

NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING NOTIFICATION AND AGENDA

- Meeting Date:** Friday, January 7, 2022 9:00 AM
- Meeting Title:** State Board of Education Meeting Notification and Agenda
- Location:** Embassy Suites by Hilton Lincoln
Regents Ballroom A
1040 P Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
- Web Streaming:** Live web streaming will be available through the State Board of Education website: www.education.ne.gov/StateBoard/
- Agenda:** Except for emergency items added at the time of the meeting, the agenda will not be changed less than 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting and any changes will be immediately posted on the website. The Board will attempt to adhere to the sequence of the published agenda, but reserves the right to adjust the order of items if necessary and may elect to take action on any of the items listed.
- Interpreter:** If you need interpreter services or other reasonable accommodations, please contact the Nebraska Department of Education at (402) 471-5059 five (5) days prior to the meeting to coordinate arrangements.
- Website:** An electronic version of the agenda and support materials are available on the State Board of Education's Agenda page: www.education.ne.gov/StateBoard/Agendas.html
- Lunch:** On Friday, January 7, 2022, if necessary, the State Board of Education may break for lunch at 12:30 p.m. The Board may resume work on the agenda at approximately 1:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER
State Board of Education President
 - 1.1. Roll Call
State Board of Education President
 - 1.2. Pledge of Allegiance
State Board of Education President
 - 1.3. Announcement of the placement of the Open Meetings Act information
State Board of Education President
2. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT
Commissioner Blomstedt
 - 2.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process
Commissioner Blomstedt

- 2.1.A. Commissioner's recommendations and items to be removed from consent agenda
Commissioner Blomstedt
- 2.2. Report On Rules
Commissioner Blomstedt
- 2.3. Board Operations Information
Ryan Foor
- 2.4. COVID-19 Meeting Protocol
Commissioner Blomstedt
- 3. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS
State Board of Education President
- 4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
State Board of Education President
- 5. CONSENT AGENDA
State Board of Education President
 - 5.1. Board Member Out-of-State Travel Approval
 - 5.2. Committee Appointments
 - 5.3. Contract Approvals
 - 5.3.A. Authorize the Commissioner to amend the contract with Colyar Technology Solutions Inc for the purpose of implementing an enhancement approved for payment with USDA non-competitive Technology Innovation Grant funds
Kayte Partch and Zainab Rida
 - 5.3.B. Authorize the Commissioner to approve a contact with Teachstone Training, LLC.
Melody Hobson
 - 5.3.C. Authorize the Commissioner to continue to contract with Student1 to implement NDE Central Data Repository Phase 2 ETL Development and to maintain Level 4 technical support related to integration of Ed-Fi technologies pursuant to 2019 Federal SLDS Grant terms
Deputy Commissioner Halstead and Kristin Yates
 - 5.4. Grant Approvals
 - 5.5. Lease Approvals

5.5.A. Authorize the Commissioner to enter into a revised lease agreement between the Department of Administrative Services, State Building Division, and the Department of Education, Nebraska VR, for office space in Omaha, Nebraska for the period of 3/1/22 through 2/28/27
Lindy Foley and Bryce Wilson

5.6. Minutes of the Previous State Board of Education Meeting

5.7. Miscellaneous Approvals

5.7.A. Receive monies for the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Activities
Commissioner Blomstedt

6. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

State Board of Education President

6.1. Policy Committee

Acting Chair, Maureen Nickels

6.1.A. Action Item: Approve proposed revisions to State Board Bylaw B2, *Board Committees*
Maureen Nickels

6.1.B. Action Item: Approve proposed revisions to State Board Bylaw B9, *Public Participation at Board Meetings*
Maureen Nickels

6.2. Commissioner's Appraisal Committee

Chair, Maureen Nickels

6.2.A. Action Item: Approve revisions to the Commissioner's job description and the 2021-22 performance appraisal instrument
Chair Maureen Nickels

6.3. Budget and Finance Committee

Acting Chair, Maureen Nickels

6.3.A. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to amend a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to extend staff partnership contracts until December 2024 (Referred to Committee at the 12/3/2021 meeting)
Lane Carr

7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

State Board of Education President

7.1. Consider the Hearing Officer's Recommended Decision In the Matter of the Appeal of Delores Gladbach (Executive Session, if needed)

Leslie Donley

- 7.2. Review In-State Travel Authorization Reports
- 7.3. Review Monthly Board Travel Expense Report
- 7.4. Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Content Area Standards Process
Chair Jacquelyn Morrison
- 7.5. Accept the Commissioner's Proposed Plan for Use of the Remainder of American Rescue Plan (ESSER III) Funds
Commissioner Blomstedt
- 7.6. Authorize the Commissioner to contract with FACTS Education Solutions, LLC for services and support for the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund to supplement nonpublic schools not fully supported by the Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools program or the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for the period of January 8, 2021, through December 30, 2023
Jen Utemark
- 7.7. Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Tamera Miyasato, dba Ha'hanna Consulting, LLC
Amy Rhone
- 7.8. Authorize the Commissioner to approve a grant to fund NDE Journey to Inclusion Project in partnership with SPED Strategies, LLC
Amy Rhone
- 7.9. Discuss Board Committee Membership
State Board of Education President
8. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS
State Board of Education President
 - 8.1. Contracts Approved by Commissioner
 - 8.2. Grants Approved by Commissioner
 - 8.3. Contested Case Update
 - 8.4. Written Public Comment
State Board of Education President
9. GOOD OF THE ORDER
This section of the agenda is intended for Board members to offer informal observations of the work of the State Board. Board members may make brief announcements about attendance at future events for the purpose of informing other Board members. No business or motions, or suggested actions of the Board may be offered at this point in the

agenda; nor should Board members engage in substantive discussion about other agenda items or introduce new agenda items.

State Board of Education President

10. ADJOURNMENT

State Board of Education President

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, February 4, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at a location to be determined. As needed, a work session will be held on Thursday, February 3, 2022 at a time to be determined.

The agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on December 29, 2021. A copy of the agenda reflecting any changes will be available for public inspection during the normal business hours in the Office of the Commissioner of Education and on the State Board of Education's Agenda

page: www.education.ne.gov/StateBoard/Agendas.html. *Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda will not be changed later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting.*



TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner

FROM: Brenda Wid, Legal Services

DATE: December 15, 2021

SUBJECT: Report on Rules

RULE AWAITING APPROVAL FROM GOVERNOR

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24, *Regulations for Certificate Endorsements*
Sent to Governor 12/10/2021

RULE TO BE APPROVED BY STATE BOARD JANUARY 2022

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51, *Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs*

Public Hearing Held: 01/04/2022



Nebraska State Board of Education
Covid-19 Meeting Protocol

Meeting date/time: Thursday, January 6, 2022
Friday, January 7, 2022

Meeting location: Embassy Suites by Hilton
Regents Ballroom
1040 P Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline and detail measures and protocols that seek to protect and ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purposes of this protocol document, “attendee” shall mean any individual person who is attending the meeting, but not limited to: state board members, Nebraska Department of Education staff members, other State of Nebraska employees, hearing respondents, and members of the public.

Maximum attendance

Maximum attendance at the meeting is limited to the rated capacity of the meeting room. However in order to maintain physical distancing between individuals, the room will be setup with chairs spaced three (3) feet apart. Standing is not allowed in the meeting room. If the meeting room becomes full or crowded, members of the public may wait in the pre-function area.

Considerations for Attendees to Access Public Meetings

Attendees are asked to comply with the following directives:

- a. **Accessibility:** Members of the public are encouraged to maintain 3 feet of physical distancing between others when entering and exiting the room.
- b. **Masks:** Masks that cover the mouth and nose are recommended for all attendees. Individuals who have not been vaccinated for COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to wear a mask.
- c. **Hand sanitizer:** Use of hand sanitizer is strongly recommended upon entrance to the meeting room and after attendees touch their face, cough, or sneeze.
- d. **Physical distancing:** The meeting room will be arranged to ensure that all attendees are able to practice physical distancing with a space of at least three feet between individuals. Arranged chairs and tables are not to be moved. Attendees are encouraged to avoid shaking hands or making physical contact with other attendees.

e. **Personal questionnaire:** Attendees will be presented with the following questions on signage at the entrance to the meeting room and asked to self-identify responses of “Yes” or “No” to each question.

1. Are you experiencing, or experienced any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days?
 - i. Fever or chills
 - ii. Cough
 - iii. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - iv. Fatigue
 - v. Muscle or body aches
 - vi. Headache
 - vii. New loss of taste or smell
 - viii. Sore throat
 - ix. Congestion or runny nose
 - x. Nausea or vomiting
 - xi. Diarrhea
2. Have you been in physical contact with or in close proximity to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
3. Have you traveled outside of the United States in the last 14 days?
4. Have you been in physical contact with or in close proximity to anyone who has traveled outside of the country, or who has been ill?
5. Do you have a temperature of greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit?

Should an attendee be able to identify a “Yes” response to any of these question, the Attendee should self-select to not enter the meeting room and leave the meeting venue.

Out-State Travel Authorization Reports - January

<u>Name</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Lisa Fricke	(NONE)		
Jacquelyn Morrison	(NONE)		
Deborah Neary	(NONE)		
Kirk Penner	(NONE)		

Trip Request
(i.e. 1st, 2nd,
Other)

Out-State Travel Authorization Reports - January

<u>Name</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Patsy Koch Johns	(NONE)		
Patti Gubbels	(NONE)		
Maureen Nickels	(NONE)		
Robin Stevens	(NONE)		



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 16, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Zainab Rida, Ph.D.
Administrator, Office of Coordinated School Student Support & Services

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to amend the contract with Colyar Technology Solutions, Inc. for the purpose of implementing an enhancement necessary to ensure federal reporting requirements can be met for SY2021-22 when all school food authorities (SFAs) are providing meals through the USDA's Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Schools eligible to participate in the Fresh Fruit Vegetable Program (FFVP) while serving breakfast and/or lunch meals through the SSO also requires a system enhancement to allow schools' site applications to be approved for only FFVP.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The USDA allowed all schools to provide no-cost meals to all students using the Seamless Summer Option. The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) system, where all SFAs' meal claims are reported, is set up to generate reports for meal participation and claims through the traditional National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Since SFAs are using SSO in SY2021-22, a new reporting option must be installed to ensure the NDE can generate reports required by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

Currently, selecting the FFVP in a school's site application requires selection of breakfast or lunch. Approving schools for meal types they will not claim or receive reimbursement for could create a reimbursement, integrity, and monitoring challenge that this enhancement will help the NDE avoid.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: \$143,324

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: USDA State Administrative Expense Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: 1998



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 14, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Melody Hobson

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve a contract with Teachstone Training, LLC.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: This contract is to provide training on the CLASS program observation tool and to lead double coding training for Nebraska contracted observers to achieve reliability using the CLASS tools. The total amount of this contract is up to \$49,800 and is the second contract this fiscal year with Teachstone Training, LLC. A contract for \$48,000 was finalized in September 2021 for a different purpose. The previous contract was to provide access and training on the My Teachstone® coaching platform for up to 25 Step Up to Quality providers to pilot the coaching resource as a cost-effective alternative to in-person coaching.

The two contracts total more than \$50,000 and therefore, the proposed contract requires State Board approval to finalize.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: \$49,800

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: State general funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: 2015



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 17, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Brian Halstead, NDE Deputy Commissioner
Kristin Yates, NDE Information Systems Officer

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

Authorize the Commissioner to continue to contract with Student1 to implement NDE Central Data Repository Phase 2 ETL Development and to maintain Level 4 technical support related to integration of Ed-Fi technologies pursuant to 2019 Federal SLDS Grant terms.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

NDE is currently undergoing a multi-year design and analysis project connected to the implementation of the Nebraska Central Data Repository. Phase 2 ETL Development in connection with this project will incorporate development and testing of technical processes for movement and aggregation of data for NSSRS Student and Staff, Special Education, Finance, Nutrition, Grants Management, Adult Education and ECPRS data systems. Additional information on the project is attached as Appendix A.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: \$313,420

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal SLDS 2019 Grant Funds (Phase 2 ETL Development), General Funds (Continuation of Level 4 Technical Support)
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: April 16, 2020

Appendix A

NDE Central Data Repository (CDR), Phase 2 ETL Development

Introduction

Based on a multi-year design and analysis effort, the Nebraska Central Data Repository (CDR) will be structured based on the following data pipeline:

- The **NDE Data Lake** consolidates external and legacy data stores into one location for staging for integration and analytics
- The **ADVISER ODS API** integrates and unifies operational data from multiple applications, either through batch (ETL) or transactional (API) integrations.
- The **ADVISER LDS** representing the “source of authority” for integrated longitudinal data. Data is validated using the **ADVISER Validations system**. The ADVISER LDS combines the previous concepts of the NDE Data Hub and the NDE Accountability Data Store.
- **ADVISER Validations** runs business rules on data in the LDS to produce reports for assessing and correcting data quality error.
- The **MetaEd tool** is used to manage the unified data model and generate the ADVISER ODS API, the ADVISER LDS and its loader.
- The **ADVISER Data Warehouse** provides a dimension view of important longitudinal data to power dashboards and reporting, including the **ADVISER Dashboards**.
- **Data marts** provide curated data to support analytics, reporting, dashboards, portals, and curated APIs.

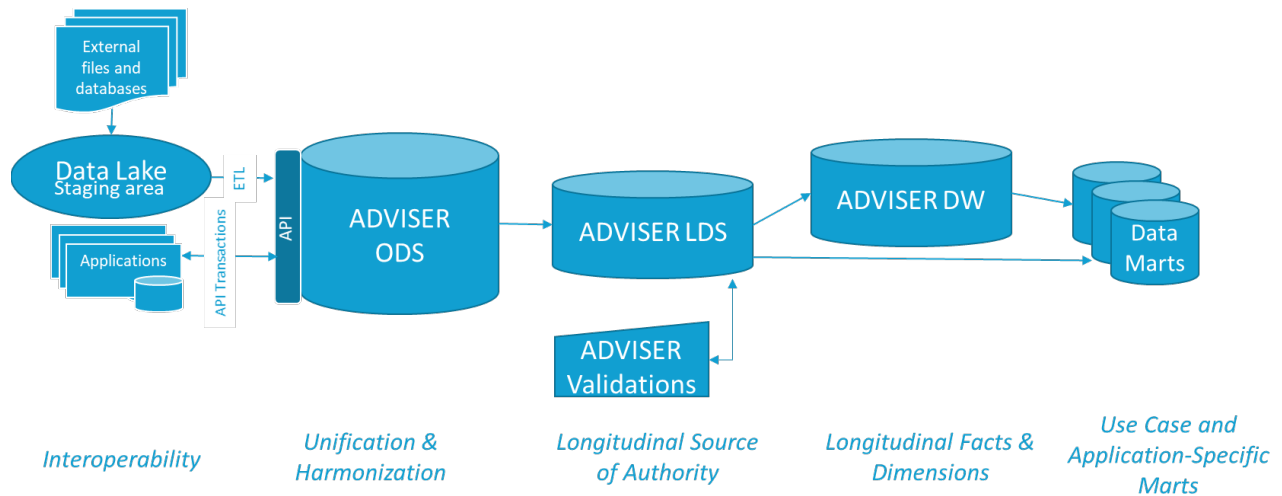


Figure 1 ADVISER CEDS-Aligned Data Pipeline

Work is currently underway to map data from selected source system data currently stored in the NDE Data Lake into Ed-Fi so it may be unified in single-year ODSs, moved to the newly developed multi-year ADVISER Longitudinal Data Store (LDS), and eventually loaded into the ADVISER Data Warehouse (DW) and downstream data marts.

The CDR Phase 2 effort was originally limited to the ODS mapping exercise and the design and

implementation of the LDS and did not include development of the ETL processes required to move data from source data systems to year-specific ADVISER ODSs and the process to populate the ADVISER Data Warehouse (DW) from the ADVISER LDS. This proposal will expand the scope of Student1's CDR work to include tasks related to ETL to load the ODS and the ADVISER DW.

Scope and Tasks

The CDR ETL effort will include two sets of ETL—one set to move information from data source systems into the single-year ODSs and a second set to move data from the ADVISER LDS into the ADVISER DW.

The effort will include:

- Selection of appropriate ETL technology that can be managed and maintained by the NDE team
- Development of ODS ETL for each of the following source system data:
 - NSSRS Student and Staff
 - SpecialEd-2008
 - Finance
 - Nutrition
 - Grants Management
 - Adult Education
 - ECPRS
- Determine requirements and business rules governing the data load from the ADVISER LDS to the ADVISER DW
- Development of ETL to move data from the ADVISER LDS to the ADVISER DW
- Confirmation that data were correctly moved from the source systems and correctly loaded into the ODS from the NDE Data Lake
- Confirmation that data were correctly moved from the ADVISER LDS to the ADVISER DW
- Remediation to correct identified issues

Student1 will base ETL development on the CDR Phase 2 MappingEDU output for each source system.

The effort includes analysis of options and sustainable ETL technology selection and the development of a testing and confirmation strategy to confirm the accuracy of the completed ETL. ETL development will begin with NSSRS Student and Staff, which will provide the basis for student and staff information in the ODS (for affected school years only) in order to preserve the data load order requirements of the Ed-Fi ODS. The ETL will be designed to gracefully handle and help identify issues with additional or mismatched person data as subsequent source systems are loaded. Issues will be raised to NDE for evaluation and guidance.

Once loaded and confirmed into the single-year ODSs, data will be loaded via script to the ADVISER LDS where it will again be tested and confirmed. The second phase of ETL development will move data from the ADVISER LDS to the ADVISER DW based on new and existing business rules. The load into the ADVISER DW will again be tested and any issues with the ETL remediated.

Schedule

ETL development is scoped to last 12 months, beginning October 1, 2021, and ending September 30, 2022. Testing and verification of the ETL will depend upon the installation of other components of the architecture. ETL for different source collections will be developed in parallel in order to deliver all tested code by September 2022.

Estimates

CDR Phase 2 ETL development will be broken into the following deliverables:

Deliverable	Target Delivery	Price
ETL technology selection and development of testing and confirmation strategy	November 2021	\$15,000
NSSRS ODS ETL	January 2022	\$55,000
Finance ODS ETL	February 2022	\$22,000
Grant Management System ODS ETL	February 2022	\$35,000
Special Education – 2008 ODS ETL	March 2022	\$22,000
Nutrition ODS ETL	March 2022	\$31,500
Adult Education ODS ETL	April 2022	\$31,500
ECPRS ODS ETL	May 2022	\$31,500
ADVISER LDS to ADVISER DW ETL requirements, business rules, development, and testing	September 2022	\$80,000
Total		\$323,500

Deliverables will be billed net 30 upon completion, testing, and acceptance by NDE.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Lindy Foley, Director of Nebraska VR

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

It is recommended the State Board of Education authorize the Commissioner to enter into a revised lease agreement between the Department of Administrative Services, State Building Division, and the Department of Education, Nebraska VR, for office space in Omaha, Nebraska for the period of 3/1/22 through 2/28/27.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This is a continuation of a lease for the Nebraska VR Omaha West field office, 12003 Q and 12011 Q. DAS negotiated the renewal of the lease for 3/1/22 through 2/28/27. Nebraska VR leases 4,833 sq. ft.

ESTIMATED COST:

Rent. Rent for this space is paid monthly and is as illustrated in the following table:

Table with 8 columns: TERM/DESCRIPTION OF SPACE, SF, RATE PSF, ANNUAL RENT, MONTHLY RENT, ANNUAL 2% FEE, MONTHLY 2% FEE, MONTHLY BILLING. Rows show lease terms from 2022-2024, 2024-2026, and 2026-2027 with corresponding costs.

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS INDICATE THE FUNDING SOURCE State Vocational Rehabilitation funds/Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds

**State Board of Education
Joint Meeting between State Board of Education and
Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education**

Thursday, December 2, 2021, 2021 – 8:00 a.m.

Graduate Lincoln, Scarlett Ballroom

141 N 9th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

[Link to Agenda and Attachments](#)

[Link to Video of Meeting](#)

Publicized notice of the business meeting was given by posting notice on the Department's website and emailed to news media requesting notification, which gave the date, time, and location of the meeting.

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION JOINT MEETING WITH THE COORDINATING
COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, Thursday, December 2, 2021, 8:00 a.m.,
Apothecary/Ridnour Building, 5th Floor, South Loft, 140 North 8th Street Lincoln, Nebraska**

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Nickels called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Maureen Nickels
Patsy Koch Johns

Patti Gubbels
Lisa Fricke

Robin Stevens
Deborah Neary

Absent: Jacquelyn Morrison (arrived at 8:04 a.m.)

Commissioner Blomstedt was also in attendance.

1.2. President Nickels announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

2. BUSINESS

2.1. Welcome from Chair of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Gwenn Aspen, Chair of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) provided welcome remarks and introductions of Commission Members.

2.2. Welcome from President of the State Board of Education

Maureen Nickels, President of the State Board of Education, provided welcome remarks and introduction of Board Members.

2.3. Message from the Executive Director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Michael Baumgartner, Executive Director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, spoke to the mission, vision, and projects of the Commission.

2.4. Message from the Commissioner of Education

Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education, spoke to the mission, vision, and projects of the Department of Education, noting the similarities and common work of both entities.

3. ADJOURNMENT

President Nickels adjourned the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

DRAFT

State Board of Education Business Meeting
Thursday-Friday, December 2-3, 2021, 2021
Graduate Lincoln, Scarlett Ballroom
141 N 9th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
[Link to Agenda and Attachments](#)
[Link to Video of Meeting](#)

Publicized notice of the business meeting was given by posting notice on the Department's website and emailed to news media requesting notification, which gave the date, time, and location of the meeting.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING, Thursday, December 2, 2021, 2:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER – President Maureen Nickels called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Maureen Nickels
Patsy Koch Johns
Jacquelyn Morrison

Patti Gubbels
Lisa Fricke

Robin Stevens
Deborah Neary

Commissioner Blomstedt was also in attendance.

1.2. President Nickels led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Nickels announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

1.3. COVID-19 Meeting Protocol

Commissioner Blomstedt shared information on the COVID-19 Meeting Protocol.

2. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

2.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process

2.1.A. Agenda Item 5.3.A. was requested to be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate vote.

2.2. Report on Rules

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24 is with the Attorney General awaiting approval.

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51 is approved as a Hearing Draft.

2.3. Board Operations Information

Ryan Foor, NDE Representative, introduced Rebecca Dunn from Ralston High School. Dunn is in her sixth year running the Education Academy and teaches an introduction to education course. The class has been watching the State Board meeting via live stream and are learning about governance structures.

Ms. Dunn brought students from her program to observe the State Board of Education meeting.

3. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

(NONE)

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Maureen Nickels appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

President Nickels thanked the Board Members who represented the Board at the State Education Conference hosted by the Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA).

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Patsy Koch Johns, second by Patti Gubbels to approve the Consent Agenda without Agenda Item 5.3.A.

Lisa Fricke:	Yea
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Yea
Maureen Nickels:	Yea
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Yea
Vacant	

The motion passed.

6. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1. **Policy Committee** – Maureen Nickels, Acting Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.

The Committee on POLICY met on December 2 and reports that the Committee has one action item and two discussion items.

The Committee discussed the proposed State Board meeting schedule for 2022. After discussion, the Committee recommends maintaining present circumstance by keeping the State Board meeting dates as outlined in B5, meeting the first Thursday and Friday of each month except January or as otherwise determined by the Board. The Committee recommends that the full Board approve this schedule at their business meeting today.

The Committee continues discussion of State Board Policy P5, *Contracts, Grants and Purchases*. The Committee recommends that the NDE staff and this Committee continue discussion of revision to this Policy in 2022.

The Committee continues discussion of State Board Policy P11, *Data Access and Use*. NDE staff indicated that the NDE General Counsel and Records Officer will discuss a strategy of restructuring this Policy and bring an outline to the Committee in February 2022.

The Committee discussed State Board Internal Policy P7, *Teaching Certificates* and recommend that this Policy be allowed to sunset and the NDE and Policy Committee/Board consider a Position Statement to encompass the priorities and vision of what the NDE and Board want regarding Nebraska's teaching professionals in 2022.

The Committee discussed State Board Bylaw B20, *Board Membership in Associations*. The Committee recommends that this policy not change and be discussed further in February 2022 with possible action in March 2022.

The Committee also recommends that discussion of restructuring the State Board Policy Reference Manual continue in February 2022.

6.1.A. Action Item: Approve State Board Meeting schedule for 2022

Motion by Patti Gubbels, second by Robin Stevens to approve the State Board Meeting Schedule for 2022.

Board Members discussed that the intent is to have at least two state Board Meetings held outside of Lincoln and no meeting in July.

Lisa Fricke:	Yea
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Yea
Maureen Nickels:	Yea
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Yea
Vacant	

The motion passed.

6.1.B. Discussion Item: P5, *Contracts, Grants and Purchases*

There was no further discussion on this item.

6.1.C. Discussion Item: P11, *Data Access and Use*

There was no further discussion on this item.

6.2. **Legislative Committee** – Robin Stevens, Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.

The Legislative Committee met with the Nebraska Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (NASCD) and discussed education policy topics. Each Committee Member provided comments from the discussion that they found enlightening.

6.3. **Commissioner's Appraisal Committee** – Maureen Nickels, Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.

The Committee reports that it has been working on refinements to the appraisal process for this next year as the Commissioner's job description has been streamlined to reduce redundancy in the performance appraisal process. The number of essential job functions has been reduced from nine to four that will translate in the number of performance appraisal rating areas decreasing from ten to four essential functions plus goals. Performance evidence will be provided in a single document prior to the onset of the appraisal process instead of on a quarterly basis. Board Member Morrison asked how the change in criteria was decided and what is the Board Governing policy about who makes those decisions.

Discussion indicated that the committee would meet before the January board meeting and bring recommendations to the board for approval of any changes.

6.4. **AQuESTT Teaching, Learning and Serving Domain Committee** – Lisa Fricke, Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.

The Committee on Teaching, Learning and Serving reports on two action items and one discussion items.

