvement in promoting and providing regional EdTech professional development opportunities in collaboration with other educational associations.

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.

Darci Lindgren
Lindsay Holy Family School
As my first two year term comes to an end, I would like to continue supporting NETA as its secretary. I wear many hats to serve NETA in addition to the regular secretary & note-taking duties. I have been the technology coordinator at Lindsay Holy Family School for fourteen years, and digital citizenship is my passion. @dalindg

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

NOTE: Contact Julie Moore at executivedirector@netasite.org if your membership number is torn or unreadable on the newsletter.
**Chad Ackerson**  
**Grand Island Public Schools**

I have taught elementary and middle school for the last 11 years. I want to be a NETA Board Member because I want to be able to help teachers find a passion for technology in the classroom like I have. I believe that technology plays an integral role in the education of our students. I would love the opportunity to use NETA to encourage an excitement for enhancing the learning of students by using technology.

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**Heather Callihan**  
**Northwest Public Schools**

My name is Heather Callihan. This is my 18th year in education and my third year as Technology Integrationist for Northwest Public Schools in Grand Island, NE. I have a passion for technology and digital citizenship. I enjoy all the learning and collaborating opportunities by being on the NETA Board. My goal is to continue learning, sharing and collaborating with others and hope to continue serving you as a NETA Board member.

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**Peg Coover**  
**Educational Service Unit #10**

As a math and science teacher for 21 years, I have loved learning ways to engage students with technology and sharing strategies with colleagues. My current position at ESU 10 allows me opportunities to work with teachers in workshops or at their districts and build capacity with technology integration. NETA is an organization that inspires educators to grow professionally to improve student learning and I would be honored to serve on the Board.

---

**JD Dalrymple**  
**Freeman Public Schools**

I thought I was “innovative” when in 2004 my classes went online. Since joining NETA, I have truly learned what innovation is. I have presented at NETA multiple times and am a member of several technology “groups.” However, I believe joining the NETA Board is the best way to give back to an organization that has forever changed how I teach. For more information find me on Twitter: @mrd_fhs or my class webpage https://sites.google.com/a/freemanschools.net/social-studies-7/

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**Scott Harrington**  
**Norris High School**

My name is Scott Harrington and I teach at Norris High School. The goal that I have for all my students and for NETA members, is for them to become explorers. An explorer is a curious, adventurous, responsible, and respectful storyteller who is willing to take chances and inspire others around them to greatness. I would love the opportunity to serve on the NETA board and invigorate all NETA members to become expert explorers.

---

**Wendy Loewenstein**  
**Omaha Public Schools**

Wendy is an instructional technology trainer with Omaha Public Schools. She facilitates the Microsoft Innovative Educator program in the district. She also works with district leadership in an effort to spread awareness and implementation of technology integration. She loves spending time school buildings to see student engagement through the use of technology. Wendy looks forward to joining the NETA board in order to advocate and celebrate innovative, best practices with technology integration in PK-12 classrooms.

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**Becky Miller**  
**Laurel-Concord-Coleridge**

@techy_beky...started it all. I was working full time as both a HS SPED Teacher and Technology Integration Coordinator. Where was I going to find time to on Twitter? Three years later I have learned everything can be found on Twitter. Twitter is a resource for education. Take risks and try something new. As a NETA board member I will encourage educators to step outside their comfort zone, take a risk, and find their reward.

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**Terri Preston**  
**St. Pius X/ St. Leo School**

I am Terri Preston, a PreK-8th technology teacher at St. Pius X/ St. Leo School in Omaha. I love working with students of all ages, and helping our teachers integrate technology successfully. I enjoy learning from my PLN and attending conferences and EdCamps, and then sharing with my colleagues and students. I would love to be part of the NETA board to make personal connections and learn with the many great teachers in Nebraska.

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**Dr. Thomas Rzemyk**  
**Mount Michael Benedictine School**

Dr. Rzemyk currently has over ten years of information technology experience in K-12 schools, and several years of teaching experience in higher education and school safety. He has extensive knowledge in technology integration, curriculum development, strategic planning, 1:1 initiatives, BYOD, and mobile computing. As a technology professional and educator, it is his vision that all faculty, students, and staff have access to the technology resources required to be successful, innovative, and creative in the classroom.

(More candidates on the next page)
(NETA Board of Directors Nominees, continued)

Tina Sauser
Boone Central Schools

Through my 15 years in education I have had the pleasure of being an elementary and high school teacher, Media Specialist, and my current role as a Technology Integration Specialist. For 9 years, the NETA conferences have provided me with strength, ideas, confidence, and ability to provide my students and teachers with a successful, empowering education. I look forward to continuing my role on the board and providing such an inspiring conference to all educators.

