



the good news series

On a cold day in February, with a snow storm threatening, state senators began debate on a bill that focused on the importance of teaching civic readiness. In the balcony and on the floor of the legislature were dozens of leaders from Nebraska's Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). The students were celebrating their Legislative Day at the Capitol to learn about state government and, coincidentally, civic readiness.

"It was quite the coincidence that the senators were talking about civics education while we were there," said Drake Vorderstrasse, the State Vice President for FBLA from Hastings Adams Central. "It's a hot button issue in school and around the state. We want to learn about real-world topics. This discussion was great and I learned a lot about different opinions on how to teach civics."

Nebraska has seven CTSOs: DECA, Educators Rising, FBLA, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, and SkillsUSA.

The CTSO Legislative Day was designed to help students develop a better understanding of Nebraska's Unicameral. While at the Capitol, students met with state leaders and attended legislative hearings. CTSO State Officers were even recognized during floor debate by state senators.

"It's really cool that FBLA gave me the opportunity to meet with senators in person," said Vorderstrasse.

Educators Rising's State Secretary Emily Lorenzen from Omaha Burke agreed. "This is such a unique opportunity to talk with senators. We got to thank them for supporting CTSOs and they got to see the real-life students they are affecting."

Participants also had a chance to meet with Nebraska Commissioner of Education Matthew L. Blomstedt and a member of the State Board of Education.

"It was really interesting to listen to different opinions and how leaders do research and make decisions. Most students don't get a chance to experience this in school or even in their lifetime. I appreciated the opportunity," said Lorenzen.

More information about Nebraska's Career and Technical Education programs and CTSOs can be found online at: <https://www.education.ne.gov/nce/nebraska-career-technical-student-organizations/>.



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