The first action item is to adopt the annual plan for the Nebraska statewide assessment and reporting system. Per Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-760.03, the Board is required to adopt this plan, for which policy decisions have previously been determined by the Board. The Committee reviewed the report and recommended adoption of the report.

The second action item is to adopt a resolution to recognize Nebraska educators. The idea of this resolution was discussed at the November meeting as a gesture to recognize the efforts of teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, support staff, and other education professionals. The Committee reviewed the draft resolution and recommended adoption.

One discussion item was on the Committee agenda, related to the revision of Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for Mathematics. The Committee heard updates and information about the standards revision process from the NDE staff; the NDE staff will provide a presentation to the full Board today during discussion on this topic. Board members are encouraged to review the provided information, including the revision timeline and information about the revision team.

The Committee also had a brief discussion on student voice and may bring this topic forward at a future meeting.

6.4.A. Action Item: Adopt the annual plan for the Nebraska Statewide Assessment and Reporting System

Motion by Lisa Fricke, second by Patti Gubbels to adopt the annual plan for the Nebraska state assessment and reporting system

Cory Epler, NDE Representative, provided a summary of the plan.

Lisa Fricke: Yea
Patsy Koch Johns: Yea
Deborah Neary: Yea
Maureen Nickels: Yea
Robin Stevens: Yea
Patti Gubbels: Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison: Yea
Vacant

Motion passed.

6.4.B. Action Item: Resolution to recognize Nebraska Educators

Motion by Lisa Fricke, second by Patsy Koch Johns to adopt a resolution to recognize Nebraska educators.

Lisa Fricke: Yea
Patsy Koch Johns: Yea
Deborah Neary: Yea
Maureen Nickels: Yea
Robin Stevens: Yea
Patti Gubbels: Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison: Yea
Vacant

Motion passed.

Jacquelyn Morrison left the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

6.4.C. Discussion Item: Nebraska's College & Career Ready Standards for Mathematics

Cory Epler, NDE Representative, presented on the Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for Mathematics.

6.5. **AQuESTT Student Success, Access and Support Domain Committee** – No report. The Committee did not meet.

President Nickels called for a break at 3:49 p.m. The meeting resumed at 4:03 p.m.

6.6. **Budget and Finance Committee** – Maureen Nickels, Acting Chair, reported on the Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed the monthly Board travel expense report and in-state travel authorizations and had no concerns.

6.6.A. Monthly Board Travel Expense Report

There was no further discussion on this item.

6.6.B. In-State Travel Authorization Reports

There was no further discussion on this item.

- 6.7. **Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Committee** – No report. The Committee did not meet.

7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

- 7.1. In accordance with Board Policy B9, set public comment time limits for Friday, December 3, 2021

Pursuant to Board Policy B9, I move to limit public comment at the Friday, December 3, 2021, meeting, to end by 4:00 p.m., where each person may address the Board for up to two minutes. The Board may take a 45-minute lunch break announced at a time prior to recessing. Motion made by Maureen Nickels, second by Robin Stevens.

Lisa Fricke:	Yea
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Yea
Maureen Nickels:	Yea
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Yea
Vacant	

The motion passed.

- 7.2. Authorize the Commissioner to amend a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to extend staff partnership contracts until December 2024.

Jacquelyn Morrison asked that this item be pulled from the Consent Agenda, but since she had to leave early, requested to have the item placed on the December 3, 2021, agenda. President Nickels asked if there was any objection to this and seeing none, the item will be placed on the next day's agenda, December 4, 2021.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS

- 8.1 President Nickels referred Board Members to review information items and reports.

9. GOOD OF THE ORDER

(NONE)

10. ADJOURNMENT

President Nickels adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

The State Board of Education will reconvene Friday, December 3, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. Graduate Lincoln, Scarlett Ballroom, 141 N 9th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING, Friday, December 3, 2021, 9:00 AM.

1. CALL TO ORDER – President Maureen Nickels called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Maureen Nickels
Patsy Koch Johns
Jacquelyn Morrison

Patti Gubbels
Lisa Fricke

Robin Stevens
Deborah Neary

Commissioner Blomstedt was also in attendance.

1.2. President Nickels led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Nickels announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

1.4. COVID-19 Meeting Protocol

Commissioner Blomstedt shared information on the COVID-19 Meeting Protocol.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

2.1. The following individuals from the public spoke against the Health Standards: Amber Parker, Arin Hess, Bradley Reinke, Dallas Asher, Deb Fisbeck, Deb Miller, Elissa Martin, Elizabeth Tegtmeier, Jenna Derr, Kathy Adams, Kelli Brady, Laura Rauscher, Mark Bonkiewicz, Sherry Jones, Stephanie Johnson and Wayne Smith.

The following individuals from the public spoke regarding *Not my Idea*, a book located in public school libraries: Julie Sheldon and Liz Davids.

The following individuals from the public spoke regarding *Not my Idea*, a book located in public school libraries and against the Health Standards: Mary Hamilton and Rhonda Bors.

The following individuals from the public spoke regarding the initiative to replace the Nebraska Department of Education: Jennifer Hicks and Michael Connely.

The following individual from the public spoke regarding the fiduciary duty of the Board: Judy Derr.

2.2. Written Public Comment

Submitted written public comments are linked through SPARQ in Board Agenda item number 2.2, documents SBOE Written Public Comment December 2021.

3. BREAK

President Nickels called for a break at 9:58 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:08 a.m.

4. Authorize the Commissioner to amend a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to extend staff partnership contracts until December 2024 (Item 5.3.A. pulled from Consent Agenda from 12/02/2021 meeting agenda).

Motion by Patsy Koch Johns, second by Lisa Fricke to authorize the Commissioner to amend a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to extend staff partnership contracts until December 2024.

Board Members discussed the main motion.

Motion by Patsy Koch Johns, no second to call the previous question. Motion died for lack of a second.

Motion by Jacquelyn Morrison, second by Patti Gubbels to refer this matter to the Budget and Finance Committee

Lisa Fricke:	Yea
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Yea
Maureen Nickels:	No
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Yea

Motion passed. This matter has been referred to the Budget and Finance Committee to report back to the board at next month's meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

President Nickels adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, January 7, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at a location to be determined.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 29, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Lora Sypal, Coordinator, Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Receive monies for the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Activities

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Annually, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Coordinator reaches out to sponsors as an education partner in Nebraska. Support for the Nebraska Teacher of the Year program comes from various businesses and education partners in the form of stipends, clothing allowance, and other contributions. Support would be used as a monetary contribution to the program for the award recipient and could be used to off-set travel expenses, classroom supplies/opportunities, or as a personal monetary gift.

The National Teacher of the Year Program is run by the Council of Chief State School Officers, which serves as a training ground for state-identified teachers to hone their skills and powerfully advocate for what is best for children, schools and the teaching profession in policy or practice discussions. The National Teacher of the Year Program originated in 1952 and continues to recognize teachers on the local, state, and national levels. The Nebraska's Teacher of the Year becomes eligible for the National Teacher of the Year title.

The Nebraska Teacher of the Year program looks for a teacher who uses effective classroom teaching techniques, possesses the capability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn, and exemplifies professionalism. These are the qualities the program recognizes and showcases. These are the educators who make a difference in our classrooms and in the lives of students across the state.

The 2022 Nebraska Teacher of the Year was announced in October, 2021 after an extensive review and selection process. The chosen educator exhibits the characteristics of quality teaching. This educator represents the kind of teacher that we want in the classrooms of our children and grandchildren.

The Nebraska Department of Education is receiving funds from Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) for Nebraska Teacher of the Year activities/sponsorship.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: The \$4,000 will be deposited in to the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program funds (indirect costs).

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: N/A
- New or Renewal: N/A



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: January 7, 2022

The Committee on Policy met throughout the month of December, and earlier this week to discuss revisions to board bylaws B2: Board Committees, and B9: Public Participation at Board Meetings. The committee presents recommendations on both items today.


Regarding bylaw B2: Board Committees, the committee reviewed information from Robert's Rules of Order and the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure on best practices for committee structures. Additionally, the committee reviewed the committee structures of the Nebraska Board of Regents, the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees, and the Utah State Board of Education. The committee recommends adoption of the proposed revisions to bylaw B2 and recommends that the Budget and Finance Committee review its position description and report back any further recommended revisions no later than the June 2022 board meeting. This is the result of discussion on potentially expanding the scope of the Budget and Finance Committee.

Regarding bylaw B9: Public Participation at Board Meetings, the committee considered the letter from the Nebraska Attorney General dated August 4, 2021, recent revisions by the Nebraska Legislature to the Open Meetings Act, and current practices of the State Board. The committee recommends adoption of the proposed revisions to bylaw B9.

This concludes the Policy Committee report.

Maureen Nickels, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.

 <p style="text-align: center;">Nebraska Department of Education Policy and Reference Manual</p>	<p>Bylaw Number</p> <p>B2</p>	<p>Page Number</p> <p>1 of 4</p>
<p>State Board Bylaw B2</p> <p>Board Committees</p>	<p>Created: 1977</p> <p>Last Revised: 2016</p> <p>Reviewed: 1984, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2015, 2016, 2020</p> <p>Approved: 03/05/2021</p>	

The State Board of Education hereby establishes standing committees of Board members for the purpose of delegating specific issues or tasks for initial study, review, and ~~or~~ recommendation.

Standing Committees of the Board will meet in conjunction with regularly scheduled board meetings to review and make recommendations on agenda items for the current or future board meetings. The agenda for regularly scheduled committee meetings will be determined by the upcoming board meeting agenda, as set forth in board bylaw B6 (Agendas/Meeting Materials for Regular Meetings). Additionally, the committee chair or a committee member may add agenda items in consultation with the commissioner and board president.

Standing committees may also meet at the direction of the Committee Chair or on the request of a Committee Member. In addition, the Board President may request a Committee to meet and deliberate on a specific topic or activity. The agenda for these additional meetings of a standing committee may be determined by the committee chair, the board president, or both. Committee members may add agenda items for these additional committee meetings in consultation with the committee chair.

~~The Commissioner of Education may request an opinion from a Standing Committee regarding a proposal he is preparing that is being prepared for recommendation to the State Board. Committees shall undertake specific tasks upon approval of the State Board or the Board President. Committees may present proposals to the Board or the Board President to be designated as priority activities for their committee.~~

Upon completion of the an assigned activity or task, the committee shall report to the full Board their deliberations and recommendations. All recommendations of the committee are subject to the approval of the Board.

Board appointments to the Standing Committees will be made by the Board President. Requests for membership on the committees may be made by individual Board members. The Committee chair and vice chair will be appointed by the Board President for each standing committee. The board president and vice president shall not serve as chair or vice chair of a standing committee, except for the Executive Committee, as described below. The Board President serves as an ex-officio member to all committees. The committee chair is responsible for presiding over committee meetings. The committee vice chair shall act in the absence of the chair and should be consulted by the chair regarding committee matters as the need arises. Each standing committee shall be assigned Nebraska Department of Education staff to assist and/or advise the committee. The Commissioner of Education will assign staff.

In addition to standing committees, ad hoc committees may be formed by, and members appointed by the president or by the Board, as the need arises. Ad hoc committees are formed to carry out specified

tasks. After the committee presents its final report to the Board, the committee will disband unless the president or Board gives new direction.

Standing Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending policies and procedures for the review of performance of the commissioner; advising the commissioner on legislative matters while the state legislature is in session; making recommendations to the Board on the NDE's position on specific bills and legislative resolutions; and reviewing board policies, including the bylaws, and recommending to the Board changes to board policy. The Executive Committee shall serve as a consultant group for the commissioner.

The president and vice president shall serve as chair and vice chair of the Executive Committee, respectively. The president shall appoint two other members who do not serve as chair of another standing committee.

Policy Committee

~~The Policy Committee may be directed to review proposed policies, bylaws or position statements of the Board and report their review or make recommendations for revisions to the Board. The Committee may be requested to develop policy, bylaw or position statement proposals for consideration by the Board.~~

Legislative Committee

~~The Legislative Committee shall be given the specific responsibility of reviewing legislative proposals and advising the Commissioner on legislative matter. The Committee is also charged with keeping the Board informed, and requesting action of the Board on any legislative proposal at any meeting of the Board.~~

Commissioner's Appraisal

~~The Appraisal Committee shall, when~~

~~directed by the Board or the Board President, review or recommend policies and procedures for the review of performance of the Commissioner of Education. Proposals for procedures and instruments to review the performance of the Commissioner of Education shall be approved by the Board. Any Board Member may request a copy of the current appraisal instrument from the Commissioner's Office.~~

~~AQuESTT Teaching, Learning and Serving Domain Committee~~

~~The AQuESTT Teaching, Learning and Serving Domain Committee may be directed to advise and make recommendations to the Board for possible action in connection with College, Career and Civic Ready, Assessment, and Educator Effectiveness tenets.~~

~~AQuESTT Student Success, Access and Support Domain Committee~~

~~The AQuESTT Student Success, Access and Support Domain Committee may be directed to advise and make recommendations to the Board for possible action in connection with Positive Partnerships and Student Success; Transitions; and Educational Opportunities and Access tenets.~~

Budget and Finance Committee

The Budget and Finance Committee may be directed to shall advise and make recommendations to the Board for possible action in connection with the Department budget and finance proposals.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall be given the additional responsibility to review the budgets for the NDE Trust Funds and make recommendations to the Board for approval. ~~The proposed budget for the Trust Funds shall be approved by the Board.~~

~~Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Committee~~

~~The Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Committee may be directed to advise and make recommendations to the Board for possible action on the development of accountability plans, program or activity performance reviews, and general~~

~~oversight of outcomes and goals set forth in the Board's strategic plan. From time to time, the Committee will review matters brought forth by the Commissioner of Education for performance review. This may include submissions of plans and the like from other entities including plans for school accreditation or improvement required by NDE Regulation and other plans that by law or regulation require State Board approval or review. The Committee also reviews and makes recommendations to the Board for actions on Community Achievement Plans which the Board is required by law to review and approve or reject. The Committee will annually review progress on the strategic planning goals and make recommendations for improvement to the plan.~~

Planning and Evaluation Committee

The Planning and Evaluation Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Board on matters related to planning and evaluation activities and functions of the state school system.

Additional duties of the Planning and Evaluation Committee include, but are not limited to, advising and making recommendations to the Board for possible action on the development of school accountability plans; community achievement plans; program or activity performance reviews; school accountability, accreditation, and approval; statewide assessment; and content area standards.

Rules and Regulations Committee

The Rules and Regulations Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Board on matters related to education policy, primarily in the form of administrative rules and the relationship to state and federal statutes.

Additional duties of the Rules and Regulations Committee include, but are not limited to, advising and making recommendations to the Board for possible action on the development, revision, or repeal of the administrative rules of the Nebraska Department of Education, including the personnel rules.

All standing committees shall have the responsibility to initiate legislative proposals and position statements of the Board, related to the purpose of the respective committee, to be considered by the Board for approval.

Ad Hoc Committee

~~Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the President or by the Board, as the need arises. Ad hoc committees are formed to carry out specified tasks. After the committee presents its final report to the Board, the committee will disband unless the President and/or Board gives new direction.~~


Board Action History

- 8/19/77 – Prior BBC
(Discussed temporary committee appointments, actions not binding unless approved by Board, listed 3 committees.)
- 12/7/84 – Prior 9131 BOP
(Same text as BBC, renumbered.)
- 12/8/95 – Prior B5
(Same text as 9131 BOP, except for deletion of reference to 3 committees.)
- 5/12/00 – Prior B5
(Complete revision. Discussed and listed 5 standing committees and committee meeting procedures.)
- 10/3/03 – Prior B5
(Complete revision. Different list of 4 committees. Added space for cross-references and Legislative history.)
- 9/7/06 – B5
(Minor changes. Deleted Curriculum Committee from list.)
- 9/4/15 – B5
(Added language that any Board member may request a current copy of the appraisal instrument from Commissioner's Office.)
- 5/6/2016 – B5
(Added three standing committees – AQuESTT Teaching and Learning Domain/AQuESTT Student Success and Access Domain/Budget and Finance.)
- 12/2/2016 – B5
(Added the Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Standing Committee.)

- 03/03/2017 – B2(B5)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. B5 is now B2.)
- 03/05/2021 – B2
(Added clarifying language to Legislative Committee and Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Committee descriptions.)

Cross-References

- 79-315 R.R.S. – State Board’s power to organize itself

 <p>Nebraska Department of Education Policy and Reference Manual</p>	<p>Bylaw Number B9</p>	<p>Page Number 1 of 3</p>
<p>State Board Bylaw B9 Public Participation at Board Meetings</p>	<p>Created: 1981 Last Revised: 2017 Reviewed: 1984, 1995, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2020 Approved: 12/11/2020</p>	

The State Board of Education recognizes its obligation to help the public understand the operation of the Department of Education. The Board is also aware of the need for communication with citizens to permit the public to make its wishes known and to permit the Board to explain general policies governing the operation of the schools in the state. Therefore, in an effort to provide a procedure by which matters of statewide interest concerning the schools may be brought before the Board and to permit the Board to conduct its meetings in an orderly and efficient manner, the State Board of Education establishes the following procedures with regard to public participation in the meetings of the Board.

The published agenda of the majority of regular meetings of the State Board shall contain an item identified as Public Comment Period. This period may be available to any person who wishes to address the State Board on any subject within its authority including items appearing on the agenda except for contested cases as described below. Up to two hours will be allowed for the public comment period when on the agenda of a regular meeting. A majority of members present and voting may take action to extend the total amount of time allowed for the public comment period. A majority of members present and voting may also take action to allow or terminate public comment at any time during a meeting.

Each individual speaking to the Board will be required to complete a "Sign-in" card for identification of oneself to identify him or herself. Individuals are required to include on the Sign-in card their name, address, and name of any organization represented, pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute section 84-1412 (3). Individuals may be prohibited to speak in public comment if the Sign-in card does not include the required information. Persons speaking to the Board during Public Comment must identify themselves should state their name at the beginning of their allotted time and may submit hand-out printed materials to for the Board but may not use any other form of media. Anyone refusing to be identified will be prohibited from speaking. Each person may address the Board for up to five minutes. A majority of members present and voting may take action to reduce or extend the amount of individual time allotted to all speakers.

The Board may also choose to permit individuals to speak to the Board using live remote video/audio technologies at selected meetings. When this is utilized, persons that wish to speak to the Board during Public Comment will likewise be required to complete and submit information in advance of the meeting for identification of oneself that identifies him or herself. This process will be described in the advance public notice of the meeting. Individuals wishing to speak to the Board using this technology must be "online" when their name is called to speak during the public comment period or they forfeit their turn and opportunity to address the Board in that public comment period. Public comment using this technology is also limited to 5 (five) minutes, except as provided below and may be reduced or extended as provided above. If an individual testifying by live remote video/audio technology wishes to provide the Board with written or printed material in connection with their testimony, such material shall be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the public meeting where public comment is scheduled, or by

close of business of the Thursday prior to any meeting scheduled for a Monday, Written or printed material is not allowed to be displayed on or using the remote video technology.

Persons may address the Board for public comment purposes by written submission in lieu of live testimony. Such written submissions must be provided 24 hours prior to the start of the public meeting where public comment is scheduled, or by close of business of the Thursday prior to any meeting scheduled for a Monday, and is limited to 750 words. Written public comments submitted in accordance with these requirements will be provided to the Board members and become part of the record of the meeting, but will not be read aloud during the meeting.

When an item appears on the regular business meeting agenda for the Board to consider a ~~H~~hearing ~~O~~fficer's recommendations in a contested case, neither oral nor written public comment from a party or a party's representative will be allowed. Parties to contested cases address the Board through the hearing process which includes the full record of the hearing which is before the Board. In the case of agenda items for the Board to consider recommendations from the Professional Practices Commission, (PPC), the Board will provide an opportunity for the parties to address it at the meeting prior to its decision in accordance with the review hearing procedures in 92 NAC 29, whether at a regular business meeting or a separate proceeding.


~~Any person or spokesperson for a group may request a 10 minute special appearance before the State Board of Education to take place on the first or second day of any regular meeting of the Board except when the Board declares itself to be in executive session. Requests for special appearances must be made in writing to the Commissioner of Education or a Board member and received no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time at least three business days prior to the first day of the meeting in order to permit such appearance to be placed on the published agenda. The schedule of State Board meetings is addressed in Board Bylaw B5. Requests for special appearances may be granted or denied at the sole discretion of the Commissioner. Individuals whose requests for special appearances are denied may instead speak during Public Comment Period as provided in this Bylaw.~~

If at any time persons appearing before the Board exceed the time limitations set forth in this ~~P~~olicy or on the agenda or become abusive or threatening in language or behavior, it shall be the responsibility of the ~~P~~resident to declare that person out of order and to refuse permission to continue to address the Board. ~~Anyone refusing to be identified will be prohibited from speaking.~~

Generally, board members will not engage in dialogue during the public comment period. A board member may request from the president to ask a clarifying question of a public comment speaker for the purpose of understanding a point or statement made by the speaker. Asking a clarifying question should not result in extended dialogue.

~~A Board member may request of the Chair a point of clarification in regard to a speaker's comments.~~

~~The Board President may also choose to allow public comment at any time during a meeting and, in the case of public comment to be provided using video/audio technologies, may choose to limit the number of persons who can address the Board at a meeting using this method. A majority of members present and voting may also choose to allow, terminate or reduce the time for public comment at any time.~~

 <p style="text-align: center;">Nebraska Department of Education Policy and Reference Manual</p>	<p>Bylaw Number</p> <p>B9</p>	<p>Page Number</p> <p>3 of 3</p>
<p>State Board Bylaw B9</p> <p>Public Participation at Board Meetings</p>	<p>Created: 1981 Last Revised: 2017 Reviewed: 1984, 1995, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2020 Approved: 12/11/2020</p>	

Board Action History

- 11/15/81 – Prior BCBI
(No copies of prior version.)
- 12/7/84 – Prior 9322 BOP
(Same text as BCBI, except for deletion of statute references.)
- 12/8/95 – Prior B12
(Similar text in first 3 paragraphs, but appearance extensions may also be granted by majority, public comment period reduced from 30 to 15 minutes for items not on agenda [and from 6 to 3 persons], added agenda item public comment designations, and option for allowing additional public comment during meetings.)
- 9/7/06 – B12
(Added majority vote option for extending public comment period.)
- 3/5/2013 – B12
(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)
- 1/7/2014 – B12
(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)
- 5/6/2016 – B12
(Added language for special appearances.)
- 03/03/2017 – B12
(Align language with B5 (formerly B11) regarding dates of Board Meetings.)
- 3/03/2017 – B12(B9)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. B12 is now B9)
- 12/11/2020 – B9
(Four-year review. Added language to reflect current approaches providing public participation in remote audio video/audio technologies at Board meetings.)

Cross-References

- 84-1412 R.R.S.– Public participation.
- 79-317(2) R.R.S. – Public participation.
- State Board Policy B5, “ Board Meeting Notification for Regular Meetings”



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPRAISAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: January 7, 2022

“The Appraisal Committee reports that...

The committee met on December 15, 2021 to:

1) **Review history of the Commissioner’s performance appraisal tool, process, and procedures**

For performance evaluations conducted from 2014 through 2018, board members completed paper forms. Individual scores and comments were aggregated and a summary report was created. The rating scale was: exceeds requirements, meets requirements, needs improvement, and not applicable.

The performance evaluation content was revised for the 2018-19 evaluation year and an electronic process (i.e., Qualtrics) was used for the first time. The system generated an aggregate report showing average scores and verbatim respondent comments. The performance evaluation content (i.e., performance standards and indicators) first used in 2018-19 was also used for the 2019-20 evaluation period. Only the Commissioner’s goals were modified from year to year.

In the spring of 2021, the Appraisal Committee proposed a consolidation of the performance standards and essential job functions, reducing them from ten to five.

2) **Discuss responsibilities of the Appraisal Committee versus those of the Board per State Board Bylaw B2**

State Board Bylaw B2 (Board Committees) provides the following description for the Commissioner’s Appraisal Committee:

The Appraisal Committee shall, when directed by the Board or the Board President, review or recommend policies and procedures for the review of performance of the Commissioner of Education. Proposals for procedures and instruments to review the performance of the Commissioner of Education shall be approved by the Board. Any Board Member may request a copy of the current appraisal instrument from the Commissioner’s Office.

Based upon this policy, the committee will bring to the board for approval any changes to: appraisal document content (e.g., performance standards, scoring criteria); appraisal format, process/methodology, and timelines; Commissioner’s annual performance goals, and terms of the Commissioner’s employment contract.

Therefore, an action item was added to the January 7, 2022 business meeting agenda for the board to consider approval of proposed changes to the Commissioner's job description and evaluation document. Virtually all of the changes reflect reorganization as opposed to deletions or additions.

3) Review contractual requirements regarding the appraisal

The Commissioner's first contract for calendar year 2014 did not require that the appraisal be attached as an appendix. Section 5 of Contract #2, which was effective on 1/2/2015, did require the appraisal to be attached to the contract as an appendix. Contract #2 was amended four times, but Section 5 itself remain unchanged. Contract #3 (effective 7/1/2018), and contract #4 (effective 7/1/2021), no longer required that the appraisal be attached as an appendix.

This concludes the Appraisal Committee report.”

Maureen Nickels, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 16, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Joel M. Scherling
HR Administrator

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

Action Item: Approve revisions to the Commissioner's job description and the 2021-22 performance appraisal instrument.

Maureen Nickels

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Proposed changes to the performance appraisal were not attached to the revised contract when the board voted on the contract amendment in June of 2021. Proposed revisions must be in place prior to the onset of the annual evaluation period, which was July 1, 2021.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: None

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:



Commissioner of Education

Essential Job Functions

Proposed Changes 5-~~256~~-21

~~Shared Vision- and Strategic Direction –~~ Contributes to thought leadership in the field of public education and creates a vision of the agency for the future. Leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the Department’s core values, beliefs, and priorities.

