Over the past four years, the EducationQuest Hall of Fame program has highlighted successes achieved by those who have used our programs and services. Our 2019 Hall of Fame inductee is Dr. Nancy Bond, supervisor of school counseling for Omaha Public Schools. Read more about Dr. Bond on page 3.
As school districts grow, we’re poised to provide services

EducationQuest Foundation has provided college-planning services to Nebraska high schools since 1986. Over the past 33 years, we have continued steadfast support – even as school districts have faced consolidations or growth.

Recently, we’re seeing significant growth in the number of students in the metropolitan areas of the state, and will soon see a noteworthy uptick in the number of high schools in the greater Omaha and Lincoln areas.

Omaha Public Schools plans to open two new high schools, one at 60th & L Streets and one at 156th & Ida Streets in August 2022, plus a middle school in 2023.

The community of Elkhorn will open its third high school at 180th & West Maple in August.

In Lincoln, a team of LPS stakeholders will soon make a final recommendation to the school board on the construction of either one full-facility high school or two smaller high schools with some shared facilities. This will require bond issue approval by voters in Lincoln in 2020.

Assuming all these plans come to fruition, EducationQuest will be poised to serve potentially five new high schools in the coming months and years. This will include our free college planning materials, financial aid programs, Apply2College resources, and other services.

No matter the size of your school district, we are committed to helping all Nebraska high school and middle school students achieve education beyond high school now and into the future.

Liz S. Koop
President & CEO
EducationQuest Foundation

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**MESSAGE FROM LIZ**

**FAST FACTS ABOUT NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOLS**

- **105,470** HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**
- **244** PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS*
- **190** NONPUBLIC DISTRICTS*
- **89%** PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE*
- **70%** COLLEGE CONTINUATION RATE*
- **587** MORE HIGH SCHOOL GRADS EXPECTED IN 2027-2028 THAN IN 2017-2018*

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*CCPE 2019 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report

**2018-2019 Nebraska Department of Education

Published biannually for education leaders in Nebraska.

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Nancy Bond inducted into EducationQuest Hall of Fame

Dr. Nancy Bond, supervisor of school counseling for Omaha Public Schools, is EducationQuest Foundation’s 2019 Hall of Fame inductee.

EducationQuest selected Dr. Bond because of her dedication to helping all OPS students achieve college and career success, and her efforts to help EducationQuest ensure its programs remain relevant and valuable to students and families.

In her role at OPS, Dr. Bond supervises 172 counselors and central office staff using a framework that encourages them to engage with students and help them form solid connections to school. She believes the influence that educators have on students greatly impacts the eventual college and career decisions that students make.

**Dr. Bond’s History at OPS**

Since starting her career at OPS in 1985, Dr. Bond has served as a counselor at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, and held other administrative positions within the central office. She is also the former assistant principal at Omaha North High Magnet School, former president of the Nebraska School Counselor Association, and a former delegate within the American School Counselor Association.

**What the Award Means to Her**

Dr. Bond said, “This Hall of Fame recognition means so much to me! Personally, I’ve always believed my work to be a mission. Professionally, I know this work can only be done through strong, collaborative efforts. I’ve admired EducationQuest since the early days of my career at Bryan High School. Nebraska couldn’t have a stronger advocate for college access than EducationQuest. Our students’ opportunities and futures are greatly enhanced by your efforts. Thank you for this tremendous honor for work that is truly from the heart!”

Joan Jurek, EducationQuest’s Director of College Planning in Omaha, said, “Nancy has been a valuable college access partner. We appreciate her work on the FAFSA initiative, the Omaha College Fair, and college planning programs within OPS.”

**ABOUT THE HALL OF FAME**

EducationQuest developed the Hall of Fame in 2016 to highlight college and career successes achieved by those who have used our programs and services. EducationQuest selects Hall of Fame inductees annually and honors them at our biennial College Access Symposium.
Two ways to help seniors get to college

Completing college applications and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are the most critical steps seniors must take to get to college.

By participating in two initiatives, Nebraska high schools can help seniors successfully complete these often-overwhelming processes.

Apply2College Campaign
Register your school to host an Apply2College event next fall during which seniors will get hands-on help with college applications. EducationQuest will provide you with a banner, stickers, and other materials you can use to ensure a successful event.

Last year, 163 Nebraska high schools hosted events during which 9,110 college applications were submitted. We would like to see more high schools participate this fall! To register, see “Apply2College” in the Professionals section at EducationQuest.org.

FAFSA Completion Initiative

The FAFSA is critical to ensuring college access for your students. But what if you learned that many of your seniors didn’t successfully complete the FAFSA process?

By participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative, your school or agency can access FAFSA submission and completion status updates on individual students and provide help to those who need it.

To sign up, contact Ritchie Morrow, financial aid officer for the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, at ritchie.morrow@nebraska.gov or 402.471.0032.

Karen Thurber named Mentor of the Year

EducationQuest’s Reaching Your Potential Scholarship Program includes the recruitment of college mentors to help ensure the success of scholarship recipients. Each year we give our recipients the opportunity to nominate their mentor for our Mentor of the Year award.