Jason Schmidt
Bennington Public Schools

I have had the great privilege to work with the students and staff of Bennington Public Schools for the last five years as the district’s Instructional Technologist. NETA has been key to my personal and professional development ever since I moved to Nebraska, and I would be extremely honored to continue to work for our members with another term on the Board of Directors.

Guy Trainin
University of Nebraska Lincoln

As a nation, we realize that education is the main vehicle for social justice. At the same time, new ways of teaching and learning through technology have emerged. I believe that NETA has helped teachers to combine the two and would like to make sure it continues. Dr. Guy Trainin is an associate professor and Graduate Chair at UNL. In TechEDGE Guy has been studying 21st-century learning. He has published extensively in print and digitally.

Spencer Vogt
Peru State College

Spencer Vogt taught in a middle school classroom for ten years as a social studies teacher and technology guru. This year he joined Peru State College’s School of Education as an Assistant Professor of Education and Technology Coordinator. Spencer wants to bring his passion and knowledge about educational technology to teachers all over the state Nebraska so they too can experience the power and awe that technology can bring to their students and classrooms.

Kurt Zadina
Alliance Public Schools

NETA has been a part of my educational career for about 25 years, it all started when I worked at ESU #3 in Omaha. I enjoyed learning from different presenters when attending the NETA conference over the years, as well as networking with fellow educators. I have worked in educational technology at ESU #3 in Omaha, Plattsmouth Public Schools, Arlington Public Schools, Westside High School and currently in Alliance Public Schools.

(Continued from page 1)

through the schedule, you’ll find something that you are passionate about being presented. Embrace it. Come to learn. Come to network, so that you can continue learning and sharing with presenters, and others throughout the year to keep that fire going.

NETA is very fortunate to have many educators willing to embrace their passion, learn from their experiences, and then share with the rest of us. While I don’t know what we’d do without social networking throughout the year, events like the spring conference offer us the opportunity for quality face-to-face time, allowing us to find that passion again that got us into the classroom in the first place.

See you April 21st.

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, sign up on the conference registration form when you register for the 2016 NETA Spring Conference. If you have questions, contact Gregg Robke, NETA Past President and Conference Volunteer Coordinator, at gregg.robke@netasite.org.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference in April!
School isn’t fun when you’re failing.
However, failure is part of learning, so every student needs to learn how to fail positively and find ways to use the mistakes as stepping stones to success.

A growing number of educators are turning to game-based learning as a way to better engage today’s students and do just that. And we’re not talking about a round of Sorry!

“In traditional education, if you get less than half of the answers correct, you’ve failed,” says Tanya Martin, coordinator for professional development support at Broward County Schools in Florida and professional development chair for ISTE Games and Simulations Professional Learning Network. When playing games, however, students learn how to strategize as they learn skills. If they make a mistake, they get to try again and figure out what to change in order to reach the next level.

“Games have a formula,” Martin adds. “They tell you when you are ready to move up to the next level.” Gamers see a positive trajectory, even if it takes several tries to reach that point.

Compare that to traditional grading, where early failures doom you for the entire year or beyond. “Failure in a scenario shouldn’t doom you, and in the game scenario, it doesn’t. It is all part of the learning process, with communicating and collaboration skills added in.”

Gaming in the classroom
Using games as a tool to enhance learning isn’t a new concept. In the past, educators used board games like Monopoly and Scrabble to help students improve math and vocabulary skills. At the same time, playing a game in class was a special event, often bestowed on the students who least needed the extra (and more stimulating) help.

Today’s game-based learning is all about bringing online games into the classroom. Sometimes the games are specially designed for educational purposes—although Martin warns that too often these games are as exciting as old-fashioned flash cards—but ideally, they are the same commercially offered games that kids are playing at home, like Minecraft and World of Warcraft.

Essentially, game-based learning is taking a game and using it alongside your curriculum, explains Trish Cloud, technology associate at Grand Oak Elementary School, Huntersville, North Carolina, and an ISTE member. Minecraft is her go-to game for the classroom environment. For example, her school’s fifth grade math program includes fractions. “I worked with our math facilitator, and she created a lesson with the situation where the students were ‘hired’ to build a town based on certain criteria, like one-third of the buildings had to be grocery stores and another third had to be clothing stores, and of those buildings, a fraction of them had to be dedicated to a particular product,” Cloud says. The students used a particular type of block in Minecraft that allowed them to see how the fractions worked. Once they understood the concept through the game, the students had to reflect on how they came up with their solutions and show the work.

“When kids create, they have to synthesize the information you are giving them,” says Cloud. “They have to prove they understand the mastery to be able to move forward in the game.” In turn, that allows the students to move forward in the learning process in their core subjects.

