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Dear HEA Members:

Welcome to a new year! I am Jennifer Alexander your HEA President this year. For those of you who don't know me, this will be my fifteenth year teaching in USD261. I taught language arts at Campus for eleven years, for the past three years I have been at HMS; I am now at HWMS teaching 7th and 8th grade. I am looking forward to this year and intend to do my best as your president. I hope you are all eager to start a new year with our students. I know I am!

Did you know anyone can be a member of NEA? This summer I attended the national assembly of delegate representatives of unions across the nation. There were over 9,000 people housed in one convention hall. It was amazing listening to educators across the nation address issues affecting educators. Did you know there are 3.2 million members of NEA? This includes retirees, educators who serve as teachers for military personnel families stationed around the world, administrators, classified staff (para-support, secretaries, bus drivers, etc...), and people not in education who just want to be friends of education. Isn't that amazing? Remember, that as a member, we have that many people behind us.

Please think about what defines our union. Primarily, we are here to help provide the best education we can for our students. I believe everyone in education wants this for his and her pupils. HEA, with the support at our local uni-serve, state level(KNEA) and national (NEA) organization, helps to make that happen. But ALL of us make up this organization at all levels. As a member, you help make our kids the best that they can be. As a professional you can do this by attending training offered by the district at the learning center or by exploring the HEA web link on the teacher section of the district website, you can find the KNEA and NEA links that lead to seminars and training sessions on numerous educational issues. We have so many resources available to us, that it can be overwhelming. Take what applies to you and use it.

Locally, HEA (building representatives, officers, and fellow members), and our local uni-serve office in Wichita are some of your primary resources when you need legal assistance for either educational or personal purposes. Ask for help when needed. Don't be afraid to ask for help. If we don't know the answer locally, we'll find someone who does. If you don't know who your building representative is, check out the HEA link. Additionally, they are on the attached tentative monthly meeting schedule. You will see that at the moment some buildings do not have a building representative, but as those positions are filled I'll will have that list updated on the website.

Finally ACCESS Cards (KNEA member discount cards) are available. Building representatives and officers will be getting together to separate them out by building; we hope to get them handed to you by the last week of August, if not sooner.

Once again I hope the best for everyone this year. May it be full of wondrously inquisitive kids who successfully grow all year long.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Alexander