~~Works with the State Board and NDE employees to create an agency vision.~~

- ~~• Develops programs and services that work toward the vision. Ensures that the programs and services offered by the Department contribute to the organization’s mission and vision and reflect the Board’s priorities.~~
- ~~•~~
- Conducts analyses to identify emerging issues that affect education in the state or that may have an impact on the agencyDepartment.
- Sets organizational goals and outcomes and identifies resources required to achieve those goals.
- Promotes awareness of education issues and builds strong working relationships with school officials, policy partners (e.g., Governor, the Legislature, the Congressional delegation), and other stakeholders.
- ~~•~~

~~State Board of Education and Education System Policy Leadership –~~ Provides leadership for the State Board of Education and supports the policy leadership role of the Board. Provides direction for the board in policy development and governance within the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.

- Acts as the Board’s Secretary, maintaining official Board records as required by law and Board policies.
 - ~~a. Prepares Board meeting agendas in consultation with the Board President and prepares recommendations for items to be considered for Board action.~~
 - ~~b. Recommends policies to the Board for its internal operation and reviews them on a regular basis to ensure they are carried out.~~
 - ~~c. Informs the Board on major policy issues, maintains clear and open communication with Board members.~~
 - d. Assists the Board in its policy-forming, planning and evaluation functions by recommending goals, priorities, implementation plans and/or policies for Board consideration.
 - ~~e. Develops and implements plans and timelines, budgets, monitoring plans and regular reporting procedures for the implementation of all Board actions and decisions.~~
 - ~~f. Reviews state and federal legislative proposals and recommends Board action and policy positions related to those proposals.~~
 - ~~g. Recommends policy studies and data collections needed to inform Board policy decision-making and development.~~
 - Recommends rules and regulations for implementing Legislative directives and the goals, priorities, and decisions of the Board.
 - ~~h. Conducts rule hearings in accordance with Board policy, reporting results and recommendations to the Board before adoption.~~

~~State School System Leadership –~~ Provides leadership for the continuous improvement of Nebraska’s public schools.

- Creates guidelines and provides direction on the creation of school programs, curricula and instructional practices that represent appropriate and established practices including research-based best or promising practices.
- ~~• Develops and implements rules and regulations to carry out statutory responsibilities and to provide for the development of quality educational programs at the local level.~~
- ~~• Develops goals, priorities and implementation plans for the Department that reflect Board goals and priorities, Legislative directives and Department priorities.~~

- ~~Conducts policy studies to identify and inform policy priorities, policy decision-making and policy implementation.~~
- Provides a process for the review of ethics complaints against educators that is user-friendly, systematic, and professional.
- Promotes the coordination of a seamless system of education (P-16), and promotes collaborative initiatives to address higher education and P-12 issues.
- ~~Gathers advice and input from the field through regular communications, meetings and other means to develop dialog on issues and concerns.~~
- ~~Promotes school improvement in preparing model(s) or recommended curricula/programs, provides supervision of and consultation to schools, organizes and hosts statewide professional development opportunities, and conducts research and evaluation.~~
- ~~Visits schools on a regular basis.~~

Agency Management – Oversees the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the agency’s programs and services.

- Effectively uses strategies, processes, and systems to hire, develop and retain high-performing personnel who demonstrate a shared commitment to organizational success; fosters and monitors department climate and culture to ensure equity.
- Promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement.
- ~~Accountability – Ensures accountability for the agency by monitoring and reporting on school performance and agency operations.~~
- Provides oversight for the financial operations of the Department and seeks funding to implement Department goals.

Establishes and maintains a system of administrative rules to establish policies and procedures. Prepares and recommends to the Board an annual report for public dissemination on the performance of schools, including the achievement levels of students.

- ~~i. Reports regularly on the progress of implementation and/or the effects of the Board’s actions and decisions.~~
- ~~j. Develops and implements plans to evaluate the actions of the Board and the Department.~~
- ~~k. Develops biennial report to the Governor, Legislature, and the State Board covering actions of the Board, Department operations, and the progress and needs of schools.~~

~~Outreach/Engagement/Collaboration – Promotes awareness of education issues and builds strong working relationships with stakeholders.~~

- ~~Develops communications networks and collaborative relationships with policy partners and the education community to communicate Board actions and to gather feedback and input on future actions.~~
- ~~Develops and maintains plans for systematic communication to inform the public and to promote the goals, priorities and actions of the Board and the Department.~~
- ~~Develops and maintains regular two-way communications with policy partners including the Governor, the Legislature and the Congressional delegation.~~
- ~~Acts as the official spokesperson for the Department.~~
- ~~Serves on state commissions, task forces and committee representing the Department.~~
- ~~Helps to shape the agenda and decision-making of policy partners and other stakeholders.~~

- ~~Agency Management – Oversees the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the agency’s programs and services.~~
- ~~Ensures that the programs and services offered by the agency contribute to the organization’s mission and reflect the Board’s priorities.~~
- ~~Maintains all public records of the Department in accordance with the law and Board policy, maintaining public access to records.~~
- ~~Establishes and maintains a system of administrative rules to direct the work of staff.~~
- ~~Performs all duties prescribed by the Legislature.~~

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- Human Resources Management — Maintains a qualified, competent staff to carry out the agency's mission.
 - Determines staffing requirements for organizational management and program delivery.
 - Maintains a classification and compensation system.
 - Organizes and assists staff to achieve the goals and priorities of the Department and the Legislature.
 - Establishes and maintains a system of personnel development and management.
 - Maintains a positive, healthy and safe work environment in accordance with all appropriate legislation and regulations.
 - Implements a performance management process for all staff members, which includes monitoring performance on an ongoing basis and conducting annual performance reviews.
 - Maintains a system of corrective and disciplinary action.
 - Provides for employee recognition initiatives.
 - Advises the Board on collective bargaining activities.
 - Conducts staff meetings to disseminate information, gather input, and direct work.

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- Financial Planning and Management — Provides oversight for the financial operations of the agency and seeks funding to implement agency goals.
 - Prepares biennial budgets based on Board goals and priorities, Legislative directives and Department priorities.
 - Establishes and maintains a system of accounting and financial reporting for all funds in accordance with the laws and policy.
 - Maintains awareness of the financial, statistical, and accounting records of the agency.
 - Works with the Board to secure adequate funding for the operation of the agency.
 - Ensures the accuracy, integrity, and timeliness of all financial accounting and reporting.
 - Administers the funds of the agency and approves expenditures as authorized.

-
- Professional Development — Participates in performance management and professional development activities.
 - Prepares for and participates in the annual appraisal of performance with the Board.
 - Prepares annual reports for the Board that document activities and achievements of the Commissioner and the Department in implementing Board goals and priorities, carrying out statutory responsibilities, meeting Department goals and priorities, and achieving professional growth targets.
 - Prepares an annual performance plan outlining goals, objectives and timelines.
 - Prepares for and participates in the annual appraisal of performance with the Board in addition to appraisals initiated by the Commissioner involving staff and other audiences affected by the Commissioner's performance.
 - Participates in conferences, workshops, teaming activities, courses, and professional reading to maintain professional expertise and to improve performance.

Travel/Outreach – Possesses a valid driver's license, travels independently, and works in a variety of settings.

Commissioner’s Performance Standards, Indicators & Targets

Proposed Revision ♦ 65/36/21

1. Shared Vision and Strategic Direction

The Commissioner leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the department’s core values, beliefs, and priorities. The Commissioner leads through a collaborative process engaging all stakeholders and mobilizing state resources in support of the vision and strategic direction of education in Nebraska.

Indicators

- 1.1 Develops and implements a shared vision and strategic direction that guides the state into supporting high expectations for student achievement.
 - **Evidence:** *Documentation of a shared vision and strategic direction supports high expectations of student achievement and accomplishment, developed with specific strategies, measurable outcomes/outcomes, and timelines.*
- 1.2 Partners with the board of education and key community constituents/stakeholders in the development of the shared vision and strategic direction, which represents the current and future needs of the state and school communities.
 - **Evidence:** *Documentation of collaborative development of the shared vision and strategic direction involving board members and key community constituents/stakeholders.*
 - **Evidence:** *Community engagement meetings and surveys solicit input and feedback on the vision and strategic direction from diverse stakeholders and constituents*
- ~~1.3—Ensures the shared vision and strategic direction represents the current and future needs of the state and school communities.~~
 - ~~•—Evidence: Community engagement meetings and surveys solicit input and feedback on the vision and strategic direction from diverse stakeholders and constituents.~~
- ~~1.41.3~~ Engages constituents/stakeholders within the state and school communities to develop a commitment to the shared vision and the strategic direction.
 - **Evidence:** *Board, staff, state and community presentations and updates routinely model commitment to the shared vision and strategic direction.*
 - **Evidence:** *Newsletters, articles, public speaking engagements, and information on the department website routinely provide constituents with information and updates related to the shared vision and strategic direction*
- ~~1.5—Continually models and reinforces commitment to the shared vision using diverse communication strategies.~~

~~**Evidence:** Newsletters, articles, public speaking engagements, and information on the department website routinely provide constituents with information and updates related to the shared vision and strategic dir~~
- ~~1.61.4~~ Routinely solicits feedback—including periodic review and revision of the shared vision and strategic direction—with input from key stakeholders throughout the state.
 - **Evidence:** *Feedback processes such as surveys, formal and informal meetings, or committees solicit input from key stakeholders throughout the state.*

3.1.5 Communicates regularly and openly with families and stakeholders across the state about the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Department of Education, educational needs, student performance, challenges, and accomplishments.

- *Evidence: Newsletters, newspaper articles, web articles, speaking engagements and communication plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.*

1.6 Maintains a presence throughout the state to understand its strengths and needs.

- *Evidence: Participation in state, regional, and community events, facilitating meetings or informational sessions, or conducting needs assessments or surveys.*
- *Evidence: Serves on boards or committees to provide leadership and direction on educational issues and needs in Nebraska.*

1.7 Models collaboration within the organization and encourages collaboration between the Nebraska Department of Education, other state agencies, educational organizations, ESU's and school districts.

- *Evidence: Reports, presentations, and updates demonstrate collaboration within organizations; and activities and professional development reinforce collaborative processes.*
- *Evidence: Strategic planning and rule-making processes are developed with collaborative input through engagement of key state-wide stakeholders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.*
- *Evidence: Satisfaction and consumer-focused surveys are routinely used to gather input from external and internal stakeholders, and results are shared and utilized.*

The Commissioner leads through a collaborative process engaging all stakeholders and mobilizing state resources in support of the vision and strategic direction of education in Nebraska.

Indicators

1.88 Communicates regularly and openly with families and stakeholders across the state about the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Department of Education, educational needs, student performance, challenges, and accomplishments.

- *Evidence: Newsletters, newspaper articles, web articles, speaking engagements and communication plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.*

1.99 Maintains a presence throughout the state to understand its strengths and needs.

- *Evidence: Participation in state, regional, and community events, facilitating meetings or informational sessions, or conducting needs assessments or surveys.*
- *Evidence: Serves on boards or committees to provide leadership and direction on educational issues and needs in Nebraska.*

1.1010 Understands and is engaged with state educational needs, priorities, and resources.

- *Evidence: Student and school data, state surveys, data on state, regional and community needs, and stakeholder engagement plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.*

1.114 Models collaboration within the organization and encourages collaboration between the Nebraska Department of Education, other state agencies, educational organizations, ESU's and school districts.

- *Evidence: Reports, presentations, and updates demonstrate collaboration within organizations; and activities and professional development reinforce collaborative processes.*
- *Evidence: Strategic planning and rule-making processes are developed with collaborative input through engagement of key state-wide stakeholders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.*
- *Evidence: Satisfaction and consumer-focused surveys are routinely used to gather input from external and internal stakeholders, and results are shared and utilized.*

2. State Board of Education ,Policy, and the Education System Policy

The Commissioner provides direction for the board in policy development and governance within the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.

Indicators

- 2.1 Actively and continually fosters board relationships and keeps board members informed and engaged in development.
 - **Evidence:** Board agendas and board communications keep board members informed; strategies, such as board committees or board professional development, keep board members engaged in a proactive process focused on state educational needs and policy priorities.
- 2.2 Proactively responds to board needs and policy priorities.
 - **Evidence:** Board agendas, reports, and communication are used to inform board and key stakeholders on educational needs and policy priorities.
 - **Evidence:** Uses strategies and tools to routinely gather input from board members to determine needs and direction for policy priorities.
- 2.3 Provides leadership in the compliance, review, and development of state policy.
 - **Evidence:** Board policies are current, aligned with state statutes and the board's strategic direction and vision policy, and the department is in compliance with state and federal regulations.
- 2.4 Stays current on, responds to, and advocates for state or federal policy, as needed to support the board's shared vision and strategic direction.
 - **Evidence:** Reports to board members and staff demonstrate up-to-date information on state or federal policy, as needed.
 - **Evidence:** Monitors state and federal legislation; confers with legislators and congressional representatives.
- 2.5 Collaboratively works to influence state and national decisions impacting student achievement and school success.
 - **Evidence:** Board reports, board communication, and professional development show evidence of engagement of key stakeholders and participation in activities that support state and national policy decisions that have positive impact on student achievement and school success.

~~3. Collaboration with Stakeholders~~

~~The Commissioner leads through a collaborative process engaging all stakeholders and mobilizing state resources in support of the vision and strategic direction of education in Nebraska.~~

~~**Indicators**~~

- ~~3.1 Communicates regularly and openly with families and stakeholders across the state about the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Department of Education, educational needs, student performance, challenges and accomplishments.~~
 - ~~**Evidence:** Newsletters, newspaper articles, web articles, speaking engagements and communication plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.~~

~~3.2 Maintains a presence throughout the state to understand its strengths and needs.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Participation in state, regional, and community events, facilitating meetings or informational sessions, or conducting needs assessments or surveys.~~
- ~~● **Evidence:** Serves on boards or committees to provide leadership and direction on educational issues and needs in Nebraska.~~

~~3.3 Understands and is engaged with state educational needs, priorities, and resources.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Student and school data, state surveys, data on state, regional and community needs, and stakeholder engagement plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.~~

~~3.4 Models collaboration within the organization and encourages collaboration between the Nebraska Department of Education, other state agencies, educational organizations, ESU's and school districts.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Reports, presentations, and updates demonstrate collaboration within organizations; and activities and professional development reinforce collaborative processes.~~
- ~~● **Evidence:** Strategic planning and rule-making processes are developed with collaborative input through engagement of key state-wide stakeholders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.~~
- ~~● **Evidence:** Satisfaction and consumer-focused surveys are routinely used to gather input from external and internal stakeholders, and results are shared and utilized.~~

4.1. Continuous Improvement and Accountability

~~The Commissioner promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement.~~

~~Indicators~~

~~4.1 Demonstrates a commitment to accountability by modeling and ensuring everyone is held accountable for success.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Board policies and procedures define a system of accountability and reports and presentations keep the board and community informed about department accountability.~~
- ~~● **Evidence:** Commissioner's annual report to the board regarding strategic plan measures of progress and annual school accountability reporting provides the foundation for continuous improvement.~~

~~4.2 Systematically reviews, anticipates, and analyzes emerging trends and innovative strategies to continually improve all elements of the organization.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Board reports and presentations keep the board informed of emerging trends and innovative strategies to continually improve all aspects of the organization.~~

~~4.3 Maintains comprehensive and current information about organizational processes, procedures, and effectiveness.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Robust, comprehensive strategic plans for the organization and each program are based on comprehensive and current information on program outcomes, with specific goals and benchmarks aligned with state and national indicators of quality and best practice.~~

~~4.4 Makes informed recommendations to the board and decisions based on multiple data sources.~~

- ~~**Evidence:** Multiple data sources are used and clearly explained in board reports and board recommendations.~~

~~4.5 Engages key stakeholders on continuous improvement and accountability of the organization on a regular basis.~~

- ~~**Evidence:** Administrative and board reports routinely provide information regarding activities to engage key stakeholders on continuous improvement of the organization.~~

~~4.6 Aligns state processes and regulations with national indicators of quality, accreditation, and accountability.~~

- ~~**Evidence:** Board reports provide information on state policies, regulations, procedures, and practice aligned with national expectations of quality, accreditation and accountability.~~

5.3. Teaching and Learning State School System Leadership

The Commissioner ensures organizational and school success through continuous improvement and leadership focused on evidence-based practices in teaching and learning.

Indicators

- 35.1** Ensures the implementation of a coherent system of standards and assessment that aligns with the shared vision, is culturally responsive and embodies high expectations.
- **Evidence:** State standards and assessments are developed with broad stakeholder input to ensure high expectations and cultural responsiveness. Processes, ~~standards~~standards, and state assessments are reviewed and approved by the board.
- 35.2** Communicates high expectations for student achievement that is accomplished by a data-driven approach that produces effective results.
- **Evidence:** Strategic plan clearly articulate data-driven high expectations that are incorporated into the regulations for accountability and accreditation.
- 35.3** Ensures standards and assessments are research-based and innovative and provide learning experiences and opportunities that lead all students to success at the next level.
- **Evidence:** Board reports, presentations and student achievement data reflect that processes are in place to ensure standards and assessment are developed using research-based and innovative practices and are monitored and adjusted to provide equitable and challenging learning experiences and opportunities that lead all students to success at the next level.
- 35.4** Ensures regulatory processes and policies relative to teacher preparation and certification are available for review and input by key stakeholders, parents, and community members.
- **Evidence:** Teacher preparation and certification rules and processes are available for review; and a process for input is identified in board policy, procedures, or practices.
 -
- 35.5** Monitors and supports the implementation of research-based practices in teaching and learning.
- **Evidence:** Board reports and presentations, as well as state regulations, ~~procedures~~procedures, and practices, reflect the use of research or evidence-based practices.

6. Personnel Leadership

The Commissioner effectively uses strategies, processes, and systems to hire, develop and retain high-performing personnel who demonstrate a shared commitment to organizational success.

Indicators

6.1 Ensures the necessary personnel and financial resources are allocated to achieve the organization's shared vision and strategic direction.

• Evidence: Board reports, presentations and the department budget reinforce that personnel and financial systems are in place to achieve the board and department's vision and strategic direction.

• Evidence: Budget and hiring processes and timelines are available and communicated to the board members and key stakeholders.

6.2 Implements human resource systems and processes that address: recruitment, hiring, and induction; evaluation and retention; and short-term and long-term planning reflective of personnel needs.

• Evidence: Communication processes inform board members and key stakeholders regarding recruitment and employment opportunities within the department.

• Evidence: Department procedures are in place and available for review by board members regarding the evaluation process of all personnel.

• Evidence: Strategies for recognition and positive reinforcement of all personnel are used to support retention.

• Evidence: Board reports, presentations, and personnel data reflect department policies and procedures are in place and consistently used to support personnel needs in the department.

• Evidence: Short-term and long-term plans are in place to support recruitment, development and retention of all personnel.

6.3 Creates a comprehensive system of professional development for all personnel.

• Evidence: Department policies, procedures and practices define professional development expectations.

• Evidence: Strategic plans delineate professional development expectations and areas of improvement for the organization.

• Evidence: The Commissioner's professional development plan aligns with the department needs and priorities and demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning.

47. Systems Leadership and Agency Management

The Commissioner: -promotes department success by managing the organizational structure and resources in a way that ensures a safe, efficient, and effective working environment; -effectively uses strategies, processes, and systems to hire, develop and retain high-performing personnel who demonstrate a shared commitment to organizational success; fosters and monitors department climate and culture to ensure equity; promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement; and participates in professional learning opportunities.

Indicators

- 74.1 Ensures business processes and systems are in place for budgeting and financial planning.
- **Evidence:** *Board reports on budget and financial status demonstrate department policies, procedures, and practices are aligned with effective use of business processes and systems in all aspects of the department's finances.*
- 74.2 Communicates expectations that align board and department vision with the use of physical and financial resources of the department.
- **Evidence:** *Board reports and presentations on use of physical and financial resources reflect an alignment with the board and department's shared vision and strategic direction.*
- 74.3 Uses a systems approach that optimizes the use of facilities and resources.
- **Evidence:** *Short-term and long-term plans are available and routinely updated.*
 - **Evidence:** *Facilities are well-maintained, ~~clean~~clean, and safe.*
- 74.4 Identifies and resolves issues, manages conflicts, and builds consensus about the use of personnel, physical and financial resources throughout the department.
- **Evidence:** *Department policies, procedures, and practices define processes for handling conflict, and routine communication keeps board members informed of operational issues and the resolution of such issues.*
- 6.14.5 Ensures the necessary personnel and financial resources are allocated to achieve the organization's shared vision and strategic direction.
- **Evidence:** *Board reports, presentations and the department budget reinforce that personnel and financial systems are in place to achieve the board and department's vision and strategic direction.*
 - **Evidence:** *Budget and hiring processes and timelines are available and communicated to the board members and key stakeholders.*
- 6.24.6 Implements human resource systems and processes that address: recruitment, hiring, and induction; evaluation and retention; and short-term and long-term planning reflective of personnel needs.
- **Evidence:** *Communication processes inform board members and key stakeholders regarding recruitment and employment opportunities within the department.*
 - **Evidence:** *Department procedures are in place and available for review by board members regarding the evaluation process of all personnel.*
 - **Evidence:** *Strategies for recognition and positive reinforcement of all personnel are used to support retention.*
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports, presentations, and personnel data reflect department policies and procedures are in place and consistently used to support personnel needs in the department.*
 - **Evidence:** *Short-term and long-term plans are in place to support recruitment, ~~development~~development, and retention of all personnel.*

6.34.7 Creates a comprehensive system of professional development for all personnel.

- *Evidence: Department policies, procedures and practices define professional development expectations.*
- *Evidence: Strategic plans delineate professional development expectations and areas of improvement for the organization.*
- *Evidence: The Commissioner's professional development plan aligns with the department needs and priorities and demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning.*

4.8 Creates a system in which shared vision on equity and equitable practices are the norm.

- *Evidence: Department practices including communication plans and stakeholder/staff surveys of climate and culture reinforce a shared vision of equity and equitable practices.*
- *Evidence: The Commissioner establishes protocols allowing department staff to communicate directly with the Commissioner regarding any possible or perceived climate/cultural conflicts within the department.*

4.9 Processes, regulations and services reflect a commitment to equity and equitable practices.

- *Evidence: Department policies, procedures, practices, and services clearly support a commitment to equity.*

4.10 Visibly and actively develops and communicates a positive and responsive culture of high expectations and well-being for self, staff, and services.

- *Evidence: The Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies, and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, stakeholders, and customers that convey a positive and responsive culture of high expectations and equitable practices.*

Continuous Improvement and Accountability

The Commissioner promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement.

Indicators

4.11 Demonstrates a commitment to accountability by modeling and ensuring everyone is held accountable for success.

- *Evidence: Board policies and procedures define a system of accountability and reports and presentations keep the board and community informed about department accountability.*
- *Evidence: Commissioner's annual report to the board regarding strategic plan measures of progress and annual school accountability reporting provides the foundation for continuous improvement.*

4.12 Systematically reviews, anticipates, and analyzes emerging trends and innovative strategies to continually improve all elements of the organization.

- *Evidence: Board reports and presentations keep the board informed of emerging trends and innovative strategies to continually improve all aspects of the organization.*

4.13 Maintains comprehensive and current information about organizational processes, procedures, and effectiveness.

- *Evidence: Robust, comprehensive strategic plans for the organization and each program are based on comprehensive and current information on program outcomes, with specific goals and benchmarks aligned with state and national indicators of quality and best practice.*

4.14 Makes informed recommendations to the board and decisions based on multiple data sources.

- *Evidence: Multiple data sources are used and clearly explained in board reports and board recommendations.*

4.15 Engages key stakeholders on continuous improvement and accountability of the organization on a regular basis.

- *Evidence: Administrative and board reports routinely provide information regarding activities to engage key stakeholders on continuous improvement of the organization.*

4.16 Aligns state processes and regulations with national indicators of quality, accreditation, and accountability.

- **Evidence:** Board reports provide information on state policies, regulations, procedures, and practice aligned with national expectations of quality, accreditation, and accountability.

4.17 Leads with dignity and respect.

- **Evidence:** The Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, parents, stakeholders, and communities that convey dignity and respect.

4.18 Ensures implementation of policy and practice is consistent.

- **Evidence:** Department policies and procedures guide the decision-making process to be just, fair, and equitable; and the Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, stakeholders, parents, and communities that demonstrate decisions are just, fair, and equitable.

4.19 Models and articulates ethical behavior and consistently holds others in the department accountable for demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior.

- **Evidence:** Department policies and procedures are grounded in an ethical framework, and the Commissioner models and leads with integrity and ethical behavior.
- **Evidence:** Department policies and procedures are grounded in an ethical framework, and the Commissioner holds all staff accountable for behavior that may be deemed as lacking integrity or ethics

4.20

~~8. Equity, Climate, and Culture~~

~~The Commissioner fosters and monitors department climate and culture to ensure equity.~~

~~Indicators~~

~~8.1 — Creates a system in which shared vision on equity and equitable practices are the norm.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Department practices including communication plans and stakeholder/staff surveys of climate and culture reinforce a shared vision of equity and equitable practices.~~
- ~~● **Evidence:** The Commissioner establishes protocols allowing department staff to communicate directly with the Commissioner regarding any possible or perceived climate/cultural conflicts within the department.~~

~~8.2 — Processes, regulations and services reflect a commitment to equity and equitable practices.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** Department policies, procedures, practices and services clearly support a commitment to equity.~~

~~8.3 — Visibly and actively develops and communicates a positive and responsive culture of high expectations and well-being for self, staff and services.~~

- ~~● **Evidence:** The Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies, and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, stakeholders, and customers that convey a positive and responsive culture of high expectations and equitable practices.~~

9. Leadership, Conduct, and Professional Growth

The Commissioner leads with enthusiasm, fairness, and integrity; demonstrates a high level of personal and professional conduct; participates in professional learning opportunities; and, models continuous improvement.