Being a gamer helps
Cloud is a self-described gamer, having played Minecraft and World (continued on the next page)
of Warcraft. When she was first alerted that she’d have iPads to use in the classroom, she immediately began to lobby her principal to allow her to add Minecraft to the tablets and to computers. She then created an after-school Minecraft club with a $10 joining fee that covered the costs of adding the game to the devices. “Bringing it in as a club showed the teaching staff how enthusiastic kids were about playing the game,” she says. Her own Minecraft experience gave her insight on how to best incorporate the game into the classroom environment and how to generate interest among the students.

It was definitely a plus when it came to selecting the right software.

“You want to make sure that the game covers the correct concepts, engages the students and has a difficulty level to it, otherwise the win-loss risk never kicks in, and then it is just play,” she says. Her own Minecraft experience gave her insight on how to best incorporate the game into the classroom environment and how to generate interest among the students.

Douglas Kiang, computer science teacher and speaker at Punahou School in Honolulu, Hawaii, doesn’t think that teachers need to have gaming experience—and he doesn’t believe that many are gamers—but they should have some basic concept of how gaming operates. “Be willing to experiment and learn,” he says. When teachers take an active and personal interest in the games, the students pick up on that and they become even more engaged in the overall experience.

If the teacher doesn’t have much personal gaming experience, Novak recommends taking advantage of the ISTE gaming communities and resources. “See what other teachers and schools are doing,” she encourages.

Also keep in mind how you want to use the game in the classroom setting. Is it going to address one core subject and focus on one type of skill, or do you want it to span across several subject areas? Beyond its popularity with school-aged children, one of the reasons Minecraft is the game of choice for so many teachers is because it can be easily used for virtually everything in the curriculum.

Unexpected benefits

While adding games to the curriculum reinforces the skills that make for better learners, games help improve social skills. They can be ice breakers early in the school year, when students are just getting to know each other. And teachers can use them to create a connection with the community as a whole.

For example, Kiang tells the story of a student who created an app for a mother of an autistic child. It is now available in Apple’s store, and it was all due to using game-based learning to help engage the student in project-based learning and to encourage risk-taking.

“You want to make sure that the game covers the correct concepts, engages the students and has a difficulty level to it, otherwise the win-loss risk never kicks in, and then it is just play,” says Kae Novak, chair of ISTE Games and Simulations PLN and instructional designer for Front Range Community College in Denver.

With gamification, teachers can recreate much of the competition angles, such as setting up leader boards to see how students are competing head to head on a project or incorporate a reward system like badges and points toward a certain goal. Outside of the school setting, stores use gamification when they issue loyalty cards and airlines use the concept with frequent flyer miles. In schools, it is used to help motivate students to achieve in traditional academic settings.

There are several specific game dynamics that work best in gamification, Kiang says. One example is the failure dynamic, which circles back to one of the positive aspects of game-based learning: the opportunity for students to learn how to work with and learn from their mistakes.

“In a game like Angry Birds, you don’t want to win every level on the first try. That takes away the fun of the game,” says Kiang. “But we can’t say the fun part of school is failing on the first time on a task.” Using (Continued on the next page)
this dynamic in gamification, students are given the chance to try again and again until they get it right in order to get their badge or reward.

Another dynamic used in gamification is deployment. It’s basically a “be here at a certain time and get an award” technique. Kiang simplifies it even more. “In the real world, we call that happy hour. The tavern is always the same, but if you show up between certain hours, you get special prices.” In the classroom setting, he uses this dynamic to encourage students to show up for review parties. He sets up a time for students to gather online to watch a video together and to engage in a back-channel chat. Even though the review party is optional, setting it up as a special event makes kids want to attend.

There is a downside to using gamification, however. If students already have a passion for a particular subject, the reward system won’t motivate them as much. But then, figure that students with a passion are already highly engaged, so gamification techniques do their job in adding extra spice and incentive to students who need it.

The newest offshoot
Machinima is another technique that involves game playing. It uses screen capturing software to record scenes in video games or any 3D virtual world. “Think of it as movie-making, but you are doing it based on what’s happening on a screen,” Novak explains. “You can do the same editing you would for a documentary.”

Machinima is growing in popularity among students and teachers. It provides opportunities for students to work together on projects based on their game experience, while adding areas like writing scripts and demonstrating their knowledge in specific subject areas.

Room to grow
Game-based learning and the offshoots like gamification and machinima are gaining support in the classroom, but Larry Johnson, CEO of The New Media Consortium, believes there is still a long way to go before it is a mainstreamed teaching tool. Right now, he says, games still haven’t caught on in terms of being turned into specific educational tools.

Also, while it appears that game-based learning engages a lot of students, it won’t be the right tool for every student nor for every part of the curriculum, but that doesn’t mean the future for game-based learning isn’t bright.

“What is needed are people who get gaming and can help the rest learn how it is best applied, when it should be applied, and how to make it a part of the learning ritual,” says Johnson. “I think it has a good shot at entering the mainstream.”