EducationQuest’s 2019 Reaching Your Potential Mentor of the Year is Karen Thurber, Assistant Director of Student Support Services at Creighton University. Karen was nominated by her mentee, Nhu Y Nguyen. Following is an excerpt from Nhu’s nomination letter:

Karen goes above and beyond for everyone in Student Support Services, whether co-workers or students. Her office is where pep talks happen before a big test, where you talk about your dream job after graduation, and where you can map out your life for the next five years while eating fruit snacks she has stocked in her cabinet. Regardless of why I go to Karen’s office, I never walk out the same way I walked in. I feel more loved, more confident in myself, and less stressed about what is to come.
Eleven students receive $500 scholarships

EducationQuest awards several $500 scholarships each year designed to encourage students to follow us on social media, attend a Financial Aid Program, and use our ScholarshipQuest tool. During 2018-19, 11 students benefited from these programs.

Get Social Scholarship

Students who follow EducationQuest on Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram can apply for this $500 scholarship every time we reach certain follower milestones. Most recently, we awarded scholarships to Caitlyn Yager, a senior at Lincoln East High School, and Katie Wall, a sophomore at Ashland-Greenwood High School.

Financial Aid Program Scholarship

Students who attended an EducationQuest Financial Aid Program last fall were eligible to register for this scholarship. Six winners were drawn from those who registered. They are Casidy Baumgartner, a junior at Boone Central High School; Morgan Birkel, a senior at David City Aquinas High School; Lydia Eliason, a senior at Grand Island Senior High School; Dawson Kriha, a senior at Bayard High School; Lorna Maxon, a senior at Laurel-Concord-Coleridge High School; and Mackenzie Thomas, a senior at Elkhorn High School.

Scavenger Hunt Scholarship

Eligible students can apply for this $500 scholarship after they set up a profile in ScholarshipQuest – EducationQuest’s database of over 2,000 Nebraska-based scholarships. They “scavenge” around EducationQuest’s website to find answers to questions in a survey. Winners are drawn from those who correctly answer the questions.

This year’s winners are Jocelyn Rauert, a senior at Wood River High School, and another student who wishes to remain anonymous.
Over the past year, EducationQuest arranged for California-based Families in Schools to come to Nebraska to conduct their *Transition to College* facilitator training.

Representatives from 38 schools and organizations participated in the training, which is designed to engage parents in the transition to college process. Sessions were held in August 2018 and January 2019.

Those who participated in the training have or will set up *Transition to College* training at their locations for parents. This six-week program addresses the transition of students – especially those who are low-income and first-generation – from high school to college.

“We have been desperately searching for a way to increase parent engagement - especially with our Spanish-speaking families. We also had the issue of parents confused about how to best help their student in the college process. This program addressed both pieces.”

– Stacy Athow, counselor at Ralston High School

### Schools and organizations that participated in August 2018 training

- Beatrice High School
- East Butler Public School
- Falls City High School
- Friend Public School
- HTRS Schools
- Lexington High School
- Lincoln Public Schools
- Migrant Education Program
- Millard South High School

### Schools and organizations that participated in January 2019 training

- Auburn High School
- Central Valley Public Schools
- Chadron Public Schools
- Crete High School
- Emerson-Hubbard Community Schools
- Lincoln High School
- Lincoln North Star High School
- Lincoln Northeast High School
- Lincoln Southeast High School

- Omaha Benson High School
- Omaha Northwest High Magnet School
- Plattsburgh High School
- Ralston High School
- Shelby-Rising Public Schools
- St. Luke Teen Center
- Urban League of Nebraska
- Wood River Rural High School
- WTN Higher Education (Winnebago Tribe)
Raise your hand if you attended Transition to College training! These participants attended the August training session.

This team participated in the January training session.

**NEST partnership promotes college savings**

EducationQuest is continuing its partnership with the State Treasurer’s Office and First National Bank to promote the importance of saving for college through the Nebraska Educational Savings Trust (NEST). NEST is Nebraska’s state-sponsored 529 college savings program.

Over the past year, EducationQuest has promoted college savings by hosting a webinar, writing and posting a series of blog articles at EducationQuest.org, and by making the NEST brochure available to schools via our material ordering process. Most promotion efforts have targeted middle schools.

“When students save money specifically for college, their expectation is that they will indeed go to college – and take steps to get there,” said Kristin Ageton, EducationQuest Director of College Access.

Ageton cited a 2017 IHEP study that shows children with college savings between $1 and $499 are three times as likely to attend college and four times as likely to graduate as those without any college savings.
For many years, EducationQuest has produced college planning publications for students in sixth grade through adult learners. These publications are provided free of charge to Nebraska middle schools, high schools, and community agencies.

Periodically, we gather feedback from students, school counselors, and agencies to determine the effectiveness of these pieces.

Last fall, we evaluated our KnowHow2GO to College publication, which has served 8th-10th grade students for the past 10 years. Based on the results, a revised KnowHow2GO publication will now serve 7th and 8th grade students, and we are developing a new publication - Exploring College - for 9th and 10th grade students.

KnowHow2GO to College

Now 12 pages, this publication provides information and activities to help 7th and 8th grade students discover career interests, learn about types of colleges and degrees, and find ways to save for college.

Exploring College

This 12-page publication provides steps to help 9th and 10th grade students succeed in high school, consider career and college choices, and learn about ways to pay for college.

Other EducationQuest publications

EducationQuest also produces Look2College for 6th grade students, College Prep for 11th and 12th grade students, an Adult Learner Handbook, and College Planning for Students with Disabilities.

Nebraska middle schools, high schools, and community agencies recently ordered these and other free EducationQuest materials for delivery in August.