~~1a~~

~~9.1 — Leads with dignity and respect.~~

- ~~• **Evidence:** The Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, parents, stakeholders, and communities that convey dignity and respect.~~

~~9.2 — Ensures implementation of policy and practice is consistent.~~

- ~~• **Evidence:** Department policies and procedures guide the decision-making process to be just, fair, and equitable; and the Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, stakeholders, parents, and communities that demonstrate decisions are just, fair, and equitable.~~

~~9.3 — Models and articulates ethical behavior.~~

- ~~• **Evidence:** Department policies and procedures are grounded in an ethical framework, and the Commissioner models and leads with integrity and ethical behavior.~~

~~9.4 — Consistently holds others in the department accountable for demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior.~~

- ~~• **Evidence:** Department policies and procedures are grounded in an ethical framework, and the Commissioner holds all staff accountable for behavior that may be deemed as lacking integrity or ethics.~~

~~9.5 — Participates in professional growth and leadership opportunities to model continuous improvement needs of self and the organization.~~

- ~~• **Evidence:** The Commissioner's professional development plan delineates needs and activities that model continuous improvement for the organization and opportunities to foster ongoing leadership.~~

Commissioner's Performance Standards, Indicators & Targets

Proposed Revision ♦ 6/3/21

1. Shared Vision and Strategic Direction

The Commissioner leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the department's core values, beliefs, and priorities. The Commissioner leads through a collaborative process engaging all stakeholders and mobilizing state resources in support of the vision and strategic direction of education in Nebraska.

Indicators

- 1.1 Develops and implements a shared vision and strategic direction that guides the state into supporting high expectations for student achievement.
 - **Evidence:** *Documentation of a shared vision and strategic direction supports high expectations of student achievement and accomplishment, developed with specific strategies, measurable outcomes, and timelines.*
- 1.2 Partners with the board of education and key community constituents/stakeholders in the development of the shared vision and strategic direction, which represents the current and future needs of the state and school communities.
 - **Evidence:** *Documentation of collaborative development of the shared vision and strategic direction involving board members and key community constituents/stakeholders.*
 - **Evidence:** *Community engagement meetings and surveys solicit input and feedback on the vision and strategic direction from diverse stakeholders and constituents*
- 1.3 Engages constituents/stakeholders within the state and school communities to develop a commitment to the shared vision and the strategic direction.
 - **Evidence:** *Board, staff, state and community presentations and updates routinely model commitment to the shared vision and strategic direction.*
 - **Evidence:** *Newsletters, articles, public speaking engagements, and information on the department website routinely provide constituents with information and updates related to the shared vision and strategic direction*
- 1.4 Routinely solicits feedback—including periodic review and revision of the shared vision and strategic direction—with input from key stakeholders throughout the state.
 - **Evidence:** *Feedback processes such as surveys, formal and informal meetings, or committees solicit input from key stakeholders throughout the state.*
- 1.5 Communicates regularly and openly with families and stakeholders across the state about the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Department of Education, educational needs, student performance, challenges, and accomplishments.
 - **Evidence:** *Newsletters, newspaper articles, web articles, speaking engagements and communication plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.*
- 1.6 Maintains a presence throughout the state to understand its strengths and needs.
 - **Evidence:** *Participation in state, regional, and community events, facilitating meetings or informational sessions, or conducting needs assessments or surveys.*
 - **Evidence:** *Serves on boards or committees to provide leadership and direction on educational issues and needs in Nebraska.*

- 1.7 Models collaboration within the organization and encourages collaboration between the Nebraska Department of Education, other state agencies, educational organizations, ESU's and school districts.
 - **Evidence:** Reports, presentations, and updates demonstrate collaboration within organizations; and activities and professional development reinforce collaborative processes.
 - **Evidence:** Strategic planning and rule-making processes are developed with collaborative input through engagement of key state-wide stakeholders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.
 - **Evidence:** Satisfaction and consumer-focused surveys are routinely used to gather input from external and internal stakeholders, and results are shared and utilized.
- 1.8 Communicates regularly and openly with families and stakeholders across the state about the State Board of Education, the Nebraska Department of Education, educational needs, student performance, challenges, and accomplishments.
 - **Evidence:** Newsletters, newspaper articles, web articles, speaking engagements and communication plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.
- 1.9 Maintains a presence throughout the state to understand its strengths and needs.
 - **Evidence:** Participation in state, regional, and community events, facilitating meetings or informational sessions, or conducting needs assessments or surveys.
 - **Evidence:** Serves on boards or committees to provide leadership and direction on educational issues and needs in Nebraska.
- 1.10 Understands and is engaged with state educational needs, priorities, and resources.
 - **Evidence:** Student and school data, state surveys, data on state, regional and community needs, and stakeholder engagement plan/goals exist with timelines and benchmarks.
- 1.11 Models collaboration within the organization and encourages collaboration between the Nebraska Department of Education, other state agencies, educational organizations, ESU's and school districts.
 - **Evidence:** Reports, presentations, and updates demonstrate collaboration within organizations; and activities and professional development reinforce collaborative processes.
 - **Evidence:** Strategic planning and rule-making processes are developed with collaborative input through engagement of key state-wide stakeholders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.
 - **Evidence:** Satisfaction and consumer-focused surveys are routinely used to gather input from external and internal stakeholders, and results are shared and utilized.

2. State Board of Education and Education System Policy

The Commissioner provides direction for the board in policy development and governance within the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.

Indicators

- 2.1 Actively and continually fosters board relationships and keeps board members informed and engaged in development.
 - **Evidence:** Board agendas and board communications keep board members informed; strategies, such as board committees or board professional development, keep board members engaged in a proactive process focused on state educational needs and policy priorities.
- 2.2 Proactively responds to board needs and policy priorities.
 - **Evidence:** Board agendas, reports, and communication are used to inform board and key stakeholders on educational needs and policy priorities.
 - **Evidence:** Uses strategies and tools to routinely gather input from board members to determine needs and direction for policy priorities.

- 2.3 Provides leadership in the compliance, review, and development of state policy.
 - **Evidence:** *Board policies are current, aligned with state statutes and the board’s strategic direction and vision policy, and the department is in compliance with state and federal regulations.*
- 2.4 Stays current on, responds to, and advocates for state or federal policy, as needed to support the board’s shared vision and strategic direction.
 - **Evidence:** *Reports to board members and staff demonstrate up-to-date information on state or federal policy, as needed.*
 - **Evidence:** *Monitors state and federal legislation; confers with legislators and congressional representatives.*
- 2.5 Collaboratively works to influence state and national decisions impacting student achievement and school success.
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports, board communication, and professional development show evidence of engagement of key stakeholders and participation in activities that support state and national policy decisions that have positive impact on student achievement and school success.*

3. State School System Leadership

The Commissioner ensures organizational and school success through continuous improvement and leadership focused on evidence-based practices in teaching and learning.

Indicators

- 3.1 Ensures the implementation of a coherent system of standards and assessment that aligns with the shared vision, is culturally responsive and embodies high expectations.
 - **Evidence:** *State standards and assessments are developed with broad stakeholder input to ensure high expectations and cultural responsiveness. Processes, standards, and state assessments are reviewed and approved by the board.*
- 3.2 Communicates high expectations for student achievement that is accomplished by a data-driven approach that produces effective results.
 - **Evidence:** *Strategic plan clearly articulate data-driven high expectations that are incorporated into the regulations for accountability and accreditation.*
- 3.3 Ensures standards and assessments are research-based and innovative and provide learning experiences and opportunities that lead all students to success at the next level.
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports, presentations and student achievement data reflect that processes are in place to ensure standards and assessment are developed using research-based and innovative practices and are monitored and adjusted to provide equitable and challenging learning experiences and opportunities that lead all students to success at the next level.*
- 3.4 Ensures regulatory processes and policies relative to teacher preparation and certification are available for review and input by key stakeholders, parents, and community members.
 - **Evidence:** *Teacher preparation and certification rules and processes are available for review; and a process for input is identified in board policy, procedures, or practices.*
- 3.5 Monitors and supports the implementation of research-based practices in teaching and learning.
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports and presentations, as well as state regulations, procedures, and practices, reflect the use of research or evidence-based practices.*

4. Agency Management

The Commissioner: promotes department success by managing the organizational structure and resources in a way that ensures a safe, efficient, and effective working environment; effectively uses strategies, processes, and systems to hire, develop and retain high-performing personnel who demonstrate a shared commitment to organizational success; fosters and monitors department climate and culture to ensure equity; promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement; and participates in professional learning opportunities.

Indicators

- 4.1 Ensures business processes and systems are in place for budgeting and financial planning.
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports on budget and financial status demonstrate department policies, procedures, and practices are aligned with effective use of business processes and systems in all aspects of the department's finances.*
- 4.2 Communicates expectations that align board and department vision with the use of physical and financial resources of the department.
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports and presentations on use of physical and financial resources reflect an alignment with the board and department's shared vision and strategic direction.*
- 4.3 Uses a systems approach that optimizes the use of facilities and resources.
 - **Evidence:** *Short-term and long-term plans are available and routinely updated.*
 - **Evidence:** *Facilities are well-maintained, clean, and safe.*
- 4.4 Identifies and resolves issues, manages conflicts, and builds consensus about the use of personnel, physical and financial resources throughout the department.
 - **Evidence:** *Department policies, procedures, and practices define processes for handling conflict, and routine communication keeps board members informed of operational issues and the resolution of such issues.*
- 4.5 Ensures the necessary personnel and financial resources are allocated to achieve the organization's shared vision and strategic direction.
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports, presentations and the department budget reinforce that personnel and financial systems are in place to achieve the board and department's vision and strategic direction.*
 - **Evidence:** *Budget and hiring processes and timelines are available and communicated to the board members and key stakeholders.*
- 4.6 Implements human resource systems and processes that address: recruitment, hiring, and induction; evaluation and retention; and short-term and long-term planning reflective of personnel needs.
 - **Evidence:** *Communication processes inform board members and key stakeholders regarding recruitment and employment opportunities within the department.*
 - **Evidence:** *Department procedures are in place and available for review by board members regarding the evaluation process of all personnel.*
 - **Evidence:** *Strategies for recognition and positive reinforcement of all personnel are used to support retention.*
 - **Evidence:** *Board reports, presentations, and personnel data reflect department policies and procedures are in place and consistently used to support personnel needs in the department.*
 - **Evidence:** *Short-term and long-term plans are in place to support recruitment, development, and retention of all personnel.*

- 4.7 Creates a comprehensive system of professional development for all personnel.
- **Evidence:** *Department policies, procedures and practices define professional development expectations.*
 - **Evidence:** *Strategic plans delineate professional development expectations and areas of improvement for the organization.*
 - **Evidence:** *The Commissioner's professional development plan aligns with the department needs and priorities and demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning.*
- 4.8 Creates a system in which shared vision on equity and equitable practices are the norm.
- **Evidence:** *Department practices including communication plans and stakeholder/staff surveys of climate and culture reinforce a shared vision of equity and equitable practices.*
 - **Evidence:** *The Commissioner establishes protocols allowing department staff to communicate directly with the Commissioner regarding any possible or perceived climate/cultural conflicts within the department.*
- 4.9 Processes, regulations and services reflect a commitment to equity and equitable practices.
- **Evidence:** *Department policies, procedures, practices, and services clearly support a commitment to equity.*
- 4.10 Visibly and actively develops and communicates a positive and responsive culture of high expectations and well-being for self, staff, and services.
- **Evidence:** *The Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies, and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, stakeholders, and customers that convey a positive and responsive culture of high expectations and equitable practices.*
- 4.11 Demonstrates a commitment to accountability by modeling and ensuring everyone is held accountable for success.
- **Evidence:** *Board policies and procedures define a system of accountability and reports and presentations keep the board and community informed about department accountability.*
 - **Evidence:** *Commissioner's annual report to the board regarding strategic plan measures of progress and annual school accountability reporting provides the foundation for continuous improvement.*
- 4.12 Systematically reviews, anticipates, and analyzes emerging trends and innovative strategies to continually improve all elements of the organization.
- **Evidence:** *Board reports and presentations keep the board informed of emerging trends and innovative strategies to continually improve all aspects of the organization.*
- 4.13 Maintains comprehensive and current information about organizational processes, procedures, and effectiveness.
- **Evidence:** *Robust, comprehensive strategic plans for the organization and each program are based on comprehensive and current information on program outcomes, with specific goals and benchmarks aligned with state and national indicators of quality and best practice.*
- 4.14 Makes informed recommendations to the board and decisions based on multiple data sources.
- **Evidence:** *Multiple data sources are used and clearly explained in board reports and board recommendations.*
- 4.15 Engages key stakeholders on continuous improvement and accountability of the organization on a regular basis.
- **Evidence:** *Administrative and board reports routinely provide information regarding activities to engage key stakeholders on continuous improvement of the organization.*

- 4.16 Aligns state processes and regulations with national indicators of quality, accreditation, and accountability.
- **Evidence:** *Board reports provide information on state policies, regulations, procedures, and practice aligned with national expectations of quality, accreditation, and accountability.*
- 4.17 Leads with dignity and respect.
- **Evidence:** *The Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, parents, stakeholders, and communities that convey dignity and respect.*
- 4.18 Ensures implementation of policy and practice is consistent.
- **Evidence:** *Department policies and procedures guide the decision-making process to be just, fair, and equitable; and the Commissioner uses oral and written communication strategies and problem-solving strategies with the board, staff, stakeholders, parents, and communities that demonstrate decisions are just, fair, and equitable.*
- 4.19 Models and articulates ethical behavior and consistently holds others in the department accountable for demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior.
- **Evidence:** *Department policies and procedures are grounded in an ethical framework, and the Commissioner models and leads with integrity and ethical behavior.*
 - **Evidence:** *Department policies and procedures are grounded in an ethical framework, and the Commissioner holds all staff accountable for behavior that may be deemed as lacking integrity or ethics*
- 4.20 Participates in professional growth and leadership opportunities to model continuous improvement needs of self and the organization.
- **Evidence:** *The Commissioner’s professional development plan delineates needs and activities that model continuous improvement for the organization and opportunities to foster ongoing leadership.*



Commissioner of Education

Essential Job Functions

5-25-21

Shared Vision and Strategic Direction – Leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the Department’s core values, beliefs, and priorities.

- Ensures that the programs and services offered by the Department contribute to the organization’s mission and vision and reflect the Board’s priorities.
- Conducts analyses to identify emerging issues that affect education in the state or that may have an impact on the Department.
- Sets organizational goals and outcomes and identifies resources required to achieve those goals.
- Promotes awareness of education issues and builds strong working relationships with school officials, policy partners (e.g., Governor, the Legislature, the Congressional delegation), and other stakeholders.

State Board of Education and Education System Policy – Provides direction for the board in policy development and governance within the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.

- Acts as the Board’s Secretary, maintaining official Board records as required by law and Board policies.
- Assists the Board in its policy-forming, planning and evaluation functions by recommending goals, priorities, implementation plans and/or policies for Board consideration.
- Recommends rules and regulations for implementing Legislative directives and the goals, priorities, and decisions of the Board.

State School System Leadership – Provides leadership for the continuous improvement of Nebraska’s public schools.

- Creates guidelines and provides direction on the creation of school programs, curricula, and instructional practices that represent appropriate and established practices including research-based best or promising practices.
- Provides a process for the review of ethics complaints against educators that is user-friendly, systematic, and professional.
- Promotes the coordination of a seamless system of education (P-16), and promotes collaborative initiatives to address higher education and P-12 issues.

Agency Management – Oversees the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the agency’s programs and services.

- Effectively uses strategies, processes, and systems to hire, develop and retain high-performing personnel who demonstrate a shared commitment to organizational success; fosters and monitors department climate and culture to ensure equity.
- Promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Provides oversight for the financial operations of the Department and seeks funding to implement Department goals.
- Establishes and maintains a system of administrative rules to establish policies and procedures.
- Participates in performance management and professional development activities.
- Prepares for and participates in the annual appraisal of performance with the Board.
- Participates in conferences, workshops, courses, and professional reading to maintain professional expertise and to improve performance.

Travel/Outreach – Possesses a valid driver’s license, travels independently, and works in a variety of settings.

Commissioner’s Essential Functions & Performance Standards ♦ 5/25/21

Original Essential Functions	Potential Revised Essential Functions	Original Performance Standards	Potential Revised Performance Standards
1. <u>Vision</u> – Contributes to thought leadership in the field of public education and creates a vision of the agency for the future.	1. <u>Shared Vision and Strategic Direction</u> – Leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the Departments’ core values, beliefs, and priorities.	1. <u>Shared Vision and Strategic Direction</u> – The Commissioner leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the department’s core values, beliefs, and priorities.	1. <u>Shared Vision and Strategic Direction</u> – Leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, strategic direction, and goals that reflect the department’s core values, beliefs, and priorities
2. <u>State Board Leadership</u> – Provides leadership for the State Board of Education and supports the policy leadership role of the Board.	2. <u>State Board of Education and Education System Policy</u> – Provides direction for the board in policy development and governance with the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.	2. <u>Board, Policy, and the Education System</u> – The Commissioner provides direction for the board in policy development and governance within the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.	2. <u>State Board of Education and Education System Policy</u> – Provides direction for the board in policy development and governance within the political, social, economic, or legal context at a state and national level.
3. <u>State School System Leadership</u> – Provides leadership for the continuous improvement of Nebraska’s public schools.	3. <u>State School System Leadership</u> – Provides leadership for the continuous improvement of Nebraska’s public schools. (No change)	3. <u>Collaboration with Stakeholders</u> – The Commissioner leads through a collaborative process engaging all stakeholders and mobilizing state resources in support of the vision and strategic direction of education in Nebraska.	Incorporated into #1.
4. <u>Accountability</u> – Ensures accountability for the agency by monitoring and reporting on school performance and agency operations.	Incorporated into #3 and #4	4. <u>Continuous Improvement and Accountability</u> – The Commissioner promotes organizational success through a clearly defined process of accountability and a culture of continuous improvement.	Incorporated into #4.
5. <u>Outreach/Engagement/Collaboration</u> – Promotes awareness of education issues and builds strong working relationships with stakeholders.	Incorporated into #1	5. <u>Teaching and Learning</u> – The Commissioner ensures organizational and school success through continuous improvement and leadership focused on evidence-based practices in teaching and learning.	3. <u>State School System Leadership</u> – Ensures organizational and school success through continuous improvement and leadership focused on evidence-based practices in teaching and learning.
6. <u>Agency Management</u> – Oversees the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the agency’s programs and services.	4. <u>Agency Management</u> – Oversees the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Department’s programs and services.	6. <u>Personnel Leadership</u> – The Commissioner effectively uses strategies, processes, and systems to hire, develop and retain high-performing personnel who demonstrate a shared commitment to organizational success.	Incorporated into #4.
7. <u>Human Resources Management</u> – Maintains a qualified, competent staff to carry out the agency’s mission.	Incorporated into #4	7. <u>Systems Leadership and Management</u> – The Commissioner promotes department success by managing the organizational structure and resources in a way that ensures a safe, efficient, and effective working environment.	4. <u>Agency Management</u> – Oversees the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the agency’s programs and services. (New performance standard combining original sections 4, 6, 7, and 8.
8. <u>Financial Planning and Management</u> – Provides oversight for the financial operations of the agency and seeks funding to implement agency goals.	Incorporated into #4	8. <u>Equity, Climate, and Culture</u> – The Commissioner fosters and monitors department climate and culture to ensure equity.	Incorporated into #4.
9. <u>Professional Development</u> – Participates in performance management and professional development activities.	Incorporated into #4	9. <u>Leadership, Conduct, and Professional Growth</u> – The Commissioner leads with enthusiasm, fairness, and integrity; demonstrates a high level of personal and professional conduct; participates in professional learning opportunities; and models continuous improvement.	Incorporated into #4.
10. <u>Travel/Outreach</u> – Possesses a valid driver’s license, travels independently, and works in a variety of settings.	5. <u>Travel</u> – Possesses a valid driver’s license, travels independently, and works in a variety of settings. (No change)	10. <u>Performance Targets</u>	5. <u>Performance Targets</u> – Annual performance goals.



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: December 15, 2021

The Budget and Finance Committee met to discuss one item that was referred to it from the December board meeting, to authorize the Commissioner to amend a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. The committee received additional information from NDE staff and recommends approval of this agenda item.

Additionally, the committee outlined topics for the 2022 Budget and Finance Committee including inflation adjustments, length of contract requirements, and contract renewal procedures.

This concludes the Budget and Finance Committee report.

Maureen Nickels, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 18, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Lane Carr
Administrator, Office of Policy & Strategic Initiatives

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to amend a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to extend staff partnership contracts until December 2024.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At the February 2021 Nebraska State Board Meeting, board members authorized the commissioner to enter into new contracts for staff augmentation in support of NDE project efforts. Part of this proposal included early literacy, early math, systems involved youth, and community engagement specialists. Since that time, the NDE has contracted with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, which successfully hired staff to serve in a dual capacity, serving the shared interests and furthering projects together. These four areas emerged as needs based on school data, and extensive outreach to stakeholders.

This authorization would allow the NDE to amend the contract with NCFE to extend these positions for the next three years, until December 2024, and include modest expenses such as travel and materials needed by each of the positions.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): November 2021

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,220,000 total over three years

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: ESSER III (ARP)
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: February 2021

In-State Travel Authorization Reports - January

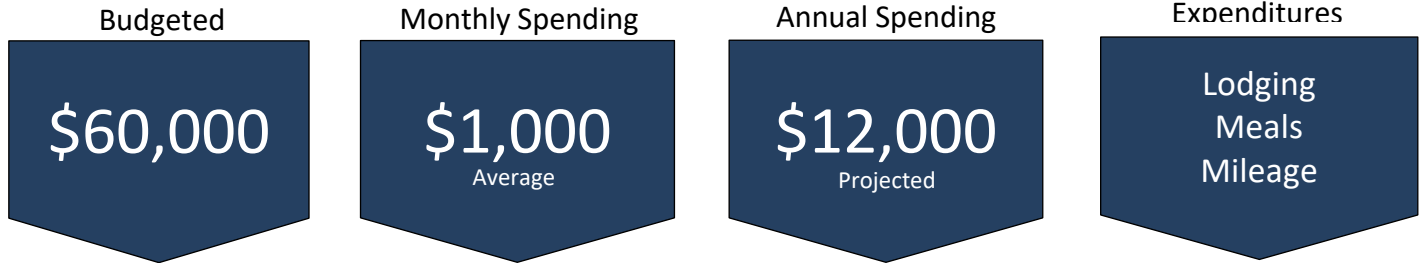
Name	Event Name	Date	Location	Board Bylaw B16 Code A-F
Lisa Fricke	NAG Conference	1/29/2022	Virtual	E
Jacquelyn Morrison	(NONE)			
Deborah Neary	(NONE)			
Kirk Penner	(NONE)			

In-State Travel Authorization Reports - January

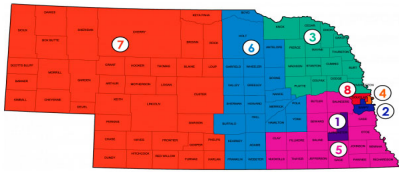
<u>Name</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Board Bylaw B16 Code A-F</u>
Patsy Koch Johns	(NONE)			
Patti Gubbels	NASB Legislative Issues Conference	01/30/22 - 01/31/22	Lincoln Cornhusker Marriott	E
Maureen Nickels	(NONE)			
Robin Stevens	(NONE)			



2021-2022 Board Travel
At-A-Glance



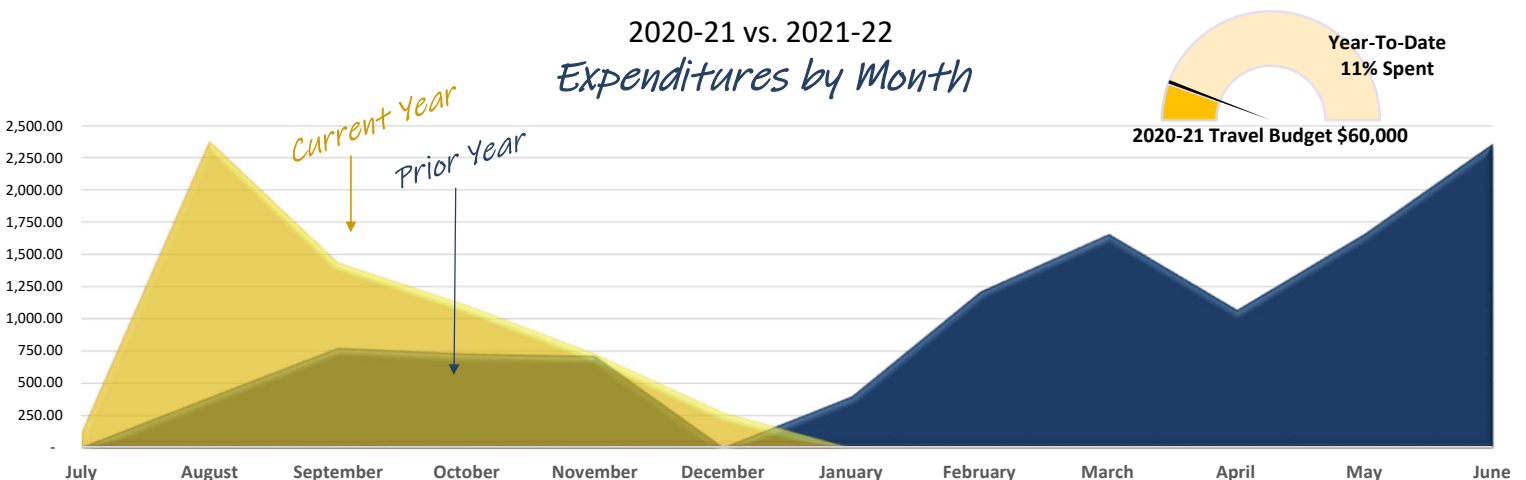
Even under pandemic conditions, the Nebraska Board of Education has retained the ability to attend meetings, conferences and conventions, sustain meaningful and dynamic work in addition to engaging in new opportunities provided through innovation and virtual technology during unexpected circumstances.