For that reason, Broward County’s Tanya Martin encourages teachers to participate in programs that focus on game-based learning. Taking a course in game design would be a helpful professional development tool, as well.

Games give educators a new way of teaching that adapts to a new generation of students and technology. “Games today are what TV was to kids a generation or two ago,” says Trish Cloud. “If kids learn coding, for example, they are doing it to develop their own games.”

And, no matter what teachers or their parents may think about giving kids too much screen time, it’s important to remember that gaming is not passive—and today’s students don’t respond as well to passive activities like worksheets. Kids who play video games are constantly plotting and learning. That active learning should easily commute from their personal mobile devices into the classroom setting.

So if kids are already using game-based learning in a casual setting, Cloud asks, shouldn’t they be able to use a tool they like and are familiar with to help them achieve a better learning experience in the classroom?

“If you take a good look at game-based learning,” she adds, “you’ll see that it can completely change the way kids master a topic.”

And no one fails when they’re having fun.

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When an approach to learning and teaching earns a nickname or two, that's often a sign the approach has worn out its welcome and is being replaced with a more relevant method.

Such is the case with “sit and get” or “sage on the stage,” the teaching method that chains students to their seats and puts teachers front and center in a lecture format. Those days are on their way out.

Replacing this approach is active learning—and with it learning spaces that allow for collaborative, personalized and project-based learning.

Dale Basye, who co-authored the new ISTE book Get Active: Reimagining Learning Spaces for Student Success with Peggy Grant, Stefanie Hausman and Tod Johnston, understands that transforming learning spaces can be met with resistance. After all, it’s difficult to change teaching methods, give up some control and transform a classroom or create new learning spaces on a budget.

But that doesn’t mean educators can’t use a few tricks to create active learning spaces on a small scale.

“Children respond well to novelty,” Basye says. “If they enter a room that’s different, they open up more to the lesson and are more in the moment as to what learning and teaching can be.”

Basye offers the following suggestions for jumpstarting the creation of active learning spaces:

**Upset the apple cart.**

Get rid of the traditional classroom layout of rows of desks and the teacher at the front of the room. Put chairs or desks in small groups for collaborative work. When it’s time to share the work, move the seating into a circle with the teacher in the middle. Time for independent study? Let students move to the outer edges of the classroom with pillows or cushions.

“Think flexible and change the configuration throughout the day,” Basye suggests. “With this approach, children have equity in the situation and in the physical space. They have power or a say in where they sit as long as it’s not disruptive.”

**Start with affordable solutions.**

Sure, there are some amazing products out there to create a futuristic, sleek active learning space like specialized seating, mobile desks and even hanging reading pods, but you don’t have to invest in the expensive options. Add tennis balls to desk and chair legs so workspaces can be moved without a huge disruption or damage to floors. If you have a small budget to work with, purchase pillows and cubbies to create cozy spaces for independent reading. Or use whiteboard paint to make all sorts of surfaces “writable.” Basye jokes that in addition to allowing children to collaborate and teachers to see if students are understanding a concept, whiteboard surfaces also appeal to students’ natural urge to damage school property.

**Incorporate the four Cs.**

Creating an active learning space shouldn’t just be about moving furniture; it has to advance learning and teaching. Turn to the four Cs —collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking—to visualize how learning spaces might be arranged and how learning will play out in these spaces.

Collaboration is the largest part of the equation so make sure the spaces are flexible. Address creativity by creating a makerspace. Conquer critical thinking and communication, two important components of the ISTE Standards for Students, by making work areas for project-based learning.

**Think outside the classroom (literally).**

Learning doesn’t have to take place within four walls. Allow students to take discussion groups outside. Outfit hallways with beanbag chairs or café tables so students can collaborate. One San Diego, California, school built classrooms with roll-up doors that open onto a courtyard.

“Kids really respond to the freeing feeling, but the teacher is still connected,” Basye says.

**Mimic digital age workplaces**

Libraries need not be places for shushing. Outfit yours with comfortable furniture and have the feel of an internet café. These areas look more like the Google work environment than an old-fashioned school library. It’s an approach that makes sense as educators work to build digital age skills.

**Go mobile with technology.**

Laptops, tablets and smartphones can be easily incorporated into an

*(Continued on the next page)*
Welcome to ISTE 2016!
Mark your calendars, and plan now to attend ISTE 2016 in Denver! Join more than 16,000 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 26–29, 2016, at the Colorado Convention Center.

The NETA Board is again providing an opportunity for a Midwest States reception while at ISTE for NETA members to expand their professional learning network.

NETA Super-earlybird Registration
Complete your conference registration using the ISTE 2016 Website online registration. Register by March 1, 2016 to qualify for the Super Early Bird rate.

