



**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

Wanting a change, Rita Nickel applied to Chase County Schools (CCS) and was accepted as a fourth grade teacher this year.

The 14-year teaching veteran likes seeing growth in her students, and comparing them from the beginning of the year to the end, “how far they’ve come and how they’ve matured.”

Nickel, who is a native of Loup City, was a third grade teacher at the Omaha Nation Public School in Macy from 2000-12.

Last year, besides being a reading facilitator at Omaha Nation, she also was the Intervention Project Manager for a \$3 million federal school improvement grant for Omaha Nation.

The grant’s purpose was to improve the school and its reading and math scores, as well as graduation rates.

Nickel graduated from Loup City High School in 1990, then obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education with an early childhood endorsement from the University of Nebraska-Kearney in 2000.

She then received a Masters of Science degree in administration from Wayne State University in 2011.

Full of enthusiasm for her class, Nickel said she most enjoys seeing her students learn, and “their thought process. I love listening to great discussions. I don’t even have to talk” while they engage in debate, she said.

“It gives me goose bumps.”

Nickel’s daughter Rachael, 21, attends the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Son Randall, 19, attends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

She enjoys reading, gardening, bowling and people watching when outside the classroom.

As for her move to Imperial, Nickel felt that she had “done what I could” at Omaha Nation. “I wanted a change and new challenges.”