Board Member Activity

District	Board Member	Current Year July 2021-June 2022		Prior Year July 2020-June 2021		Variance			
		December	Year-To-Date	December	Year-To-Date	December	Year-To-Date		
1	Patsy Koch Johns, Vice President	\$39	\$212	\$0	\$58	\$39	\$155		
2	Lisa Fricke	\$39	\$916	\$0	\$284	\$39	\$633		
3	Patti Gubbels <i>New Jan. 2021</i>	\$39	\$1,722	\$0	\$0	\$39	\$1,722		
3	Rachel Wise <i>Outgoing Dec. 2020</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$698	\$0	-\$698		
4	Jacquelyn Morrison <i>New Jan. 2021</i>	\$39	\$813	\$0	\$0	\$39	\$813		
4	John Witzel <i>Outgoing Dec. 2020</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30	\$0	-\$30		
5	Patricia Timm	\$0	\$239	\$0	\$288	\$0	-\$49		
6	Maureen Nickels, President	\$39	\$766	\$0	\$648	\$39	\$118		
7	Robin Stevens	\$39	\$1,440	\$0	\$517	\$39	\$922		
8	Deborah Neary	\$39	\$532	\$0	\$63	\$39	\$470		
		\$273	\$6,640	11%	\$0	\$2,586	4%	\$273	\$4,054
Annual Budget			\$60,000		\$60,000				
Over/(Under) Budget			(\$53,360)	89%		(\$57,414)	96%		

2020-21 vs. 2021-22
Expenditures by Month



Historical Annual Expenditures - FY2021 (\$11,000), FY2020(\$35,000), FY2019(\$48,500)

OPPORTUNITY

OF A LIFETIME



Covid Impacts and Nebraska's Opportunity

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

Academic Impact of Covid-19

- Three impacted school years
- It will take years to know the full scope of the impact
- Nebraska is in a better position...
- Key findings:
 - Nebraska's participation rate in assessments dropped by nearly 5%
 - Data from the Nebraska Student Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) will provide a **new baseline**
 - Significant **achievement gaps persist**, and in some cases widened
 - Homeschool enrollment **expanded, then contracted** to pre-pandemic numbers
 - Overall public and non-public school enrollment was down
 - **Graduation rates held steady**, but remain lower than pre-pandemic
 - **Chronic absenteeism nearly doubled** in 2020-21**



Nebraska's investments directly address the *academic impact* of COVID-19 with targeted, statewide initiatives.

Key investments in *system efficiencies and improvements*.

Investments are *based on myriad qualitative and quantitative data sources*.



ESSER Overview

Board Response to Pandemic

- April 2020 - *Resolution on Nebraska Department of Education's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Effects on Nebraska Schools*
- June 2020 - *Declaratory Order*
- Commissioner's Guidance and Launch Nebraska

Previous Updates to the Board & Schools

- March 2021 - Update to Education Committee on ESSER I & ESSER II
- May 2021- Provide updates to the Board on the three rounds of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds
- July 2021 - Updates provided at Administrator Days
- October 2021 -Provide updates to the Board on the three rounds of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds



RELIEF AID
PreK-12 EDUCATION

INVESTMENTS IN
Nebraska


Since March 2020, the federal government has passed three relief packages in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that include unprecedented support for K-12 schools to address the impact that COVID-19 has had and continues to have on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. The relief funding comes from the CARES Act, the Coronavirus Relief Act (CRA), and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Each package provides funding to the Department of Education (DOE) and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund. The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of the DOE's actions to date on the administration of federal COVID-19 Relief Packages.

Program	CARES Act (March 2020)	CRA (September 2020)	ARPA (March 2021)
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)	\$45,085,080	\$343,073,330	\$548,908,419
Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER)	\$14,357,485	\$17,273,129	\$18,418,747
Total Education Stabilization Funds	\$61,442,570	\$360,346,459	\$667,327,166

Table 2 - Aid Available through the GEER & Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools (EANS)








Program Details	GEER I	GEER II/EANS	ARPA EANS
Timeline	March 2020	September 2020	March 2021
State Allocation & Methodology	50% of total	50% of total	50% of total
Available for Obligation Through	9/30/22	9/30/22	9/30/25
Nebraska GEER Aid	\$14,357,485	Governor's Education Funds (GEER) EANS Funds	
Nebraska EANS Services/Assistance	Provide emergency services to nonpublic schools through the GEER I fund.	Provide emergency services to nonpublic schools through the GEER II fund.	Provide emergency services to nonpublic schools through the ARPA EANS fund.
Level of Aid Spent to Date	100% Obligated	100% Obligated	100% Obligated
Nebraska Allocation & Methodology	50% of total	50% of total	50% of total
Main Purpose of Funds	Address digital equity and learning	Address digital equity and learning	Provide services or assistance to nonpublic schools that are not eligible for ESSER I or II funds.

Source: Information available at <https://doe.nv.gov/relief-aid>. Revised: April 2021 - Office of B&D



OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

NDE DAY • WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021


#LifetimeOpportunity #NDEday2021

MATTHEW L. BLOMSTEDT, PH.D., COMMISSIONER

402.471.2295 | 402.471.1911

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

matthew.blomstedt@doe.nv.gov



Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

October 5, 2021

Congress passed three separate packages to prepare for, prevent, and respond to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSAs) Act, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. As part of these allocations, Nebraska K-12 public education system will receive an influx of nearly \$654 million.

These three sets of funds provide support through varied means, the largest of which is the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund, with 80 percent of funding going directly to school districts. Each allocation also provides funds for statewide activities administered by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). A separate and specific funding stream provides assistance for non-public schools. The purpose of this document is to outline the use of funds across the three allocations.

	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) March 2020	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAs) December 2020	American Rescue Plan March 2021
Total Allocation	\$61 million	\$217 million	\$356 million
Allocated to Districts	\$79 million	\$218 million	\$492 million
NDE Set-aside	\$0 million	\$24 million	\$54 million

Grant Timelines

ESSER Grant & Performance Period

The requirement to ensure that these are one-time funds that can be used to prepare for and respond to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This should consider multi-year budgets in alignment with the activities outlined in Nebraska's Elementary School Response & Reimbursement (ESRR) 2020-2024 State Plan, meaning how these will support their schools in meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of their students through the fall of 2024.


ESSER I	ESSER II	ESSER III
April 2020	September 2020	September 2020
January 2021	March 2021	September 2021
March 2021	September 2021	September 2024

Opportunity of a Lifetime

	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) March 2020	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) December 2020	American Rescue Plan March 2021
Total Allocation	\$65 million	\$243 million	\$546 million
Formula-Based Direct Aid to Districts	\$59 million	\$218 million	\$492 million
NDE Set-Aside	\$6 million	\$24 million	\$53 million

ESSER I (CARES Act) Planning

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

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2020 CARES Act Public Feedback Survey: Executive Summary

May 15, 2020

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act suggests some uses for one-time, relief funds. In response to the impact of school attendance center closures due to COVID-19, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) recently administered a public feedback survey from April 30, 2020 through May 11, 2020 using the Qualtrics survey software. The survey, made available in English and Spanish, was designed to measure public input on how the NDE can prioritize resources in a way that most benefits Nebraska students and schools. We used our statewide accountability and school improvement framework, Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) to shape the survey. A total of 4,981 survey responses were received.

Some of the key survey findings are listed as follows:

- A majority of the respondents (67%) were educators or education-related professionals (n = 3,314). The next largest group was represented by parents who made up 27% of the respondents (n = 1,361).
- Respondents were from all geographic regions across Nebraska, with almost half of them hailing from Douglas and Lancaster counties (47%, n = 2,321). Douglas and Lancaster counties are the two most populous counties in Nebraska, housing Omaha Public Schools and Lincoln Public Schools, respectively.
- Respondents identified the following top five (5) student and community needs during this remote learning environment (continued learning outside of a "traditional" classroom):
 1. Enhance technology infrastructure (e.g., broadband, devices, platforms, data privacy, etc.) for students and families (16%, n = 3,434).
 2. Build supports for planning for possible interruptions upon returning to school and student and staff reentry (14%, n = 2,991).
 3. Ensure student nutritional needs are met (10%, n = 2,253).

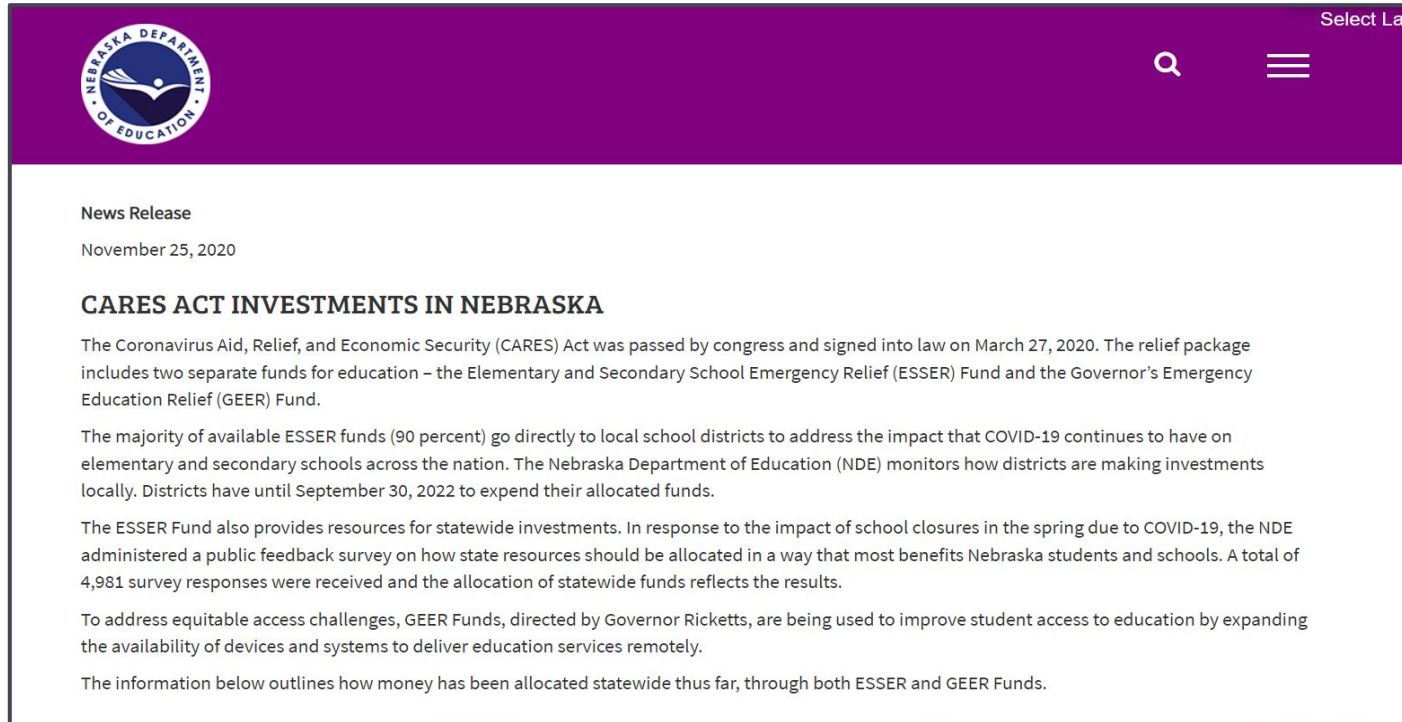
To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

Survey to Stakeholders:

- 4,981 respondents
- April 30 to May 11, 2020
- Identified Five Priority Areas:
 - Technology infrastructure for students and families
 - Supports for planning for possible interruptions when returning to school
 - Ensuring nutritional needs are met
 - Providing professional learning to support inclusive remote learning environment, and engagement for different student groups
 - Create or expand mental, behavioral, and social-emotional supports

Consistent communication with LHDs, districts, and other experts

November 2020 Update on CARES Expenditures



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Select Language

News Release

November 25, 2020

CARES ACT INVESTMENTS IN NEBRASKA


The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020. The relief package includes two separate funds for education – the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.

The majority of available ESSER funds (90 percent) go directly to local school districts to address the impact that COVID-19 continues to have on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) monitors how districts are making investments locally. Districts have until September 30, 2022 to expend their allocated funds.

The ESSER Fund also provides resources for statewide investments. In response to the impact of school closures in the spring due to COVID-19, the NDE administered a public feedback survey on how state resources should be allocated in a way that most benefits Nebraska students and schools. A total of 4,981 survey responses were received and the allocation of statewide funds reflects the results.

To address equitable access challenges, GEER Funds, directed by Governor Ricketts, are being used to improve student access to education by expanding the availability of devices and systems to deliver education services remotely.

The information below outlines how money has been allocated statewide thus far, through both ESSER and GEER Funds.

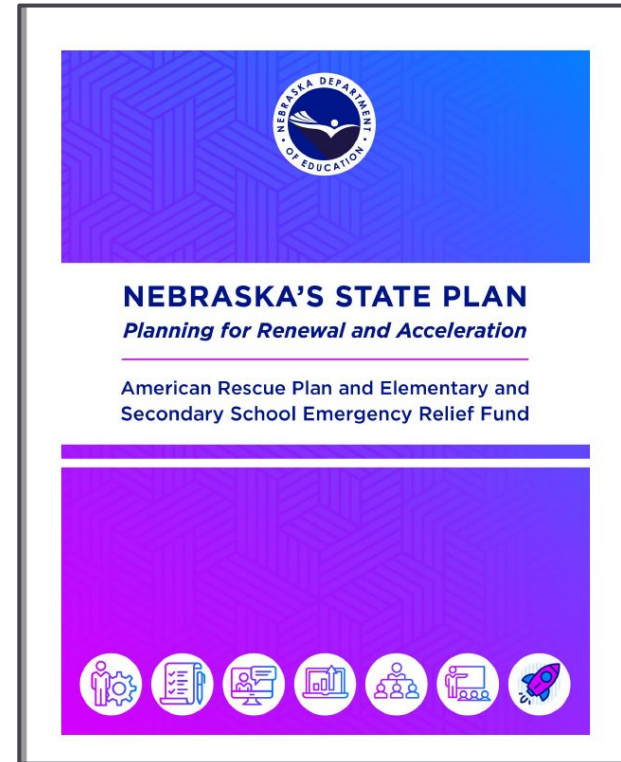


The NDE's Top Priorities

- Across 14 roundtable discussions with myriad stakeholders and a survey of nearly 450 respondents yielded the following top priorities:
 - Provide access to **comprehensive mental health services** for students, staff, and communities.
 - Reimagine **family and community engagement**.
 - Develop high-quality **professional learning** opportunities and bolster the **teacher pipeline**.
 - Ensure all students have equitable access to grade-level instruction to **address unfinished learning and support learning acceleration**.
 - Comprehensively **modernize information, data, technology, and process systems**
- Results of survey posted:
<https://www.education.ne.gov/esser/esser-iii-arp/ndes-esser-iii-application/>
- Five priorities were foundational to ESSER III plan submitted in May and approved by USDOE in October 2021



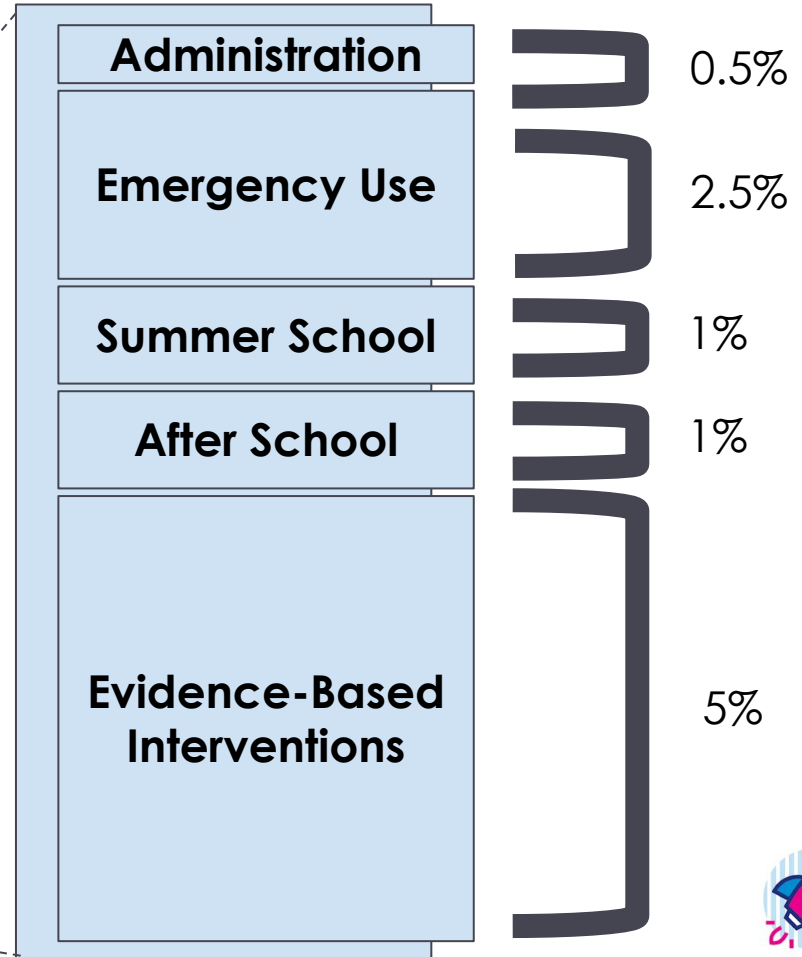
- Nebraska's ESSER III Plan
 - Describing State's Current Status & Needs
 - Safely Reopening Schools & Sustaining their Safe Operations
 - Planning for the Use & Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds
 - Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students
 - Supporting LEAs in Planning for & Meeting Students' Needs
 - Supporting the Educator Workforce
 - Monitoring & Measuring Progress



NDE's ARP Statewide Set Aside

	American Rescue Plan March 2021
Total Allocation	\$546 million
Flow Through to LEAs	\$492 million
NDE Set-Aside	\$53 million

10% of total ARP allocation



Federal Requirements for Allocation

- For ESSER II:
 - The SEA must award, either through subgrants, contracts, or retaining funds to provide direct services itself, the SEA Reserve funds (i.e., not more than 10 percent of the funds received under the ESSER II fund to address emergency needs as determined by the State) by the one-year anniversary of the ESSER II award date.
 - **The NDE must provide this by *January 2022***
- For ESSER III: Same requirement as above. ***March 2022***

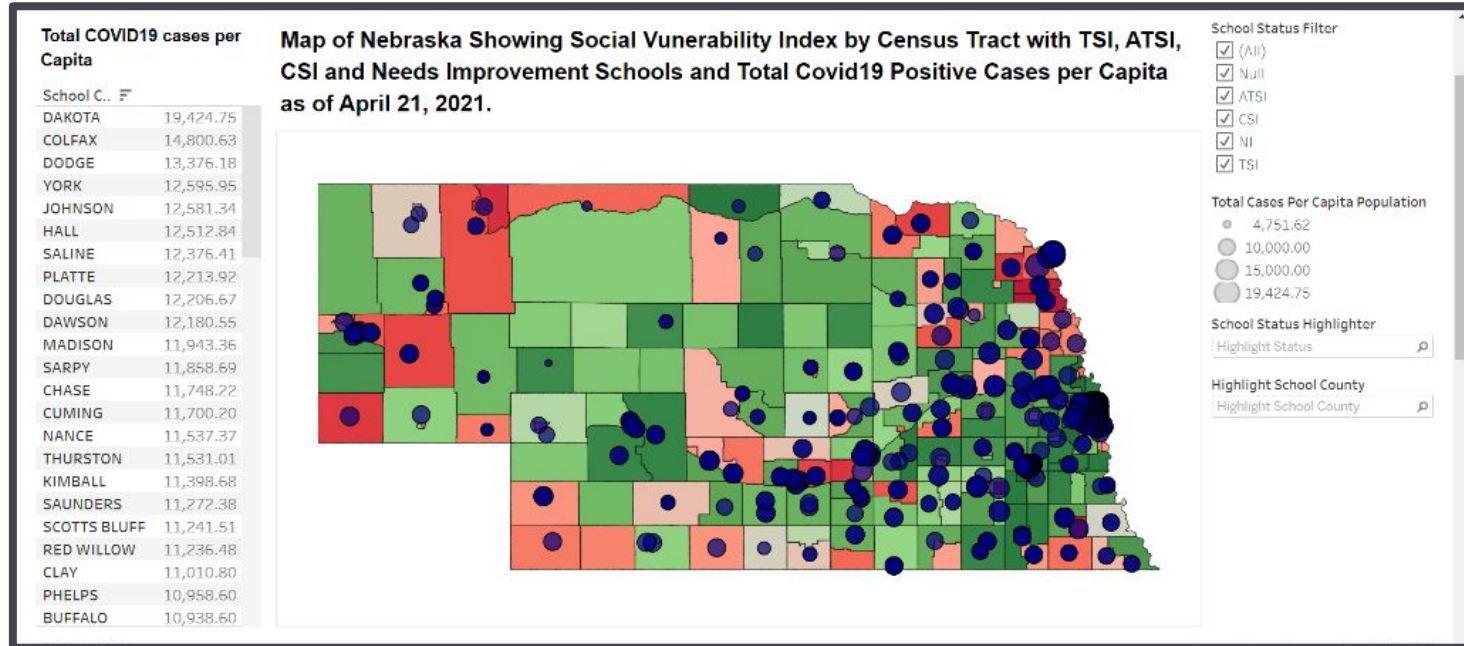


Data Sources Used to Inform Priorities and Investments


- Survey, roundtable responses, and communication with the field
- National data, trends, and research
- NSCAS data from 2020-21 school year
- MAP data from 2020-21 school year; MAP from fall 2021
- COVID-19 impact data



Example of Data Use to Target Resources



ESSER II & III Investments

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ESSER Home

- ESSER III (ARP) ▾
 - Commissioner's Message_ ESSER III Allocations
 - Federal Funding Requirements
 - LEA Allocations for K-12 Public School Districts
 - Allowable Uses of Funds for LEAs
 - Support Sessions and Resources
 - Budget Roadmap
- NDE's ESSER III Application and Statewide Investments***
- FAQs
- ESSER II (CRRSA) >
- ESSER I (CARES) >
- EANS Services & Assistance

Questions, Comments, or Corrections? Let us know!

NDE's ESSER III Application and Statewide Investments


NDE's Five Investment Priorities

After extensive feedback from stakeholders and reviewing preliminary data from the 2020-21 school year, the NDE developed the following five priority areas for statewide investments.