Go to: https://conference.iste.org/2016/attend/ and click Register

( Turn Your Classroom...continued)
active learning environment because of their portability and mobility.

Expect four amazing outcomes from your foray into active learning spaces, according to Get Active co-author Peggy Grant who focuses on the theory and pedagogy behind active learning.

Engagement. Because students are making choices about how they learn, what they learn and are involved in projects, they become more absorbed in the learning.

Rich content knowledge. When content is applied to the real world and students participate in virtual visits and simulations in flexible spaces, the learning goes deep.

Digital age skills. The active learning approach and its matching spaces allow students to tinker with technology and other materials without fear of failure. This gives them confidence to learn about new tools, and down the line, the workplace.

Collaboration. Students become self directed and take charge of their learning. Students work together in an assortment of ways, giving them time to self-manage and self-assess.

Want to collaborate with other educators who are passionate about transforming classroom learning spaces? The ISTE Learning Spaces Network includes nearly 700 educators discussing this topic. (To join the Learning Spaces Network and get access to its resources, login at ISTE and go to your network preferences.)
NETA’s Technology Grant Program
Midterm Reports from 2015 Winners

Brenna Barney
Bennington Elementary

**E-books and Audiobooks for Checkout**

The Playaway Audio books have been a HUGE hit with all my students. My original plan was to have them available for K–6 at the beginning of this school year, but because of the high check out rate with upper grade levels, I’ve decided not to have kindergarten and first grade students check them out until after our Christmas break. I cannot keep the Playaways on my bookshelves, which is an awesome problem to have. I cannot wait to purchase more titles for them. Our library currently has 26 Playaways available for my 450 students.

The E-Books haven’t been as big of a hit as I originally thought they would be for our students. They are being checked out, but not nearly as often. The students who have checked them out love them and are asking for more book titles to check out. I am currently working on promoting the E-books more to all students. Our library currently has 40 titles to choose from for single use.

I am thankful to NETA for supporting my technology grant to get Audio books and E-Books off the ground in my building.

Ginger Bygland
Boone Central Elementary School

**Digital Portfolios**

Every year I look for a way for my students to have a collection or “keepsake” of the learning that took place in third grade. Having taught for many years, I have tried putting things in three-ring binders, shoeboxes, manila folders, or any creative idea I could come up with. Now the students save everything in digital portfolios in Google docs.

One of the examples that we use the portfolios for are different writing assignments done throughout the year to show growth. With an iPad, I video each student reading a poem during Poetry Café and place the video in the student’s digital portfolio. Many science projects using Pic Collage app, Google slides, and other activities created in Google classroom are saved as well. Throughout the year I take many pictures of the students doing different activities and having celebrations. At the end of the year I can easily download the pictures into each student’s individual Google doc.

When the school year ends, I make one final folder for each student and place all the important documents into it and label it with their name, third grade, and the year they will graduate. They can access this folder at any time in their Google account. My hope is that when they graduate they can look back at this and have great memories of third grade.

Susan Prabulos
Meadow Lane Elementary

**Kids, Coding, and Robots, Oh My!**

Thanks to NETA, my students are off to follow the yellow brick road of coding and robots! Having a small set of iPads to use with robots has been wonderful! The students can use the iPads not only with the Dash and Dot robots, but also with Sphero and Ozobots.

It is always amazing to see how using a three-dimensional robot can really help students to better understand coding and computer science concepts. My kindergarten and first grade students will soon be using the Scratch, Jr. app on the iPads to learn about and practice coding.

For my students, every week could be CS Ed week, so I would like to make the actual week extra special with fun CS unplugged activities, lots of robots, and coding iPad and web apps. The resources obtained with the NETA grant will make this a reality!

The students at Meadow Lane Elementary are so thankful for the iPads and robot provided by the NETA grant! The students are no longer off to see the wizard... they are the coding wizards, thanks to NETA! ❖
Calendar of Technology Conferences & Seminars

Events of every type for educators, technicians & administrators

February 2016

Midwest Educational Technology Conference (METC)
February 8–10, 2016
St. Charles, MO
metcconference.org

NDLA (Nebraska Distance Learning Association)
Blended Pathways to Learning
February 24–26, 2016
Omaha Marriott (Regency)
Omaha, NE
ndla.org

Nebraska Association for the Gifted (NAG) Conference
February 25–26, 2016
Omaha, NE
www.negifted.org

March 2016

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)
March 21–25, 2016
Savannah, GA
site.aace.org/conf/

April 2016

CoSN’s School Networking Conference
April 4–7, 2016
Washington D.C.
www.cosn.org/events/

May 2016

United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)
May 10–12, 2016
St. Louis, MO
http://www.usdla.org

June 2016

Nebraska Career Education Conference (NCE)
June 6–9, 2016
Younes Conference Center
Kearney, NE
nceconference.com

July 2016

Great Plains Summit featuring Google
July 14–15, 2016
Southwest High School
Lincoln, NE
gpsummit.org

October 2016

Nebraska Fall Ed Tech Conference
October 6–7, 2016
Younes Conference Center
Kearney, NE
fall.netasite.org

iNACOL (International Assoc. for K-12 Online Learning)
October 25–28, 2016
San Antonio, TX
www.inacol.org
NETA Spring Conference Preview
April 21–22, 2016
CenturyLink Center Omaha
455 North 10th Street, Omaha, NE 68102

“Embrace Your Passion”
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.

