

Gifted students need educational options

By Alice Hrnicek

Mentor programs, internships, research studies and college study should be provided for gifted high school students, even in small communities, an official of the Nebraska Department of Education said.

"We do need to look at the various options for those gifted high school students who need that advanced education," Sheila Brown, supervisor of Programs for the Gifted, said at the Nebraska Association for the Gifted Annual Conference at the Hilton Hotel Friday.

Brown said there are ways to make options available for gifted students other than a legislative proposal which would help them enter college or a vocational school a year early by providing \$1,000 state scholarships.

Speaking to a group of parents and educators, Brown said there is a danger in developing children's mental abilities without regard to instructing them in the humanities.

"The child is a whole," she said. "We need the art and music experiences."

She warned that with federal budget cuts, many music and art teachers may be eliminated from schools. The classroom teacher will acquire greater responsibilities.

"The teacher has to become the genius," she said. "School boards want children to know as much as they can. Kids aren't getting the complete learning experience. There isn't time."

"I hope the teacher isn't alone. I hope the network is kept broad enough," she said.

Children need to be nurtured in an environment that lets them develop at their own pace, she said.

"We feel that we must have all the answers," Brown said. "We have to give the child some credit."

Humans have a drive to fulfill themselves psychologically and physically, she said, by pursuing studies of interest to them.

Children should be encouraged to discuss substantive issues, such as world affairs, which require moral decisions, she said.

Brown encouraged people to take a role in the newly formed federal Commission for Excellence, which has been set up to assess American schools for exceptional teaching programs.

"We in Nebraska need to describe for the commission our excellent programs," she said.

ERA not dead; tough battle lies ahead

By Gah Huey

Although the Equal Rights Amendment faces a tough battle in the months ahead, the amendment will pass, Kathy Wilson predicted Saturday at the fifth annual dinner of the Lincoln-Lancaster Commission on the Status of Women.

Wilson, chairwoman of the National Women's Political Caucus in Washington, D.C., spoke to a crowd of about 400 in the Nebraska Union. She said she personally believes that should ERA fail to be ratified by enough states by the June 30 deadline, the fight for its ratification will continue.

"The road to ratification has been hard — much harder than thought," Wilson said. "But women are coming out strong — more powerful than ever."

Wilson said women's attempts to advance in the political scene primarily have been in local politics.

"Women need to be in local politics where they can start to make a difference," she said.

The number of women making state legislature bids has increased, Wilson said.

"We are focusing on state legislatures because we are tired of being denied ERA."

Wilson said the national caucus will recruit and train women to run for offices. "The NWPC needs people in key positions who will listen. We need lawmakers who will recognize women's concerns and draft laws helping women," she said.

Wilson criticized President Reagan for not fulfilling his campaign promises.

"Only 44 women hold official positions under Reagan's administration," Wilson said. "Women occupy lower positions in his administration than they did in Carter's."

She applauded Sandra O'Connor's appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court, however.

"Only one of 43 of Reagan's promises to fill the circuit court has been achieved," she said. "Reagan promises to champion the women's movement without ERA, but the programs he claimed would help everyone have hurt women the most."

The national caucus has helped to change the image of women, but now there needs to be a change in numbers, according to Wilson. Women must and do realize they can participate in politics, she said.

"More women than ever before are running for political offices," the chairwoman said.

Wilson said the national caucus has allied with other organizations. She said several unions have supported the national caucus through funding.

But the national caucus still has a long way to go with the recruitment of minority women, she said.

"The poorer woman is more concerned with her economic situation than with politics," she said.

For the next few months, Wilson will be pushing for passage of the ERA. She also will work to recruit women.

"We are working on getting women into districts where candidates are insensitive and where our victory margin has been slim," she said.

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