1. Access to Comprehensive Mental Health Services
2. Reimagined Family and Community Engagement
3. High-Quality Professional Learning and Bolstering the Teacher Pipeline
4. Focus on Unfinished Learning and Supporting Learning Acceleration
5. Modernize Information, Data, Technology, and Process Systems

Learn more about NDE's specific investments across these five areas here:

- [Access to Comprehensive Mental Health Services](#)
- [Reimagined Family and Community Engagement](#)
- [High-Quality Professional Learning & Bolstering the Teacher Pipeline](#)
- [Focus on Acceleration](#)



Proposal Accept the Commissioner's Plan for Use of Remaining ARP Funds

- Significant investments in Information, Data, and Technology (IDT)
 - Two separate data studies indicated:
 - Nebraska spends \$100 million annually in technology, software, and accountability data submissions to NDE
 - Schools spend an estimated 655,200 hours preparing required data collections
 - Significant inconsistencies in data quality across districts
- IDT Investment Areas of Emphasis:
 - Operational Excellence
 - Organizational Change
 - Education & Stakeholder Engagement
 - Financial Stewardship
 - Security & Risk Management
- Investment in People & Products/Process





Commissioner's Plan for Use of Remaining ARP ESSER Funds

January 4, 2022

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Investment</i>
NAESP Early Childhood Educator Cohort	Professional learning for elementary principals (1 year)	\$ 350,000
Teacher Recruitment, Preparing, Retaining/Sustaining	Innovative strategies for addressing the educator shortage (3 years)	\$ 1,000,000
Special Education Inclusion Project	Professional learning to support inclusionary practices for students with disabilities (3 years)	\$ 215,000
Rural Superintendent Leadership Initiative	Professional learning for superintendents and mini-grants to support rural school needs (3 years)	\$ 1,000,000
Latino/Native American Liaisons Positions	Partnerships with Latino American Commission, and Commission on Indian Affairs; Liaison to support schools serving Native and Latino students (3 years)	\$ 400,000
Early Childhood Regional Coaches	Partnership with ESUs to provide early childhood professional learning (3 years)	\$ 1,560,000
NDE Staff Flex Position	Funding for position needed across grant life (1.5 years)	\$ 130,000
NDE Educator Workforce Coordinator	Support and coordinate NDE's myriad teacher/leader workforce strategies (3 years)	\$ 300,000
Modernization of Information, Data, and Technology Systems	People, processes, products to create efficiencies (3 years)	\$ 13,045,071
	Total	\$ 18,000,071



American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) – ESSER III

January 4, 2022

Total State Allocation:		\$546 million	
Formula-Based Aid to Districts:		\$492 million	
NDE Set Aside:		\$54 million	
Provide access to comprehensive mental health services for students, staff, and communities			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Mental Health Support Grant	Regionally-focused approach to mental health supports; Grants to ESUs, and school districts	\$ 5,457,098	Aug-21
	Total:	\$ 5,457,098	
	Percent of Total Set Aside (to date):	10.5%	
Reimagine Family & Community Engagement			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Ready Rosie	Early childhood education software	\$ 2,387,500	Oct-21
	Total:	\$ 2,387,500	
	Percent of Total Set Aside (to date):	4.6%	
Develop high-quality professional learning opportunities and bolster the teacher pipeline			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
	Total:	\$ -	
Ensure all students have equitable access to grade-level instruction to address unfinished learning and support academic acceleration			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Hanover Research	NDE customized projects; ESU access to evidence-based portal	\$ 1,089,508	Sep-21; Oct-21
Instruction Partners	K-8 math acceleration support; coherence project	\$ 5,600,000	Aug-21

TNTP	CSI school intensive support; Learning acceleration PL series	\$ 2,700,000	Aug-21
CEDARS	Systems-involved youth supports	\$ 319,000	Oct-21
Summer & After School Funding	Grants to begin after/summer school programs; Supplements to existing programs	\$ 10,925,802	Pending
Ha'Hanna Consulting	Supports for schools serving predominantly Native American students	\$ 250,000	Oct-21
	Total:	\$ 20,884,310	
	Percent of Total Set Aside (to date):	40.3%	

Comprehensively modernize information, data, technology, and process systems

Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Children's Hospital and Medical Center	School Nurse Consultant	\$ 300,000	Nov-21
Children's Hospital and Medical Center	Max the Vax Campaign	\$ 500,000	Oct-21
Heartland Center for Leadership Development	Planning grant to support rural superintendent leadership	\$ 49,500	Commissioner Approved per P5 (May-21)
Nebraska Chamber	Workforce-Education Alignment Specialist	\$ 400,000	Nov-21
Funding for Five Schools	Funding for five districts ineligible for ESSER \$	\$ 575,258	Jun-21
Teacher Cert Staffing Capacity		\$ 1,222,766	Feb-21
Nebraska Children & Families Fndn	After School/Summer School support	\$ 805,602	May-21
Nebraska Children & Families Fndn	Evaluation and coordination support	\$ 70,000	Oct-21
Nebraska Children & Families Fndn	Four shared positions (Systems Involved Youth Specialist, Early Literacy Specialist, Early Math Specialist, Community Engagement Specialist)	\$ 1,217,796	Pending (Jan-21)
	Total:	\$ 5,140,922	
	Percent of Total Set Aside (to date):	9.9%	



Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSA) – ESSER II

January 4, 2022

Total State Allocation:		\$243 million	
Formula-Based Aid to Districts:		\$218 million	
NDE Set Aside:		\$24 million	
Provide access to comprehensive mental health services for students, staff, and communities			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Mental Health Support Grant	Regionally-focused approach to mental health supports; Grants to ESUs, and school districts	\$ 9,112,514	Aug-21
Harvard University (Kernal)	SEL support, training, and screeners in the afterschool space	\$ 150,000	Sep-21
SEL Framework Developer	Development of SEL framework and rollout support	\$ 25,750	Commissioner Approved per P5 (Aug-21)
Boys Town	Safe 2 Talk investment; Suicide and crisis hotline access	\$ 1,798,000	Aug-21
MOSAIC	SEL support, training, and screeners	\$ 200,000	Nov-20
		Total:	
		\$ 11,286,264	
		Percent of Total Set Aside:	48.8%
Reimagine Family & Community Engagement			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Nebraska Children & Families Fndn	Community schools pilot sites - 4 schools	\$ 900,000	Aug-21
Nebraska Children & Families Fndn	Nebraska Center for Families Learning - Family Literacy Programing	\$ 500,000	May-21
CEDARS	Tutoring and creation of modules for systems-involved students learning remotely	\$ 460,000	Jun-21
TransAct	Translation services plug-in	\$ 226,650	May-21
		Total:	
		\$ 2,086,650	
		Percent of Total Set Aside:	9.0%

Develop high-quality professional learning opportunities and bolster the teacher pipeline			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
UNL	Diverse Educator Initiative; Clubes Igualidades	\$ 49,828	Commissioner Approved per P5 (Jul-21)
SPED Inclusion PL	Professional learning for general education teachers to support inclusionary practices	\$ 735,000	Pending (Jan-22)
	Total:	\$ 784,828	
	Percent of Total Set Aside:	3.4%	
Ensure all students have equitable access to grade-level instruction to address unfinished learning and support academic acceleration			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
YRTC Supports	HQIM for YRTC sites (systems involved youth)	\$ 501,705	Proposed
Five Districts Ineligible for ESSER	Investment in 5 districts ineligible for ESSER funds	\$ 256,355	Mar-21
NROC	Digital learning resources	\$ 25,000	Commissioner Approved per P5 (Sep-21)
Zearn Math	High-quality digital resources for math available to all schools	\$ 1,400,000	Feb-21
reVISION Supplement	Supplemental investment in Perkins reVISION grants	\$ 395,000	Aug-21
Ha'Hanna Consulting	Supports for schools serving predominantly Native American students	\$ 500,000	Oct-21
	Total:	\$ 3,078,060	
	Percent of Total Set Aside:	13.3%	
Comprehensively modernize information, data, technology, and process systems			
Contractor/Project	Description	Total	State Board Approval
Center for Assessment	Support for informing decisions around state and federal accountability	\$ 193,000	Mar-21

Opportunity Labs	Development of budget roadmap for schools, ongoing support for pandemic response	\$ 150,000	Mar-21
Utah State University (TAESE)	Sped Complaint	\$ 490,504	
Microsoft	Data security, data lake creation, API support	\$ 1,000,000	
FACTS Education Solutions	Support for administering Non-public schools EANS funding	\$ 2,048,000	Oct-21
NE Commission on Indian Affairs	Planning and support for schools serving predominantly Native American students	\$ 49,500	Commissioner Approved per P5 (Jul-21)
NE Latino American Commission	Planning and supports for schools serving predominantly Latino students	\$ 49,500	Commissioner Approved per P5 (Jul-21)
Nebraska Children & Families Fdn	DRRN Campaign	\$ 500,000	Feb-21
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Covid Impact Studies	\$ 100,000	Proposed
Agency Technology	Investments to support the hosting of virtual conferences and high-quality virtual professional learning	\$ 345,000	Commissioner Approved per P5
OCIO/Covendis	Agency support positions including technology services and website design	\$ 928,564	Feb-21
	Total:	\$ 5,854,068	
	Percent of Total Set Aside:	25.4%	



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CARES Act Investments

(As of November 19, 2020)

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020. The relief package included two separate funds for education – Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.

Nebraska ESSER Allocation:

- \$58.6 million directly to local education agencies
- \$6.4 million for statewide activities

Nebraska GEER Allocation:

- \$16.4 million

<u>CARES Act Funding Priority</u>	Investment and Project Detail	Total Investment
Enhance technology infrastructure (e.g. broadband, devices, platforms, data privacy) for students and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$12,500,000 - Device Procurement (GEERS) • \$2,800,000 - Internet Connectivity (GEERS) • \$2,500,000 - Statewide Learning Management System Consortium (ESSER) • \$515,000 - Technology Services and Pandemic Response Contracts: Application Development, GIS Mapping Support, and Web Page communication (ESSER) • \$300,000 - Academic Advancement Plan - Facility-based school data system update (ESSER) • \$284,500 - Enhanced online Career Information and Planning Nebraska Career Connections (ESSER) 	\$19,109,500

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$145,000 - Digital Content and Ed Ready Supports through National Repository of Online Curriculum (NROC)/Hippocampus (ESSER) • \$65,000 - Expanding Internet Access Points (Internet 2) EduRoam Project (ESSER) • Request for Information: Nebraska Internet Service Providers Education rates 	
<p>Build supports for planning for possible interruptions upon returning to school and student and staff reentry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$40,000 - Education and public health advice and planning for a safe return to fall. • \$40,000 - Consultation with public health experts for a safe return to fall. • \$51,900 - Provide direct support to three targeted school districts/ESUs, to observe teaching and learning, make a practical plan for improvement, develop teacher and leader capacity to carry out the plan, and support follow-through for the 2020-2021 school year • \$19,350 - Develop a pilot utilizing onetab (from Open Up Resources), a device to support PK-2 reading and mathematics, for up to 150 students in targeted schools. • \$100,000 - Family and community supports; elevate key public health messages, and create a unified theme, repository for materials, and tools to localize the messaging • \$121,126 - Conversion of course materials to be ready for remote delivery via Canvas 	<p>\$251,250</p>
<p>Ensure student nutritional needs are met</p>	<p>USDA extends waiver allowing all schools to provide free meals through December 31, 2020.</p>	

<p>Provide professional learning to support inclusive remote learning environment and engagement, along with best practices for different student groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$80,000 - Development of equity scorecard and surrounding professional learning • \$156,797 - Design an academic diagnostic for literacy and mathematics that answers questions about student access to high-quality academic experiences (e.g. grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations.) in literacy and mathematics • \$16,800 - Professional learning series focused on remote learning for literacy, mathematics, and science 	<p>\$253,597</p>
<p>Create or expand mental, behavioral, and social emotional supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$200,000 - Pilot an evidenced-based comprehensive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and assessment tools for staff and students in five districts representative of demography, rurality, and student need across the state 	<p>\$200,000</p>



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Resolution on the Nebraska Department of Education's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Effects on Nebraska Schools

WHEREAS, The world is experiencing a pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), affecting at least 181 countries and regions with over 1,000,000 confirmed cases and over 53,000 deaths resulting from this novel virus; the United States has the highest number of confirmed cases of any country, with over 245,000 confirmed cases and nearly 6,000 deaths; in Nebraska, there are over 250 confirmed cases and at least six deaths;

WHEREAS, Commissioner Blomstedt is providing statewide leadership and coordination efforts with the Governor, Chief Medical Officer, and other leaders for all Nebraska communities, schools (including alternative schools, exempt schools, interim-program schools, nonpublic schools, public schools, and schools operating under special purpose agreements), educators, administrators, school boards, clients, and citizens, including the recommendations and directives for schools to operate without students in their buildings;

WHEREAS, The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education is to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living and through the equity issues faced in this pandemic the Commissioner is requiring schools to provide a continuity of learning plan for all students, while coordinating with state and national leaders to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for those students receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);

WHEREAS, The Commissioner worked expediently and voluntarily to allow for the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education to work remotely or to modify work schedules so as to reduce staff members' risk of exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, The Commissioner serves as the executive officer of the State Board of Education; now, therefore, be it

(Page 1 of 2)

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education affirms the actions of the Commissioner to protect the public health of the people of Nebraska, maintain the continuity of education of students, maintain the continuity of services of the Nebraska Department of Education, and support the wellbeing of the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education;

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education further directs the Commissioner, under the authority of the rules and regulations administered by this Board, to facilitate broad flexibility for the operation of schools while asking schools to be cognizant of their students, families, and staff most in need of equitable supports; to support the use of continuity of learning plans as the approach to granting authority for schools to manage the needs of their schools and local communities; and to continue working with the Governor and other state and national leaders to provide broad flexibility under the Governor's emergency powers in the administration of statutes pertaining to the operation of schools during and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education encourages creative solutions to the complex problems faced by our state, communities, schools, educators, administrators, school boards, clients, and citizens;

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education grants the Commissioner the authority to submit emergency waivers to the federal government and apply for federal grants whenever Nebraska is eligible to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people of Nebraska;

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education grants the Commissioner the authority to manage the office environments of the Nebraska Department of Education in the safest manner while maintaining a continuity of operations for essential functions, including flexibility of staff leave and work environments; further, the State Board of Education supports the Commissioner in the delegation of duties to agency leadership and staff within the Nebraska Department of Education consistent with emergency needs; and

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education recognizes the intentional and purposeful work of the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education through the COVID-19 pandemic and recognizes the additional demands on their personal time and efforts and the unknown demands forthcoming.

Signed on behalf of the Nebraska State Board of Education, this 3rd day of April 2020.

Maureen Nickels, President

Patsy Koch Johns, Vice President

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the *American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021*, which will deliver critical aid to states (as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia), districts, schools, educators, students, and families as the country continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

ARP ESSER (ESSER III) funds will allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to enact appropriate measures to help schools:

- invest in mitigation strategies consistent with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](#) to the greatest extent practicable; address the many impacts of COVID-19 on students, including from interrupted instruction;
- implement strategies to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs;
- offer crucial summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs;
- support early childhood education;
- invest in staff capacity; and
- avoid devastating layoffs at this critical moment, ensuring that all students have access to teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to support their needs.

To support school systems with planning for and budgeting new pandemic relief funds the NDE has launched [Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration, 2021-2022 School Year](#).

Key Takeaways

ESSER III shares many similarities with its predecessor ESSER II, however there are four key differences.

1

LEAs must **reserve at least 20 percent** of their funds to **address unfinished learning** through the implementation of [evidence-based interventions](#), such as after school programming or other enriching educational out-of-school time programming. Programming should address students' academic, social-emotional wellbeing, and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on [marginalized students](#).

2

An LEA receiving funds will be required to develop and make publicly available on their website a **plan** for the **return to in-person instruction and ensure continuity of services**. The plan must allow for public comment. An existing plan that describes the return to in-person instruction and allowed for public comment (such as a school board meeting) will suffice. **The plan must be publicly available within 30 days of receiving ESSER III funds.**

3

An LEA receiving funds will be required to ensure transparency, accountability, and make publicly available on their website a **plan** for the **use of funds**. The plan must engage in stakeholder consultation and public comment. **The plan must be submitted to the NDE within 90 days of receiving ESSER III funds.**


4

ESSER III funding includes a **Maintenance of Equity** required at the LEA level. LEAs will not be able to disproportionately underfund nor understaff (in FTE) the highest-poverty schools. The NDE is awaiting additional guidance from the U.S. Department of Education.

NDE will be providing resources to support school districts in navigating this unprecedented opportunity

Funding Summary ESSER III

Nebraska Comparison of ESSER Funding

Grant Fund	ESSER I	ESSER II	ESSER III
Stimulus Program	CARES Act	CRRSA Act	ARP Act
Total Nebraska ESSER Aid	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$549,484,612
Available for Obligation Through*	9/30/22	9/30/23	9/30/24
Total Nebraska ESSER Aid	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$545,908,619
State Allocation & Methodology	State Allocation	State Allocation	State Allocation
LEA Aid Distribution (90% School Districts)	\$58,576,577	\$218,766,177	\$491,317,757
School District Allocation & Methodology	District Allocation	District Allocation	District Allocation
Main Purpose of Funds	Ensure students and educators have devices, connectivity, support needed to continue to learn, and provide communication & support to families and students.	Measure and address learning loss among students disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and school closures, particularly students with high-needs.	Reopen schools and sustain safe operation aligned to CDC guidance for in-person learning. Provide evidenced-based interventions to meet social, emotional, and academic needs.
SEA Reservation (10% NDE) Includes 0.5% State Administration Maintenance of Effort (MOE) and Equity (MEQ)	\$6,508,509	\$24,307,353	\$54,590,862
Budgeted Investments	60% Technology 19% Fall Planning 9% Renewal/Acceleration 5% Administration 4% Inclusive Environment 3% SEL & Mental Health	 <p>Developing strategic priorities-based planning guidance and supports for schools to achieve School Renewal and Acceleration through launchne.com and educational partners</p>	

*Period of availability includes the Tydings period.

Pre-award costs are allowable for expenses incurred from March 13, 2020 for ESSER I, II, & III.



ESSER funds and Launch Nebraska represent an opportunity to make strategic, sustainable investments to help address systemic inequalities; implement innovation and creativity to transform teaching and learning; and realize our shared vision to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

Strategic Planning

ESSER Grant & Performance Period

It is important to remember that these are one-time funds that must be used to prepare for and respond to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. LEAs should consider multi-year budgets in alignment with the priorities outlined in [Nebraska’s Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration, 2021-2022 School Year](#), mapping out how they will support their schools in meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of their students through the fall of 2024.

ESSER I	April 2020	September 2022
ESSER II	January 2021	September 2023
ESSER III	March 2021	September 2024

Allocations & Methodology

The NDE will allocate ESSER III funds to LEAs based on their respective share of funds received under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in FFY 2020. The [LEA ESSER III Allocation Table](#) is available for review. An LEA that did not receive Title I, Part A funds in school fiscal year 2020-21 (either because the district was not eligible or because it declined funding) would not generate a share of ESSER III funding. LEAs are not required to provide equitable services to non-public schools, however, will be required to reserve at least 20 percent of awarded funds to address ‘learning loss’ through federally- or NDE-recognized [evidence-based interventions](#) under the ARP ESSER award. LEAs should consider the coordination of and allowable uses for each of the ESSER grants (CARES ESSER I, CRSSA ESSER II, ARP ESSER III), as well as the grant period for each (September 2022, September 2023, September 2024, respectively).

Timeline



ESSER III *Strategic Planning*

Timeline Details

June 1-10, 2021

Fast-Track Application (Part 1)

The ESSER III application is a two-part application accessible through the GMS (Grant Management Site). Part 1 will require school districts to complete contact information and assurances required by an LEA granted a subaward under these federal funds. LEAs must review and understand all requirements under this award: Plan for Safe Return, Plan for Use of Funds, 20 percent allocation of funds to address 'learning loss' through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, high-quality instructional materials, general ARP Act assurances, common assurances, and standard agreement clause. **The [Fast-Track GMS Application Instructions](#) are available for review prior to applying.**

June 2 & 3, 2021

ESSER III Zoom Sessions

Once the application and allocations become available in the GMS (Grant Management Site) on June 1, the Office of ESEA Programs will host Zoom sessions on June 2 and 3, providing pertinent information related to the ESSER III program and Part 1 of the two-step application process. We encourage you to have a staff member from your ESSER III planning team attend.

ESSER III Launch Zoom Sessions:

- Wed, June 2nd at 2:00 pm CDT/1:00 pm MDT
- Thurs, June 3rd at 10:00 am CDT/9:00 am MDT

A recording of the session can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-J7Zz6IKRI>

By July 15, 2021

Safe Return Plan Posted on LEA Website

LEAs will have 30 days from the awarding of funds to post their Safe Return Plan on the LEA website. **ESSER III subrecipient Grant Award Notifications (GANS) will be issued Tuesday, June 15, 2021. Reference: LEA ESSER III Requirements: Safe Return Plan in this document.**

Important: Start seeking public comment today!

July 15 – September 15, 2021

ESSER III Application (Part 2) & Use of Funds Plan

The second part of the ESSER III application will be accessible through the Grant Management Site (GMS). To complete this portion of the application, the district will need to create an amendment, which will include submitting a budget, describing the intent and purpose needs, evidence-based interventions for 20% 'learning loss', Use of Funds Plan, and [GEPA Statement](#). **Timing is critical to submit Use of Funds Plan by September 15 to meet timelines and for local board budget approval. Remember amendments can be created throughout the grant period if district/school needs change. Important: Start engaging in stakeholder consultations and soliciting public comment!**

July 28, 2021

2021 NDE Day – Kearney ESSER III Sessions

This year is an opportunity to provide students with innovative ways to learn while also caring for their physical, social, and emotional needs; shifting investments to promote equity; reviewing and renewing systems (eg. Schedule, technology); accelerate learning; and providing high-quality professional learning. The NDE will present multiple ESSER III sessions at NDE Day on Wednesday and office hours on Wednesday and Thursday. More information here: <https://ndeday.com/>

ESSER III *New Requirements*

20 Percent Allocation of Funds

With the passage of The [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#), states, districts, and schools now have significant federal resources available to implement evidence-based and practitioner-informed strategies to respond to students' social, emotional, and academic needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student groups (each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care).

Of the total amount allocated to an LEA from the State's ARP ESSER III award, **LEAs must reserve at least 20 percent of funds to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions for:**

1. **Meeting students' social, emotional, mental, and physical health, and academic needs**, including through meeting basic student needs; reengaging students; and providing access to a safe and inclusive learning environment;
2. **Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students most impacted and their opportunity to learn**, including closing the digital divide; implementing strategies for accelerating learning; effectively using data; and addressing resource inequities (**Reference:** [Defining Learning Loss](#)); and
3. **Supporting educator and staff well-being and stability**, including stabilizing a diverse and qualified educator workforce.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) outlines four levels of evidence (also referenced in ESSER): Strong Evidence, Moderate Evidence, Promising Evidence, or Demonstrates a Rationale. **Reference:** Read the [federal Evidence-Based Interventions](#) guidance to assist with steps in evaluating if interventions are supported by 'strong' evidence.

If interventions/strategies are selected from the Demonstrates a Rationale Level, **districts must upload supporting research and/or a logic models or theories of action which demonstrate the rationale for their implementation.** These resources will be uploaded to the second part of the ARP ESSER III application in GMS.

Districts must plan for the implementation of evidence-based interventions/strategies. District plans should address communication of the intervention to stakeholders, professional development for teachers and leaders, guidance for implementation, and progress monitoring expectations to determine effectiveness and return on investment.

Instructional Materials

If ESSER III funds will be used to purchase **core** instructional materials for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, or science, the district will be required to show that the instructional materials are aligned to the Nebraska State Standards and Key Instructional Shifts. Information about alignment is available through the [Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative](#) and [EdReports](#).

For information on core instructional materials, see the [High Quality Instructional Materials Information](#). The spreadsheet includes three tabs: ELA instructional materials, mathematics instructional materials, and science instructional materials and is organized by grade bands (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). Materials with a rating of "Meets" meet the expectations for alignment and are pre-approved as an ESSER expenditure. Materials with a "Does Not Meet" rating do not meet expectations for alignment and will not be approved as an ESSER expenditure. Materials with a "Partially Meets" rating or not listed will be subject to additional review by NDE staff prior to approval. **More information will be required on the second part of the ESSER III application in regard to the materials selected.**

Safe Return Plan

An LEA must include **specific information** that addresses how it will **maintain student and staff health and safety** and how it will **ensure continuity of services** for academic and social-emotional needs, as well as how it **meets [CDC guidance](#)**, to the greatest extent practicable.

To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plan, **the NDE is providing the following [template/worksheet](#)**.

The LEA awarded ESSER III funds must **develop or revise** a Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services, **including those that have already returned to in-person instruction**. An LEA must include in its plan under section 2001(i) of the [ARP Act of 2021 \(H.R.1319\)](#) the following:

Start
Today!

1. **IN GENERAL** - An LEA receiving funds under this section shall develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website, no later than 30 days after receiving the allocation of funds; the date the ARP ESSER application is approved and/or the Grant Award Notification (GAN) date. [Section 2001\(i\)\(1\)](#).
2. **COMMENT PERIOD** - Before making the plan publicly available the LEA shall seek public comment on the plan (e.g., by requesting input on website) and take such comments into account. [Section 2001\(i\)\(2\)](#).
3. **PLAN CONTENTS** - An LEA must describe in its plan under [USED Interim Final Requirements](#) (IFR) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services:
 - a. How the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the [CDC's safety recommendations](#) including:
 - i. Universal and correct wearing of masks,
 - ii. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding),
 - iii. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette,
 - iv. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation,
 - v. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaborations with the state, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
 - vi. Diagnostic and screening testing;
 - vii. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;
 - viii. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health/safety policies; and
 - ix. Coordination with State and local health officials. Including the needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.
 - b. How the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.
4. **PLAN ACCESSIBILITY** – Under [USED Interim Final Requirements](#) the plan must:
 1. be accessible and publicly available on the LEA's website,
 2. in an understandable and uniform format, and available to all,
 3. may require written or oral translations for non-English speakers, and
 4. Upon request, provided in an accessible format for individuals with disabilities.

5. **PREVIOUS PLANS** - If an LEA has developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction before the date of the enactment of the ARP Act:
 1. that meets the statutory requirements (sought public comment on the plan, took such comments into account in the development of the plan, and is publicly available on the LEA's website), then such plan shall be deemed to satisfy the requirement under [section 2001\(i\)\(3\)](#).
 2. Under the [USED IFR](#), such plans that meet the statutory requirements but does not address all the CDC requirements in the 'PLAN CONTENTS' section of this document, the school district must revise to include these elements and re-post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ESSER III funds (date of the GAN) per the 'PLAN REVISIONS' section requirements to meet these provisions.

6. **PLAN REVISIONS** – During the period of the ARP ESSER award (through September 30, 2023), an LEA must regularly, but no less than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and as appropriate, revise its plan under [USED IFR](#).
 1. In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must: seek public input, and take such input into account.
 2. If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any such policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations.
 3. ESSER III funds are subject to the Tydings amendment and are therefore available to LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review/revisions are not required during the Tydings period.
 4. Revisions be made publicly available on the LEA's website.

7. **DOCUMENT RETENTION FOR PROGRAMMATIC MONITORING** - LEA's will maintain documentation locally and the NDE will programmatically monitor plans for the above requirements. The school district agrees to:
 1. keep records of the people involved in writing the plan,
 2. input received about the plan,
 3. changes to the plan,
 4. policies referenced within the plan, and
 5. screenshots of where the plan is posted on the website.

The U.S. Department of Education has released two informational documents:

Volume 1 - [2021 ED COVID-19 Handbook Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

Volume 2 - [2021 ED COVID-19 Handbook Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs](#)

Use of Funds Plan (LEA ARP ESSER Plan)

An LEA awarded ESSER III funds agrees to **develop** a plan to ensure transparency and accountability for use of the funds to address their students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, in particular those students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under [20 U.S.C. 1221e-3](#), the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has the authority to promulgate rules governing the programs administered by the Department. Through the [USED Interim Final Requirements \(IFR\)](#), an LEA must include in its LEA ARP ESSER Plan the following:

1. **IN GENERAL** - An LEA receiving funds under this section shall develop, submit to the NDE (through part 2 of the grant application opening mid-July), and make publicly available on the school district's website, no later than 90 days after receiving the allocation of funds; the date the ARP ESSER application is approved and/or the Grant Award Notification (GAN) date, a plan for the LEA's use of ARP ESSER funds.

2. **STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION** - Under this requirement, an LEA must engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders and the opportunity to provide input in the plan development.