Conference Highlights

➤ **Venue**
The Spring NETA Conference will again be held at the spacious CenturyLink Center Omaha, near Omaha’s vibrant Old Market.

➤ **190+ Breakout Sessions**
Session topics will be listed on the NETA web site by mid-February.

➤ **Poster/Playground Sessions**
Casually visit poster/playground displays and ask questions about successful projects.

➤ **Strands**
Back by popular demand! A technical strand of sessions for Technology Coordinators and Support Specialists, a strand for 1:1 implementations (device for each student), a digital citizenship strand, a leadership strand and a Google spotlight strand.

➤ **Conversation Sessions!**
Come and learn from the group, not from an individual presenting.

➤ **Maker Spaces**
Explore and learn at a Maker Space!

➤ **Graduate Credit**
You can earn graduate credit for attending both days of the conference.

➤ **Vendor Exhibits**
Your favorite exhibitors will be showing all the latest and greatest tools and solutions!

➤ **Win Big Prizes**
Attend our prize drawings after the closing sessions on Friday!

➤ **Pre-conference Workshops**
Workshops are BACK and will be held Wednesday, April 20, 2016!

Featured Speaker Schedule

This year’s keynote speakers will be participating in *Neb Ed Talks*, short talks designed to inspire you to *Embrace Your Passion*. There will be two presentations each morning. Watch for the keynote speakers to also give featured sessions with other specially invited speakers throughout the two days.

**Neb Ed Talk Speakers Thursday:**
- Robert Dillon
- Jennie Magiera

**Neb Ed Talk Speakers Friday:**
- Rafranz Davis
- Tony Vincent

**Featured Thursday:**
- Robert Dillon
- Jennie Magiera
- Alice Steinglass
  (Sponsored by CSTA, UNL Department of Computer Science and Engineering, and NETA)
- Therese Willkomm
  (Sponsored by Assistive Technology Partnership/Education)

**Featured Friday:**
- Paige Jaeger
  (Sponsored by Nebraska School Librarians Association and NETA)
- Tony Vincent
- Rachelle Wooten

**Featured Thursday and Friday:**
- Ken Shelton

*(Find more information about keynote and invited speakers on the next pages)*
In a time when the world and our work spin faster than ever, is it still possible to notice the world around us? Being intentional about noticing gives us this opportunity to truly see through a lens of hope and possibility for our kids, our schools, and our community.

There are many great stories of innovation happening in education, but too rarely are these coming from public schools serving high needs communities. The educators dedicated to these students often shy away from taking risks as they must dedicate their focus towards other challenges. However high risk situations like these call for taking the biggest risks of all.

Paige Jaeger
Paige Jaeger is a computer programmer-turned librarian and educational administrator. She spent 15 years teaching at both the elementary and secondary levels where she creatively packaged reading and research. Paige considers herself an INQUIRY advocate and believes that we are equipping the “next generation to grow up and run the world. Heaven help us if they cannot think.” She now delivers PD for schools and is the Instructional Focus Editor for School Library Connection magazine.

Ken Shelton
Ken Shelton currently holds an M.A. in Education, specializing in Educational Technology, and New Media Design and Production. Ken is an Apple Distinguished Educator and a Google Certified Teacher, and was also named to the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Educational Technology Task Force. Ken regularly gives keynotes, presentations, and leads workshops (nationally and internationally), covering a wide variety of Educational Technology, Technology Integration, Digital Age Literacies, Creative Expression, Photography, Visual Learning, Visual Storytelling, and Instructional Design topics. His 14 years as an educator included teaching Middle School technology. Ken is currently a Director of Professional Development for EdTechTeam.

Alice Steinglass
Alice Steinglass runs the product, engineering and marketing teams at Code.org. Her team works with education and software companies across the industry to run the Hour of Code—a global movement reaching tens of millions of students in over 180 countries. Her team also builds tools and software to support introductory computer science classes for students from K–12. Alice is dedicated to increasing diversity in computer science by giving every student the opportunity to learn computer science in school. With a student base that is 43% female and 37% African American or Hispanic, Code.org has already enrolled over two million girls in the Computer Science Fundamentals classes. Prior to Code.org, Alice managed the PM team for the UX Platform on HoloLens, designed APIs and developer client libraries for Xbox 360, ran an ecosystem outreach and UX team for Windows and built project management tools.