Start Today!
Note: All Applicable
Stakeholders



1. Specifically, an LEA **must** engage in meaningful consultation with
 1. students;
 2. families;
 3. school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and
 4. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.
2. Additionally, an LEA **must** engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following, to the extent present in or served by the LEA:
 1. Tribes;
 2. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
 3. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.
3. **COMMENT PERIOD** - Before making the plan publicly available the LEA shall seek public comment on the plan (e.g., by requesting input on its website) and take such comments into account in the development of the plan.
4. **CONTENTS** - The LEA ARP ESSER plan ensures that LEAs are using ARP ESSER funds for their intended purposes and evaluate the effectiveness. **The NDE may prescribe additional requirements to ensure ARP ESSER funds are meeting the needs of Nebraska schools, students, and teachers.** For example, the NDE might require that the plan include data that illustrates the LEA's most pressing needs or descriptions of promising practices that the LEA has implemented to accelerate learning. The plan and any revisions to the plan must include at a minimum a description of:
 1. How the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies, consistent with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning;
 2. How the LEA will use the funds it reserves to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive after school programs, or extended school year (consistent with the requirement of the ARP Act that each LEA reserve at least 20 percent of its ARP ESSER funds for that purpose);
 3. How the LEA will spend its remaining funds consistent with the ARP Act,
 4. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions that are implemented will address the academic impact of lost instruction time and will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and migratory students, and
 5. Include data that illustrates the LEA's most pressing needs or descriptions of promising practices that the LEA has implemented to accelerate learning.
5. **PLAN ACCESSIBILITY** - The plan must:
 1. Be accessible and publicly available on the LEA's website,
 2. In an understandable and uniform format, and available to all,
 3. May require written or oral translations for non-English speakers, and
 4. Upon request, provided in an accessible format for individuals with disabilities.
6. **PLAN SUBMISSION & REVISIONS** - The initial LEA ARP ESSER plan will be submitted through a GMS (Part 2) ARP ESSER grant application process.
 1. During the period of the ARP ESSER award (through September 30, 2023), an LEA must regularly review and as appropriate, revise its plan.
 2. Submission procedures for plan revisions will be established by the NDE.

Note:
Questions to
generate for
consultation!

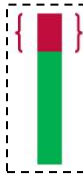


3. ARP ESSER funds are subject to the Tydings amendment and are therefore available to LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review and revisions, if necessary, are not required during the Tydings period.
 4. Revisions made publicly available on the LEA's website.
7. **DOCUMENT RETENTION FOR PROGRAMMATIC MONITORING** - LEA's will maintain documentation locally and the NDE will monitor Return to In-Person Instruction Plans for the above requirements. The school district agrees to:
1. keep records of the people involved in writing the plan,
 2. collaboration and general comment input required for the initial development of the plan,
 3. changes to the plan, and
 4. screenshots of where the plan is posted on the website.

Maintenance of Equity (MOEquity)

The ARP Act ([section 2004\(b\) and \(c\)](#)) contains both State and LEA MOEquity requirements for each Federal Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023. LEAs must follow maintenance of equity and ensure that the highest-poverty schools are not disproportionately underfunded nor understaffed (in terms of FTEs). ***Additional Guidance has been made available by the U.S. Department of Education.*** LEA MOEquity for high-poverty schools:

1. As a condition of receiving funds under section 2001, LEAs shall not, in Federal fiscal years 2022 or 2023:
 1. **Reduce per-pupil funding** (from combined State and local funds) for any high-poverty schools served by such LEA by an amount that exceeds:



Highest Poverty Schools
Schools in the **top 25%** of the all schools in the LEA based on the percentage of poverty students served

 1. the total reduction in LEA funding (from combined State and local funding) for all schools served by the LEA in such fiscal year (if any); divided by
 2. number of children enrolled in all schools served by the LEA in such fiscal year.
 2. **Reduce per-pupil, full-time equivalent staff** in any high-poverty school by an amount that exceeds:
 1. the total reduction in full-time equivalent staff in all schools served by such LEA in such fiscal year (if any); divided by
 2. the number of children enrolled in all schools served by the LEA in such fiscal year.
2. **Exceptions** – Shall not apply to LEAs that meet at least one of the following criteria:
 1. Total enrollment less than 1,000 students
 2. Operates in a single school - serves all students within each grade span with a single school and unable to differentiate elementary and secondary levels of data.
 3. Demonstrates an exceptional or uncontrollable circumstance, such as unpredictable change in student enrollment or precipitous decline in the financial resources of such LEA, as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

ESSER III

General Requirements

Equitable Services

LEAs **are not required** to provide equitable services under ESSER III. The ARP Act includes a separate program, the [Emergency Assistance to Non-public Schools \(ARP EANS\)](#).

Supplement Not Supplant

ESSER III funds **are not subject** to a supplement not supplant provision.

Program Accounting Codes

All ESSER funds must be tracked separately.

Revenue Code: 4998

Receipts from the 2020-2021 ESSER III Supplemental Subgrant (ARP Act, 2021) for costs incurred through September 30, 2024 to address the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Only used in the General Fund, Special Building Fund and the School Nutrition Fund.

Disbursement Code: 6998

Expenditures supported by the 2020-2021 ESSER III Supplemental Subgrant (ARP Act, 2021) for costs incurred through September 30, 2024 to address the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Only used in the General Fund, Special Building Fund and the School Nutrition Fund.

Reporting

LEAs will be required to provide reports to the NDE documenting the amount of ESSER III funds spent in each allowable use category. Details will be provided as they become available. In addition, LEAs are subject to monitoring processes.

Document Retention

LEAs will be responsible for supporting evidence and documentation of expenditures for reporting, audit, and reimbursement purposes. Financial records, supporting (primary) documents, and all documentation of reasonable, necessary, and allocable aspects must be retained for a period of three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report. If a litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the three-year period, the records must be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action is taken. [2 CFR § 200.334 – Retention Requirements for Records](#).

Capital Expenditure Prior Approval

All capital expenditures using ESSER funds must be approved by the NDE to be considered an eligible use of funds. To help facilitate this approval process, please complete and submit the [Capital Asset Non-Construction Form](#) or [Capital Asset Construction \(HVAC, Remodel\) Form](#) to utilize ESSER III funds for capital asset purchases or projects.

An approval form must be filled out for each capital expenditure your district would like to use ESSER funds for. For the ESSER Grants, “capital expenditure” is defined as follows: A construction project or individual non-consumable item that: 1) Has a useful life of more than one year; and 2) Costs greater than \$5,000.

Note: If your district has already received approval for a capital expenditure via email, you do not need to fill out an Approval Form for that expenditure.

Reimbursement

With ESSER funds available for reimbursement, the [ESSER Resources: Expense Reimbursement guidance](#) provides subrecipients with information that will support successful preparation for requesting reimbursement of ESSER funds.

Applicable Laws

Notice of Department Policy

The NDE conducts federal fiscal subrecipient monitoring and compliance reviews; implementing related enforcement actions, in accordance with federally [established policies and procedures](#). These policies and procedures incorporate best practices and standards that may be similar to common auditing standards, but the agency does not apply a specific set of external standards, such as the US Government Accountability Office’s Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book), nor is it required to do so. Such review occurs under the independent audit process.

ESSER III funds are subject to all applicable provisions of the [Education Department General Administrative Regulations \(EDGAR\)](#) and the [Uniform Grant Guidance \(UGG\) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). LEAs should be aware of **cash management** ([2 CFR § 200.305](#)) and **other post federal award requirements** in [2 CFR part 200, subpart D](#).

Note: Due to the level of ESSER funding provided, additional LEAs may fall within the single audit threshold (i.e., expending \$750,000 or more of federal funds during the fiscal year). REFERENCE: [Single Audit Procedures \(p. 22\)](#)

General Guidelines

All activities supported with ESSER I, II, and III funds must be related to preventing, preparing for, or responding to COVID-19. These Federal emergency resources are available for a wide range of activities to address diverse needs arising from or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, or to emerge stronger as a result of the pandemic, including responding to students’ social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs and continuing to provide educational services as schools, LEAs, and States respond to and recover from the pandemic.

In making determinations about the allowability of a proposed activity under ESSER I (CARES Act), ESSER II (CRRSA Act), or ESSER III (ARP Act), LEAs must determine and document in writing at the time of the expenditure:

1. Did the expenditure occur on or after March 13, 2020?
2. How did the expenditure allow the district to prevent, prepare for, or respond to coronavirus?
3. Was the expenditure necessary to prevent, prepare for, or respond to coronavirus ([2 CFR § 200.403\(a\)](#))?
4. Was the cost considered “reasonable” under [2 CFR § 200.404](#) (i.e., its nature and amount does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost)? In particular, is it necessary and reasonable for the performance of the ESSER award? ESSER grants are governed by the Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). What might be necessary and reasonable in one circumstance might not be in another.
5. Is the expenditure allocable to the ESSER grants ([2 CFR § 200.405](#))?
 There are expenditures which may not be an allowable use of ESSER funds. Remember that the overall purpose of the Education Stabilization funding of which ESSER is a part is to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus.” For a replacement example, to be allocable to ESSER, the replacement of an outdated item/system must be connected to this purpose. However, if this connection cannot be made, because ESSER funds have no supplement-not-supplant requirement, you may be able to shift allocable expenses to ESSER funds, leaving your district with sufficient funds from other sources to purchase the necessary item or system.

ESSER III

FACT SHEETS

The following Federal Fund Fact Sheets assist subrecipients with understanding the compliance requirements associated with aspects of their grants when developing and implementing policies and procedures.

The technical content in each of the Federal Fund Fact Sheets is primarily derived from [2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Grant Guidance \(UGG\)](#) and the [Education Department General Administrative Regulations \(EDGAR\)](#) with important ESSER III aspects incorporated for clarification. Further, you will find a live link to the source of the specific regulations within each document so that the subrecipient may develop their own interpretation and understanding of the Federal regulation.

The Federal Fund Fact Sheets are not a substitute for the advice of your own attorney, accountants, or audit firm and/or law firm licensed to practice law in the state of Nebraska. In reading and applying Federal law and regulation, we recommend that you seek and obtain the advice of counsel with questions of application, interpretation, and/or to ensure that use of this information is appropriate to your particular situation.

This resource is intended to help provide clarity to subgrantees regarding internal control procedures for the Nebraska ESSER subgrants. This resource is not a substitute for existing requirements of the subgrant agreement, subaward assurances, Grant Award Notification (GAN) terms and conditions, applicable state laws, or federal regulation ([2 CFR Part 200](#)) required by subgrantees of the award.

- [Expenditure Code Appropriateness & Documentation](#)
- [Cash Management](#)
- [Compensation](#)
- [Capital Expenditures, Construction, & Davis-Bacon](#)
- [Internal Controls](#)
- [Inventory Management System](#)
- [Procurement](#)
- [Procurement Beyond the Simplified Acquisition Threshold](#)
- [Record Retention](#)
- [Standard of Conduct/Conflict of Interest](#)
- [Subrecipient and Contractor Determinations](#)
- [Supplies](#)
- [Suspension and Debarment](#)
- [Time & Effort Reporting \(Including Stipends/Merit Pay\)](#)
- [Travel Using Federal Funds](#)
- [Use and Disposal of Equipment](#)

Uniform Guidance APPLIES TO ESSER III

- Cost Principles
- Pre-award Costs
- Time Distribution Records
- Cash Management
- Construction
- Prior Approval

U.S. Department of Education
[FAQ for ESSER](#), updated
May 2021, FAQ #A-16

Federal Regulation

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Federal Regulation technical assistance available on the [NDE Fiscal Monitoring](#) webpage

- Fiscal Monitoring
- Presentations & FAQs
- Policies & Procedures
- Time & Effort forms
- Working Meals
- Allowable/Unallowable Costs

ESSER III *Priority Planning*

In February 2021, the NDE released [Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration](#) which serves as the roadmap for improving outcomes for all Nebraska students while confronting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

School Renewal & Acceleration includes Nebraska's six key components that direct efforts to support Nebraska schools as we work together to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living. Each key component includes focus areas with key actions and initiatives.

The priorities ground the initiatives and resources that are encompassed within the *School Renewal & Acceleration* framework. ***The purpose of this guidance is to support school systems in planning for the use of ESSER III funds in alignment to the six key components and priority areas.***

Renewal & Acceleration Alignment & Planning Support

The planning guidance outlined below is designed to support school systems as they begin planning for the development of ESSER III budgets and use of these one-time funds. Based on current needs identified by the LEAs, the NDE has aligned the School Renewal & Acceleration Framework to ESSER III allowable activities which yield high-impact investments.

Through the GMS ARP ESSER III application, LEAs will have the opportunity to commit to framework priorities and initiatives through budgeting and ARP ESSER Used of Funds Plan required by recipients of the federal award.

Key steps for successful *School Renewal & Acceleration* through ESSER III funds:

1. Determine the *School Renewal & Acceleration* planning team
2. Review ESSER III allowable activities
3. Determine the school system's needs based on data, stakeholder engagement, and public comment
4. Review planning support guidance below
5. Determine which priorities and initiatives support the schools' identified needs
6. Review resources aligned to initiatives and then determine how those resources support the school district's planning and budgeting needs

Implementation of the *Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration* requires school districts and school systems to target resources to support **FOUR CORE ACTIONS:**

1. Anchor core instruction to high-quality instructional materials and content and move forward with appropriate supports and interventions.
2. Leverage and collect specific data to determine the level of support needed by all students, and in particular students who have been historically marginalized.
3. Assess and attend to whole child needs (e.g., mental health, nutritional needs, etc.) while integrating and aligning to academic acceleration.
4. Utilize community engagement and partnerships as strategies for maximizing every available resource.

This section describes the **KEY COMPONENTS** of *Nebraska’s Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration*.



System Considerations:

Systems considerations integrate data, technology, and infrastructure to reexamine traditional school systems and structures. Systems considerations integrate the wholechild needs with academic needs.



High-Quality Instructional Materials & Content:

High-quality instructional materials create coherence, offer consistency across all learning environments, and support student voice and social-emotional health. The predictable structure of coherent, consistent instructional materials and content are foundational for teachers and students alike.



Diagnosing Unfinished Teaching & Learning:

Because of a disrupted school year, unfinished teaching and learning may impact students’ progress towards mastery of grade-level content. Determining the content that may not have been taught is critical to moving to grade-level content as quickly as possible. Leveraging data from multiple sources provides insight into what students know, what they don’t know, and addresses misconceptions about what students think they know.



Planning for Acceleration:

When planning for the summer, next school year, and the following school year, “meeting students where they are” will not be enough. A mindset of “acceleration, not remediation” is needed so that students are met with grade-level expectations while also addressing students’ social and emotional needs.



Ensuring Equitable Instruction:

Leaders and teachers must continue to assess the extent to which the academic and social-emotional needs of historically marginalized student groups are addressed and ensure all students have equitable access and success in their learning opportunities. Special attention must also be paid to the Class of 2021 to ensure students graduate with postsecondary plans.



Professional Learning for Teachers & School Leaders:

The traditional structures in which educators learn must be adapted to support teaching and learning. Content-specific professional learning that accelerates all students’ learning must support educators as they build knowledge and skills while ensuring their own sense of self-efficacy and social-emotional health and learning.

ESSER III

Allowable Activities

ESSER III does not include a supplement, not supplant provision (SNS) providing additional flexibility in budgeting to meet the needs of addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The allowable activities for ESSER III formula funds may be used on a wide variety of activities as identified under the [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#):

1. Administration – 10 percent administrative cap, includes indirect cost rate charged against direct costs. [Reference](#).
2. Any activity authorized by the ESEA of 1965, IDEA, AEFLA, and Perkins. **Note:** *McKinney-Vento was not included as an allowable use under ESSER III ARP Act.*
3. Coordination of preparedness and response efforts.
4. Providing principals and other school leaders with resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools. **Note:** *Not included in ESSER III/ARP Act.*
5. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities.
6. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs.
7. Training and professional development for LEA staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
8. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a LEA, including buildings operated by such agencies.
9. Planning, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures.
10. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
11. Providing mental health services and supports.
12. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs.
13. **New ESSER II** Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including:
 1. Administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including differentiating instruction.
 2. Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students.
 3. Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment.
 4. Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.
14. **New ESSER II** School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.
15. **New ESSER II** Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities.
16. **New ESSER III** Development of strategies and implementation of public health protocols that align with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on reopening and operating school facilities to maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff. **CDC Guidance can be found at:** [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](#)
17. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation and continuity of services in LEAs and continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA. Any entity that receives funds under the Education Stabilization Fund shall, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to COVID-19.

ESSER III *Resources*

USE OF FUNDS

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STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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INNOVATIVE USE OF FUNDS

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SUPPORT ONLINE LINKS



[Commissioner's Message](#)
[LEA Methodology & Allocations](#)
[Funding Overview](#)
[CARES Act Webpage](#)
[Launch Nebraska](#)
[ESEA Programs Webpage](#)



[ARP ESSER Fact Sheet](#)
[FAQs \(Updated May 2021\)](#)
[ESSER Office Hours Follow Up](#)
[Interim Final Rule](#)
[SEA Methodology & Allocations](#)
[American Rescue Plan Webpage](#)



[American Rescue Plan Act](#)
[Allowable Activities: Side-by-side](#)
[CCSSO: Commonly Asked Questions](#)
[CCSSO: ESSER Call Follow Up](#)
[CCSSO: Restart & Recovery](#)
[CCSSO: COVID-19 Relief Webpage](#)

Terminology

Term	Definition
After-school programs	Supplemental school programs that offer academic enrichment activities after the school day.
Allowable use	Activities authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2000 (ESSA), IDEA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Perkins CTE Act, or the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as well as other specified activities for which LEAs can use ESSER funds.
Assistive technology	Item, equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with disabilities.
Continuity of services	Ensuring students receive the same services received during in-person instruction while facilities are closed, and students are learning virtually.
ESSER I (CARES)	Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). The Department awarded these grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEAs, with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the Nation. ESSER Fund awards to SEAs are in the same proportion as each State received funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, in fiscal year 2019.
ESSER II (CRRSA)	The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA), was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides an additional \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund). ESSER II Fund awards to SEAs are in the same proportion as each State received funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, in fiscal year 2020.
ESSER III (ARP)	The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, enacted on March 11, 2021. ARP ESSER provides a total of nearly \$122 billion to States and school districts to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students. In addition to ARP ESSER, the ARP Act includes \$3 billion for special education, \$850 million for the Outlying Areas, \$2.75 billion to support non-public schools, and additional funding for homeless children and youth, Tribal educational agencies, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives.
Evidenced-based	ESEA emphasizes the use of evidence-based activities, strategies, and interventions (collectively referred to as "interventions"). Section 8101(21)(A) of the ESEA defines an evidence-based intervention as being supported by strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence, or evidence that demonstrates a rationale (see text box below). Some ESEA programs encourage the use of "evidence-based" interventions while others, including several competitive grant programs and Title I, section 1003 funds, require the use of "evidence-based" interventions that meet higher levels of evidence.
Evidence-based interventions	Interventions proven effective through strong, quality research (could include peer-reviewed, documented empirical evidence of effectiveness or randomized, controlled trials at scale).
Formula allocation	Formula grants are also known as entitlement grants. Grantees are not required to compete for formula funds; however, grantees are required to complete grant applications and comply with other grant requirements in order to ensure that grant funds are expended in accordance with the defined purpose and goals of the grant program.
Unfinished learning	Skills and knowledge that students have not yet mastered.
Student connectivity	Ensure all students have access to a device, wifi or hotspot, and broadband connectivity to participate fully in virtual learning.
Summer learning	Provides students with additional opportunities for learning and growing during the summer months through academics and enrichment.



NEBRASKA'S STATE PLAN

Planning for Renewal and Acceleration

American Rescue Plan and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund



Introduction

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (“ARP ESSER”) Fund, authorized under the American Rescue Plan (“ARP”) Act of 2021, provides nearly \$122 billion to States to support the Nation’s schools in safely reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic. It is particularly important that ARP ESSER funding will enable States and local educational agencies (“LEAs”), and more directly schools, to support students who have been most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are likely to have suffered the most because of longstanding inequities in our communities and schools that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education (“Department”) is committed to working in partnership with States so that these unprecedented resources are quickly put to work to ensure students have sustained access to in-person instruction and that the resources are used to provide the effective support students need as they persist through and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The thoughtful and timely use of these funds will have a lasting impact on our Nation’s schools and help to address the inequities in resources, services, and opportunities available to our students.

This template presents an opportunity for States to share their plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds with the public. The Department must approve a State educational agency’s (“SEA’s”) plan in order to make the State’s remaining ARP ESSER allocation available for use. Please note that the Department intends to issue ARP ESSER reporting requirements separately.

Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below. An SEA may use this template or another format as long as every item and element is addressed in the SEA’s response. Throughout this document, questions that refer to an SEA’s ARP ESSER funding are referencing the total allocation to be received by the SEA, including that which it allocates to its LEAs.

Each SEA must submit to the Department by **June 7, 2021**, either: (1) its ARP ESSER plan or (2) the State requirements that preclude submission of the plan by that date and a date by which it will be able to submit its complete ARP ESSER plan.

To submit the SEA’s plan, please email the plan to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov).

In order to ensure transparency, the Department will post each plan on the Department’s website when it is received and will indicate each plan’s approval status.

This template also allows States to fulfill the requirement of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (“CRRSA”) Act ESSER II 6-month reporting requirement in section 313(f) of the CRRSA Act.

Cover Page


Grantee and Contact Information

ARP ESSER PR Award Number (e.g., S425U2100XX): S425U210048

SEA Contact: Jen Utemark, Office of Budget & Grants Management

Telephone: 402.471.4313

Email address: jen.utemark@nebraska.gov

By signing this document, I agree to each of the assurances listed in Appendix C and further assure that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.	
Chief State School Officer or Authorized Representative (Printed Name) Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative 	Date: 10/12/2021

A. Describing the State's Current Status and Needs

The Department recognizes the extraordinary efforts made by States, LEAs, and educators to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe the progress they have made, the priorities and student needs guiding their ARP ESSER funding decisions, and their current and projected operating status.

1. **Progress and Promising Practices:** Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 strategies that have been most effective in supporting the needs of students in your State during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please include, if applicable, how your State will submit and encourage its LEAs to submit lessons learned and best practices to the Department's [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) so that they can be shared with other States and LEAs.

Nebraska stands out as a state that supported in-person learning for the vast majority of students for the entire 2020-21 school year. This accomplishment is a testament to the hard work and perseverance of the state's educators, resiliency of our learners, family and community engagement and support, and partnerships among national, state, and local public health officials.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) supported the continuity of learning and safe return to school through the following strategies:

First, the NDE served as a **convener and communicator**. NDE hosted weekly, then twice per month, meetings with superintendents and other staff, bringing together local and state public health officials and the governor to share the state of the state. These meetings provided clear, consistent communication focused on health and well-being, mitigation strategies, and continuity of learning. The NDE, in collaboration with myriad partners, developed [Launch Nebraska](#), a comprehensive guide to leadership and systems work, continuity of learning, and conditions for learning necessary to make the 2020-21 school year safe and productive for students. The resource has now pivoted to the key actions necessary for [Renewal and Acceleration](#).

Second, from the beginning of the pandemic, the NDE emphasized the **critical need to support marginalized student groups** in their continuity of learning. School districts were required to submit "Continuity of Learning Plans" which asked specifically about strategies to serve students with disabilities and English learners. Responses informed supports to schools, professional learning offerings, and flexibilities in rules and regulations. **Digital equity gaps** were also addressed through early and coordinated focus on the hierarchy of technology needs. A significant investment was made in bridging the digital divide through both the NDE's CARES Act set aside and the governor's investment of GEER dollars.

Finally, over the past year, the NDE has curated over 30 hours of **professional learning opportunities** targeted toward the varied needs of schools, subject area, and student needs. These resources, which are still accessible, allow districts to choose the learning and resources that best fit the needs of their staff and students.

2. Overall Priorities: Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 issues currently facing students and schools across your State as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including, to the extent possible, data illustrating why these are the most critical and/or most widespread issues facing schools and students.

Across 14 ESSER roundtable discussions, a survey of stakeholders, and quantitative data analysis, the following four priorities have emerged:

- **Access to comprehensive mental health services** for students, staff, and communities. The psychological toll of the pandemic may not be fully understood yet, but access to mental healthcare providers pre-pandemic was already scarce, particularly in rural communities.
 - **Authentic and reimagined family and community engagement**. Parents, guardians, and families have played an invaluable role supporting the safety and learning of students over this past year. Trust, relationships, and two-way communication must be prioritized this summer and throughout the next school year.
 - Teachers and leaders with the requisite **high-quality professional learning and resources** to address the full spectrum of students' academic needs with an explicit focus on the unfinished learning of historically marginalized students. This priority also emphasizes **bolstering the teacher pipeline**. Shortages in critical teaching positions existed pre-pandemic (detailed further below) and have further been exacerbated. Particular attention must be paid to attracting, retaining, upskilling, and elevating educators, with particular attention increasing the racial parity of the teaching force.
 - **Ensure students have equitable access to grade-level instruction to address unfinished learning and support learning acceleration**. Students had differing experiences during the pandemic, and many, especially the historically marginalized, were performing below grade level before the pandemic. That said, educators must not turn solely to remediation to approach the unfinished teaching and learning of students, instead focusing on the acceleration necessary to meet the needs of each student.
3. Identifying Needs of Underserved Students: Describe your State's 2-3 highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable) and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups:

- i. Students from low-income families,
- ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),
- iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),
- iv. English learners,
- v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”)),
- vi. Students experiencing homelessness,
- vii. Children and youth in foster care,
- viii. Migratory students, and
- ix. Other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the SEA (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, and LGBTQ+ students).

To the extent possible, this description should include data on indicators such as estimates of the academic impact of lost instructional time,¹ chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.

NOTE: Many 2020-21 data collections, including cohort graduation rate, statewide summative assessment scores, membership, and teacher/personnel data, will not be available until Fall 2021. The NDE has endeavored to detail specific needs for student groups given qualitative input from myriad stakeholders and available quantitative data. Additionally, Nebraska had a high statewide summative assessment participation rate, positioning the state well for data analysis.

Many needs facing specific student groups were present before the pandemic, and while new data may not be currently, the NDE acknowledges the disparate effect of COVID-19 on some communities, which could lead to the widening of these opportunity and achievement gaps. As Commissioner of Education, Dr. Matthew Blomstedt noted, “The collective failure as a nation to successfully confront the pandemics of poverty, racism, and injustice left us more vulnerable to the pandemic of COVID-19 and the consequences it will have for generations.”

¹ For the purposes of the plan, “academic impact of lost instructional time” refers to “learning loss” experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as referenced in the ARP Act and the CRRSA Act.

Table A1.