Therese Willkomm
Therese Willkomm is the director of ATinNH, the New Hampshire state wide assistive technology program with the Institute on Disability and is an assistant professor in the department of occupational therapy at the University of New Hampshire. She holds a Ph.D. in rehabilitation technology from the University of Pittsburgh and has over 25 years experience in assistive technology.
(Invited Speakers, continued)

providing/managing assistive technology services. She is known nationally and internationally as “The McGyver” of assistive technology. Dr. Willkomm has presented in 38 states, five foreign counties, and three U.S. Territories and authored 22 publications including her most recent book titled Make A Difference Today —Assistive Technology Solutions in Minutes.

Rachelle Wooten

Rachelle Wooten is a Digital Learning Specialist with Fort Bend ISD. Her passion is designing and facilitating a professional development experience that empowers, inspires, and equips teachers with innovative, proven solutions to reach and teach each of their students. She is the author of the iBook: Mission ‘Pod’sible: A Teacher’s Guide to Podcasting. She’s an authorized Google Education Trainer, Microsoft Innovative Educator, Adobe Education Leader, and Certified Adobe Education Trainer. She has also earned distinctions such as: an Edmodo Certified Trainer, and Common Sense Graphite Certified Educator, and is a Nearpod Pioneer. She has presented at the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA), SXSWedu, Region 4 Education Service Center (Houston area), Rice University, the ISTE Conference and Association of Supervision, Curriculum, and Development (ASCD).

Conference and Registration Details

Posters, Playgrounds & Maker Spaces!

On Thursday afternoon, explore and learn at a Maker Space. Areas that will be showcased include:

• **Make it DO**—What can you make existing equipment DO with logic, programming, and creative ideas. A “maker’s” take on robotics, coding, and unique adaptations of different tools.

• **Make it NEW**—Rapid prototyping from raw materials and finished products to actually implement your ideas. Additive and subtractive manufacturing through 3D printing, engraving/carving, and creative design.

• **Make an IMPACT**—Making a difference in this world through social innovation takes a keen eye on the needs of your community. Using sensors, tools, and innovative skills, you can make an IMPACT on someone’s life.

• **Make it YOU**—YOU are uniquely YOU. Here is your chance to be creative with design, wearables, and personalized touches. Make your statement here!

On Friday watch for the gallery of Poster/Playground Sessions. The sessions will highlight the teachers who received NETA 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 1, 2016.

Back in 2016! 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

Reserve Your Hotel Room

Don’t Forget to Reserve Your Hotel Room! NETA has negotiated discounted rates at the Hilton Omaha (connected to the CenturyLink Center Omaha), Hilton Garden Inn Omaha Downtown and the Courtyard by Marriott—Omaha Downtown. For more information on how to reserve your room please visit www.netasite.org. Click on Spring Conference Information and then on Housing and Logistics.

Food Choices at the Conference

• Gourmet Coffee Cart
• Alexander’s BBQ
• Taco Cart

Concession stand located in Exhibit Hall A:

• Smoked Andouille Sausage
• Chili Cheese Coney
• Nacho Grandeo
• Jumbo Hot Dog
• Nachos, Pretzels & Popcorn
• Beverages
The following workshops are optional and can be added on to the conference experience when registering. Attendees need not be registered for the conference in order to participate in a workshop, but either way pre-registration for workshops is required. There is limited seating in order to ensure the highest quality learning experience for participants, so don't wait to register! Be prepared to bring your own device (BYOD) for pre-conference workshops. The instructors will inform registrants of details prior to the workshops.

**Wednesday, April 20, 2016**

1:00–4:00 p.m.

**workshop #**

**101 3D Printing in the Classroom... Are You Part of the 3D Revolution?**

*Tim Watters & Todd Woolston, Mid West 3D Solutions*

From core classes to electives...we have 3D printing for everyone! Are you lucky enough to have a 3D printer, but don't know how to use it? Maybe you would like to get a 3D printer but don't know what to look for? Come and learn here! In this workshop we will discuss and demonstrate the latest in 3D printing technology and curriculum. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own PC with design software capable of exporting a 3D model in STL file format. *(Cost: $75)*

**501 DIY-Lights, Camera, Classroom Action! iPad**

*Lisa Pospishil, Beth Gentrup & Leann Widhalm, Norfolk Public Schools*

Video creation IS the educational Superfood you need in your classroom! Join us for an easy, step-by-step guide packed with everything needed to spark the imagination and creativity of students of all ages. Video will become time-friendly and quickly a part of any classroom routine. When done right, video projects will have classrooms cycling through all levels of Bloom’s, The Learning Pyramid, 21st Century Skills, and any pedagogy you can name. *(Cost: $75)*

NOTE: There will be 5 DIY iTeleprompter and Microphone solution sets drawn at the end, BUT if you want your VERY OWN iPad Classroom Video Kit to make yourself, add the $40-iPad Classroom Video Kit: Includes materials to build your own DIY iTeleprompter, Microphone extension, and pill microphone. (To add the $40 video kit, use this for the workshop number: 501 with kit for a total of $115.)*

**102 GAFE Admin Console Technical Retreat**

*Karl Hehr, Ames Community School District*

Do you manage Google Apps for your school or district? Have you configured your Admin Console around best practices? The default console does not come configured for a school environment so find out what settings you really should change by attending this technical session. In the session we will provide a deep dive of the Admin Console, which will include tips on how to manage users, groups, services and Chromebooks with ease. As well as a look at the third party services which will make your life easier and protect and secure your domain. *(Cost: $75)*

**502 Google Tools and Activities for Engaging K-12 Learners**

*Pam Krambeck, Google Certified Trainer*

Participants in this workshop will explore a variety of Google tools and sample K-12 classroom activities that engage learners of all ages. Model activities will be demonstrated and shared via Google Drive for downloading. This workshop will be geared to teachers who are looking to take the first step at using Google tools in their classroom. *(Cost: $75)*

**103 Empower Students with Workforce Ready Skills**

*Microsoft Innovative Educator*

Prepare today’s learners for their futures by leveraging communication and collaboration tools that extend learning opportunities beyond the walls of the classroom. In this workshop, participants will practice real time collaboration in Office 365, anytime communication with Skype, explore the endless possibilities with OneNote, and publish interactive content in a Sway. *(Free workshop.)*

**503 iPads in the Elementary Classroom**

*Jeffrey Bernadt, Jeanette Carlson, Ann Feldmann, Bellevue Public Schools*

Come join us as we help you put your classroom on a path to creating a personalized learning environment for your students. This workshop will focus on iPad innovation at the K-6 level. We will explore a core suite of apps and strategies specific to math and language arts to empower students to create, reflect, and collaborate. The workshop will be hands-on with time for teacher planning and creation, so bring your iPad, your computer, and any curriculum materials for an upcoming unit. *(Cost: $75)*

http://netasite.org
Conference Registration

CenturyLink Center Omaha—April 21–22, 2016
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.

• Conference Registration begins February 1, 2016. Early bird registration discount ends March 18, 2016 (postmarked).
• 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) __________________________

Please list involvement/memberships of other state level educational organizations:
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

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 ____________________________
Twitter @ __________________________ My Passion is ____________________________________________

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

NOTE: Registrations may be paid by check, purchase order, MasterCard, American Express or VISA.
Note registration increases listed below after March 18.

Conference Registration Rates (Please check the appropriate box below.)

☐ Full conference, both days [early bird rate] ................................................................. $139
  [Includes all sessions and exhibits. After March 18 cost is $159.]
☐ Thursday ONLY [early bird rate] ................................................................................. $114
  [Includes all sessions and exhibits. After March 18 cost is $139.]
☐ Friday ONLY [early bird rate] ..................................................................................... $114
  [Includes all sessions and exhibits. After March 18 cost is $139.]
☐ Lead Presenter .............................................................................................................. $39
  [one per session—additional presenters must pay full registration]
☐ Student conference pass (for Higher Education students—not for K–12) ............. $39
  [Includes full conference and inclusion on NETA listserv. Full-time student ID Required.]
☐ Vendor Exhibits ONLY (includes membership) ...................................................... $59

Enter your registration rate (depending upon early bird rate or after March 18th) .................................................................................................................................$________________

List up to two optional workshops by workshop number: 1) ___________ 2) __________  Workshop total .................$________________

Subtotal (Conference registration plus any optional workshops) ..............................................$________________

Group Discount* (Subtract $10 for a full registration or $5 for one-day) .................$ __________________

*Must be in groups of 10 or more registrations paid with the same check, PO, or charge card

Total Amount Enclosed (Subtotal - 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: NETA16 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

Refund Policy: Conference registration refunds will be made only if notification is made to the registration office listed below by April 1, 2016. A $15 handling fee will be subtracted from the refund.

http://netasite.org
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 2015, your membership is included with your registration. You will receive a printed newsletter. If you would like to receive a printed newsletter, but did not attend the Spring Conference, you may pay $35 for a printed September, November, February and April newsletter. Make checks payable to NETA. To become a member, please fill out the above form and mail with check to:

- [ ] I am a new member
- [ ] I was recruited by this current NETA member

NETA Membership
PO Box 484
Gretna, NE 68028

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