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	<p>Key Data Point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018-19 Chronic Absenteeism: 21% (All Students: 13%) • 2019-20 Graduation Rate: 79.7% (All Students: 88%) <p>1) While a small percentage of students in Nebraska learned remotely this year, economically disadvantaged students in our largest districts were more likely to have started the year in this learning modality.</p> <p>2) Consistent, reliable, high speed internet and broadband access continue to be a challenge for economically disadvantaged students in Nebraska</p>
Students from each racial or ethnic background used by the State for reporting purposes (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race/ethnicity)	<p>Key Data Point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019-20 Graduation Rate for Native American Students: 71% (All Students: 88%) • 2018-19 English Language Arts for Black or African American Students: 27% Proficient (All Students: 52%) • 2018-19 Chronic Absenteeism for Hispanic/Latinx Students: 19% (All Students: 13%) <p>1) In addition to the pandemic, which disproportionately affected families of color, the twin pandemic of racial injustice came to a head with the murder of George Floyd. Trauma, disproportionate rates of discipline, disproportionality in identification for special education and many other inequities continue to affect learners of color at higher rates than their White peers.</p> <p>2) Significant opportunity gaps existed before the pandemic, with each racial and ethnic group scoring below the White student group in ELA, math, and graduation rates.</p> <p>3) Educators across the state need continued support to ensure culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy and materials are meeting the needs of all learners and implemented with fidelity.</p>
Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on	<p>Key Data Point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018-19 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – 43% of high school girls reported feeling “Sad or Hopeless” compared to 21.1% of boys • 2018-29 YRBS – 22.8% of girls considered attempting suicide, compared to 12.7% for boys

Student group	Highest priority needs
underserved student groups by gender)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018-19 suspension and expulsion data: African American girls represent only 7% of the student population but over 23% of the expulsions <p>1) Prior to COVID-19, data from the YRBS suggest girls need additional social emotional and mental health supports.</p> <p>2) At the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity, prior to the pandemic, Black girls were far more likely than their White peers to be suspended and expelled at significantly disproportionate rates.</p>
English learners	<p>Key data point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019-20 Graduation Rate: 52% (All Students: 88%) • 2018-19 Chronic Absenteeism: 18% (All Students: 13%) • 2020-21 ELPA 21 Participation Rate: 96% <p>1) Like students with disabilities, the English learner student group is nuanced and complex. In Nebraska, 110 languages are spoken in our schools, and one of the greatest challenges is increasing the capacity of general education teachers to effectively support the English language acquisition of ELs across content areas.</p> <p>2) An additional priority for English learners is authentic and meaningful engagement of parents and guardians of English learners.</p>
Children with disabilities	<p>Key data point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019-20 Graduation Rate: 68.9% (All Students: 88%) • 2018-19 Math for Students with Disabilities: 22% Proficient (All Students: 52%) <p>1) When Nebraska designated schools for targeted support and improvement and additional targeted support and improvement for the first time in 2019, the students with disabilities group had the most school identifications. One of the greatest needs is a collective responsibility and accountability for students with disabilities in general education classrooms and strengthening Tier 1 core instruction.</p> <p>2) Nebraska must continue to pursue explicit supports for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were often unable to receive the same type of intensive supports necessary and guaranteed to them.</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>3) Building parent and guardian capacity for support and advocacy. Parents, guardians, and families serve as the primary teachers of students. A specific need is continued empowerment of families to serve as advocates and partners in students with disabilities in reaching the goals outlined in IEPs.</p>
<p>Students experiencing homelessness</p>	<p>Key data point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019-20 Graduation Rate: 59.9% (All Students: 88%) <p>1) Students experiencing homelessness often struggle to participate in virtual or online learning. Schools often serve as the most stable structures for this student group, so disruptions created significant barriers to their learning and access to supports.</p> <p>2) While Nebraska’s data systems and governance make it virtually impossible for a student to be disenrolled without accounting for their movement, tracking and accounting for students experiencing homelessness continues to be a challenge.</p> <p>3) While all students benefit from wrap around services, students experiencing homelessness specifically gain when the school addresses whole child needs.</p>
<p>Children and youth in foster care and those involved in the justice system</p>	<p>Key data point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2020: 3,965 Systems-Involved Youth, 3% increase from 2019 • 2019-20 Graduation Rate: 51.2% (All Students: 88%) <p>1) Students who are systems involved, including those in the foster care or juvenile justice systems, require specific attention to transitions among facilities, when they age out, or from grade to grade.</p> <p>2) Students who are systems involved require more personalized attention through educational advocates, mentors, or liaisons, and a coordinated cross-sector collaboration. In Nebraska, this relationship is developing, but with greater numbers of students, further work must be done.</p>
<p>Migratory students</p>	<p>Key data point(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019-20 Graduation Rate: 84.7% (All Students: 88%) <p>1) Students who are migratory often lack stable and consistent transportation. This challenge was especially acute during the pandemic with loss of jobs and housing instability.</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>2) Migratory students and families benefit from two-generational approaches like family literacy, parenting classes, and parent and child together time. These strategies empower parents to support their own learning and that of their children.</p> <p>3) As students move from place to place, rapid placement in appropriate courses is often lost or the process prolonged. This means that specific strategies for credit recovery must be pursued for migratory students.</p>
<p>Other groups of students identified by the State (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, LGBTQ+ students)</p>	<p>Key data point(s):</p> <p>There are several student groups considered “at risk” before the pandemic, as measured by both the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and academic outcomes. In addition to those student groups above, the NDE also is monitoring the needs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ+ Youth (2018-19 YRBS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 34.4% of LGBTQ+ students reported being bullied ○ 59.4% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling sad or hopeless ○ 41% of LGBTQ+ students reported seriously considering attempting suicide <p>1) According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey from 2018-19, LGBTQ+ youth are far more likely to experience sadness, depression, and bullying at schools in Nebraska. Among the highest needs from the ARP survey and stakeholder input, mental health supports for all students, including, but not limited to LGBTQ+ students, must be prioritized and provided across the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are Highly Mobile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2018-19 English Language Arts: 30% Proficient (All Students: 51%) ○ 2018-19 Math: 26% Proficient (All Students: 52%) <p>1) Students who are highly mobile often struggle to participate in virtual or online learning. Schools often serve as the most stable structures for this student group, so disruptions created significant barriers to their learning and access to supports</p> <p>2) Strong structures must be implemented to support continuity of services for students who are highly mobile, especially for mobile students that are also English learners and/or have disabilities.</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with a Parent in the Military <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2018-19 English Language Arts: 66% Proficient (All Students: 51%) ○ 2018-19 Math: 64% Proficient (All Students: 52%) <p>1) Children with a parent in the military, while often performing higher than their peers on academic assessments, often need additional support for their transitions to and from new bases or assignments. The patterns and needs of students with parents in the military often mirror those of highly mobile students.</p> <p>2) Additionally, students with a parent in the military often require additional social emotional supports as a result of their movement from place to place.</p>

4. Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in identifying the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and student well-being, including identifying the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic. Where possible, please identify the data sources the SEA will suggest its LEAs use in thoughtfully diagnosing areas of need, including data on the academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of lost instructional time.

The NDE will support LEAs in unearthing the impact of COVID-19 on students through multiple strategies. First, the NDE will elevate messages developed through its own research on the impact. For example, the NDE has developed a map triangulating the CDC’s social vulnerability index, COVID-19 cases per hundred thousand, and our TSI, CSI, ATSI schools. This has enabled the NDE to target funds and strategies and can be replicated at the local level.

Additionally, the NDE will assist districts in inventorying and using their own local data like attendance, interim assessments, classroom assessments, digital equity, and perceptual data. Technical assistance sessions will be held throughout the summer to assist schools in examining available data, triangulating it, and pivoting into action.

Finally, the NDE will assist schools to approach disparate impacts through a multi-tiered systems approach, ensuring tier one academic, social, emotional and mental health needs are met for all, and more intensive supports pursued for those students most affected.

5. School Operating Status: It is essential to have data on how students are learning in order to support the goals of access and equity, especially for student groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Describe

the current status of data collection on operational status and mode of instruction of all schools in your State. This description must include:

- i. A description of to what extent, and how frequently, the State collects now and will collect in the future data for all schools in your State on:
 - a. Mode of instruction: The number of schools in your State that are offering fully remote or online-only instruction; both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid model); and/or full-time in-person instruction;
 - b. Enrollment: Student enrollment for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction; and
 - c. Attendance: Student attendance for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction.

The NDE made a conscious effort to reduce data burdens on schools during this year so districts could focus all efforts on the unique learning environment and safety protocols. Districts self-reported mode of instruction to the NDE. Additionally:

- Enrollment data is submitted and validated in October of each year
- Attendance data flows to the NDE each day, but is officially validated at the end of the year.
- Mode of instruction was informally collected through Launch NE Learning Status page.

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, the NDE will include enhanced tracking for Learning Modality, through specific student-level data elements for in person, remote, or hybrid learning. Additional absence codes to capture the reason for absences will provide more specific analytic opportunities to evaluate and identify supports needed for students as well.

- ii. The data described in A.5.i.a. and b. using the template in Appendix A (and to the extent available, the data described in A.5.i.c.) for the most recent time period available. Please note that this data can be submitted separately within 14 calendar days after a State submits this plan. The SEA must also make this data publicly available on its website as soon as possible but no later than June 21, 2021, and regularly provide updated available information on its website. The Department will periodically review data listed in A.5.i on SEA websites.

See Appendix A for more details.

- iii. To the extent available, a description of the planned operational status and mode of instruction for the State and its LEAs for Summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year.

The NDE will continue to support local decisions around offerings for the fall, however, the NDE believes like this year, the vast majority of students will be learning in-person this summer and in the fall of 2021. Additionally, the NDE will enhance its data collections to include more clear measures of remote learning, reasons for absences, and other key indicators of student access and success.

B. Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations

The Department recognizes that safely reopening schools and sustaining their safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being, and especially for being able to address the educational inequities that have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in this vital area.

1. Support for LEAs: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in safely returning to in-person instruction and sustaining the safe operation of schools. This description must include:
 - i. How the SEA will support its LEAs implementing, to the greatest extent practicable, prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff;

Nebraska has prioritized and supported in-person instruction from before the beginning of this year. Planning and support began in late spring 2020 with the development of Launch Nebraska and the NDE’s [Planning a Safe Return to School in Nebraska](#) guidance developed by local, state, and national public health and education experts. Through the development of this document the NDE communicated the following foundational values which drove the state to a successful school year:

- Equity: We must ensure our students, especially those who have been historically underserved, maintain access to high quality teaching.
- Quality: While flexibility and innovation must be pursued, we must not back down from our standards for quality.
- Flexibility: We must pursue flexibilities in regulations and innovations to ensure students have access to high quality teaching.
- Safety: Learning cannot occur if the school community does not feel safe in their environment.

- Decisive: Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We will make mistakes, and we will adapt quickly as variables on the ground change.

In sum, Nebraska schools have already safely returned to in-person learning through the commitment of educators, resiliency of students and staff, partnerships with local health departments and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and clear guidance and communication. This same commitment to student and staff safety continues into summer 2021 and the 2021-22 school year.

For summer and into next school year, the NDE will insist upon consultation with local health departments in designing safety protocols aligned with the CDC and emerging best practices.

Additionally, the NDE has developed a template plan to guide district leaders in easily aligning their return to learning plans to the most recent CDC guidelines.

Table B1.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	The NDE has led statewide efforts and partnerships to message the continued need for safety, masking, vaccinations, and mental health through its sponsorship in the Do Right, Right Now campaign.
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Additionally, guidance was provided for schools in the NDE’s Planning a Safe Return to School in Nebraska , and through continued evolution of guidance on the Launch NE website.
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	The NDE has also worked closely with the Nebraska Association of Local Health Departments and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to share consistent messages every other week through joint webinars with education leaders.
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	The NDE coordinated the distribution of hand sanitizer and face masks at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, and continues to closely monitor PPE needs for districts.
Diagnostic and screening testing	The NDE worked closely with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to pilot COVID-19 screening tests to 2,500 students statewide through two separate rounds.
	Finally, the NDE has developed and executed professional learning webinars for school nurses and other school health

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
	personnel through a partnership with Nebraska Children’s Hospital and their Project ECHO.
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	The Do Right, Right Now campaign pivoted from mitigation efforts to vaccination efforts beginning in January 2021. The NDE has also elevated district efforts for staff and student vaccination.
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	The NDE Office of Special Education developed guidelines aligned to CDC and local, state, and national public health officials accommodating for the unique needs of students with disabilities. This included proper alternatives to health and safety protocols.

- ii. Any Statewide plans, policies, estimated timelines, and specific milestones related to reopening and operation of school facilities, including any mechanisms the SEA will use to track, monitor, or enforce their implementation;

Every Nebraska school district has provided in-person instruction in the 2020-21 school year. The NDE has been tracking districts that have offered remote or hybrid options.

- iii. To what extent the SEA and its LEAs consult with Federal, State, and local health officials. This description should include, if available, whether the SEA and its LEAs have received support for screening testing from their State or local health department based on funding awarded by the CDC; and

Central to the success of this year has been the partnerships with public health officials at all levels. The NDE has partnered with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), national partners, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (NALHD).

The NDE hosted weekly meetings with education stakeholders from March 2020 through March 2021. Each week, the governor, DHHS, and at least one representative from local health departments (LHDs) have presented relevant data and guidance to school leaders, and allowed significant dialogue and questions and answer time.

Additionally, NDE staff met weekly with the chief medical officer and state epidemiologist to collaborate and create a strategy for LEA COVID-19 screening, distribution of PPE, and virus mitigation in school settings.

Finally, districts bolstered relationships with LHDs and the NDE, and worked collaboratively to develop plans for school operations. Local health departments provided the following services to LEAS:

- Consulted with superintendents.
 - Provided guidance and technical assistance to local schools.
 - Determined consistent protocols for when cases occurred within schools.
 - Quarantined and isolated school staff and students based upon COVID-19 cases and/or exposure.
 - Regularly communicated local COVID-19 status – including via risk dial.
- iv. Any guidance, professional learning, and technical assistance opportunities the SEA will make available to its LEAs.

The NDE provided guidance on [Launch NE](#) distilling CDC guidance for facilities, lunchroom settings, fine arts, in career and technical education classrooms, and extracurricular activities. The NDE worked collaboratively with DHHS and local health departments to disseminate and update these documents regularly, and shared the resources weekly with superintendents and other school leaders.

The NDE also participated in Project ECHO professional learning opportunities for school nurses.

2. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans: Describe how the SEA will ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register and available at <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/> (ARP ESSER requirements) to either: (a) within 30 days of receipt of the funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA’s website a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, or (b) have developed and made publicly available on the LEA’s website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act, including:
- i. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan includes, or will be modified to include, the extent to which it has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in table B1;
 - ii. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students’ academic needs, and students’ and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;
 - iii. How the SEA will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER

- grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),² and revises as appropriate, its plan, and how the SEA will ensure that the LEA seeks public input, and takes such input into account on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the revisions to the plan; and
- iv. Describe, to the extent the SEA collects it, information about LEA implementation, to the greatest extent practicable, of each element of the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in table B1 and its LEAs' needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent, to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.

See responses below:

- i. Since all Nebraska schools were already providing in-person instruction in the 2020-21 school year, the NDE has created a simple template to capture district best practices, ensure required consultation with local health departments, and guarantee alignment with CDC guidelines.
- ii. In the spring of 2020, the NDE required "Continuity of Learning Plans" which can serve as models for this year's version. In the template for the Safe Return to In-Person Learning, districts will detail their plans for continuity of learning, including services for specific student groups, and their plan for providing nutritional services and other students support if disruptions should occur this year. The NDE will collect this response through the grants management system.
- iii. The NDE will provide technical assistance and consultation during the summer of 2021 including support with the template for a safe return, grants management assistance, etc. These plans will be periodically reviewed by both programmatic and fiscal staff throughout 2021-22 and beyond at six-month intervals.
- iv. The NDE does not collect these data.

C. Planning for the Use and Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds

The Department recognizes that seeking input from diverse stakeholders is essential to developing plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds that are responsive to the needs of students, families, and educators. In this section, SEAs will describe their plans for consultation and for coordinating the use of ARP ESSER funds with other resources to meet the needs of students.

² ARP ESSER funds are subject to the Tydings amendment in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. 1225(b), and are therefore available to SEAs and LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review and revisions of these plans, if necessary, are not required during the Tydings period.il

1. SEA Consultation: Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, describe how the SEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:
 - i. students;
 - ii. families;
 - iii. Tribes (if applicable);
 - iv. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);
 - v. school and district administrators (including special education administrators);
 - vi. superintendents;
 - vii. charter school leaders (if applicable);
 - viii. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
 - ix. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The description must include how the SEA provided the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support), and how the SEA took such input into account.

NDE is **committed to meaningful consultation with stakeholders**, and modeled this engagement for districts by taking time to intentionally meet with a broad set of voices representing multiple communities and stakeholder groups. Throughout May and into early June, the NDE met with 14 stakeholder groups in round table discussions focused on determining the greatest needs facing students and families, and priorities for investments of ARP funds. These groups include the following:

- i. Students
 - Career and Technical Student Organization Executive Leaders – June 2, 2021
 - Nebraska Youth Leadership Council – June 3, 2021
- ii. Families
 - Special Education Advisory Committee – May 6, 2021
 - Parents and Families (Translation services provided) – May 27, 2021
- iii. Tribes (if applicable);
 - Commissioner’s Native American Advisory Committee – May 19, 2021
 - Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs – May 19, 2021

- iv. Civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);
 - Equity Committee – (Urban League, Latino American Commission, Nebraska Commission for Indian Affairs, OutNebraska, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing) – May 26, 2021
 - Nebraska NAACP – May 20, 2021
 - Statewide Facilities-Based Schools Administrators – May 26, 2021

- v. School and district administrators (including special education administrators);
 - Nebraska Council of School Administrators Executive Team – May 18, 2021
 - Commissioner’s Superintendents Advisory Committee – May 12, 2021

- vi. Superintendents;
 - Commissioner’s Superintendents Advisory Committee – May 12, 2021

- vii. Charter school leaders (if applicable);
 - Not Applicable

- viii. Teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
 - Commissioner’s Teacher Advisory Group – April 8, 2021
 - Nebraska Council of School Administrators Executive Team – May 18, 2021
 - Commissioner’s Superintendents Advisory Committee – May 12, 2021
 - Nebraska State Education Association – May 19, 2021

- ix. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.
 - Students with Disabilities:
 - Special Education Advisory Committee – May 6, 2021
 - Students Experiencing Homelessness:
 - Omaha Education Partners – May 21, 2021
 - English Learners and Migratory Students:
 - Parents and Families– Three parent groups including the Migratory Parent Advisory Council, and Spanish-speaking parents representing English learners – May 27, 2021

- Students who are Justice and/or Systems-Involved (including foster care):
 - Statewide Facilities-Based Schools Administrators – May 26, 2021

The following six questions were posed to all stakeholder groups. Responses in the tables represent consistent or recurring themes across all groups. **What have been the greatest needs facing students and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Mental Health; Social-Emotional Supports; Increased mental health crises; Trauma across multiple crises (ex. COVID, Racial Reckoning in Summer 2020, etc.)
Staff burnout, mental health, engagement, professional learning needs
Technology; Gaps in infrastructure and connectivity
Engagement, re-engagement, and connection for students who learned remotely
Holistic needs of children: nutritional, physical health, housing insecurity, family crises

If money weren't a barrier, what investments would you make in your school and community to transform education?

Offer Universal pre-K for all
Increase family and community engagement; parent education and two-generational approach
Focus on equitable learning strategies such as restorative practices; explicit strategies for SPED, EL, and students of color; Support for culturally relevant pedagogy
Focus on the teacher pipeline - recruitment, retention, elevation of educators. Intensive professional learning now and into next year; focus on remote learning
Implement a Community schools model and wrap around services; integration of services with DHHS, etc.

What state and local investments should be made to prioritize students who have been historically marginalized?

Increase racial diversity among the teaching force
Provide training on inclusion and inclusionary practices: ex. Universal design for learning, restorative practices, cultural competence and culturally relevant pedagogy and materials.

Elevate student and family voice, specifically students and families of color
Rethink school schedules
Implement project based learning and invest in CTE

What are the most important strategies local school districts could implement as part of their investments?

Summer and enhanced program offerings, ex. Tutoring and expanded learning
Summer learning for educators
Early interventions for struggling readers
Full-time nurses, school counselors and/or mental health counselors, social workers, behavioral coaches, etc.
Substitute teachers, and teacher pipeline

What statewide supports could/should NDE provide through our investments?

Statewide strategy for mental health access; Tier one supports for SEL
Summer school supports and programming
Incentives or investments for HQIM
Not choosing cookie cutter projects, but allowing for the customization at the district level
Strategies for parent and community engagement and full-scale community schools models

In what ways can we better recruit, support, and retain teachers and leaders during this time?

Offer and accept micro-credentialing
Remove the Praxis as a requirement
Create teacher pipeline support: Mentor teaching, Paid teacher residency programs, instructional coaches; Develop EdRising statewide
Provide teacher mental health supports
Clearly communicate recertification processes, invest in additional certification for teachers, or upskill paraeducators and teachers

Additionally, the NDE provided a public survey from May 21 to June 7 and received 543 responses. Trends from the survey reiterate themes from roundtables and include the following:

Question 1: Please select the 3 greatest needs facing students during the COVID-19 pandemic from the list below.

Student Need	Number of Responses
Social emotional supports for all students	245
Mental health supports for students	204
Unfinished teaching and learning resulting from closures	181
Supports for wraparound services at schools (i.e. supports for physical, emotional, nutritional, and health supports)	176
Barriers to learning remotely (eg. lack of internet, devices)	153

Question 8: Please select the 3 most important strategies local school districts could implement as part of their investments.

Strategies	Number of Responses
Reduced class sizes	185
Mental health training and support	174
Professional learning to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials	145
Purchase high-quality instructional materials	139
Short-term mental health practitioners, psychologists, social workers	137

Question 9: Please select up to 3 statewide supports that NDE could/should provide through their investments.

Strategies	Number of Responses
Mental health training and support	171
Reduce class sizes	146
Short-term mental health practitioners, psychologists, social workers	145
Purchase/leverage educational technology investments	143
Professional learning networks to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials	143

The listening sessions and survey reiterate the priority areas and strategies identified by the NDE and written into this plan in Section A2 and D1i.

2. Coordinating Funds: Describe to what extent the SEA has and will coordinate Federal COVID-19 pandemic funding and other Federal funding. This description must include:
 - i. How the SEA and its LEAs 1) are using or have used prior to the submission of this plan and 2) plan to use following submission of this plan, Federal COVID-19 funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act and the CRRSA Act to support a safe return to and safely maximize in-person instruction, sustain these operations safely, and address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual student groups (including students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students);

Complete the table below or provide a narrative description.

Table C1.

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
ESSER I (CARES Act)	<i>See screenshots below. More details at https://www.education.ne.gov/esser</i>	
GEER I (CARES Act)		
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)		
GEER II (CRRSA Act)		



RELIEF AID

PreK-12 EDUCATION



INVESTMENTS IN
Nebraska

Since March 2020, the federal government has passed three relief packages in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that include unprecedented support for K-12 schools to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. The relief funding awards grants to States (SEAs), school districts (LEAs), and nonpublic schools through two separate funds: the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of the NDE's actions to date on the administration of federal COVID-19 relief funds.

Table 1. Overall Funds Available to Nebraska K-12 Schools through COVID-19 Relief Packages

Legislation	CARES	CRRSA	ARP
	Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act	Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act	American Rescue Plan Act
Enacted	March 2020	December 2020	March 2021
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ESSER	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$545,908,619
Governor's Emergency Education Relief GEER	\$16,357,685	\$17,272,129	\$18,618,767
Total Education Stabilization Funds	\$81,442,770	\$260,345,659	\$564,527,386



Table 2. Aid Available through the GEER & Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic schools (EANS)

Program Details	GEER I	GEER II/EANS	ARP EANS
Stimulus Program	CARES Act	CRRSA Act	ARP Act
State Allocation & Methodology	State Allocation	State Allocation	State Allocation
Available for Obligation Through	9/30/22	9/30/23	9/30/23
Nebraska GEER Aid	\$16,357,685	Governor education funds became EANS funds	
Nebraska EANS Services/Assistance Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools	Public school districts provide equitable services to nonpublic schools through ESSER	\$17,272,129 Including \$200,000 for State Administration	\$18,618,767 Including \$200,000 for State Administration
Level of Aid Spent to Date <small>Costs may date back to March 13, 2020</small>	100% Obligated	\$0 - May 2021 Services Available	\$0 - June 2021 Schools Apply
Nebraska Allocation & Methodology	Governor providing devices/access for all students in need	Nonpublic Allocation 50% Total Enrollment 50% Low-Income	July 2021 – Final Allocations Available
Main Purpose of Funds	 Address digital equitable access and Learning <i>Check it out! Click the pic!</i>	 Provide services or assistance to non-public schools through partnership with FACTS to serve the most impacted by COVID-19	

More information available at: education.ne.gov/cares-act/

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Table 3. Aid Available through the ESSER COVID-19 Relief Packages

Program Details	ESSER I	ESSER II	ESSER III
Stimulus Program	CARES Act	CRRSA Act	ARP Act
Total Nebraska ESSER Aid	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$549,484,612
Available for Obligation Through	9/30/22	9/30/23	9/30/24
Total Nebraska ESSER Aid	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$545,908,619
State Allocation & Methodology	State Allocation	State Allocation	State Allocation
School District Aid Distribution (90%)	\$58,576,577	\$218,766,177	\$491,317,757
School District Allocation & Methodology	District Allocation	District Allocation	Released May 2021
Budgeted Investments	42% Technology 26% Closure/Employ Staff 19% Response/Supplies 11% Nonpublic Schools 1.2% Vulnerable Populations 0.4% Prof Development 0.3% Social/Emotional	April 2021 Districts Applying & Budgeting Aid	May 2021 Allocations & Application become available Note: 20% reserved for "learning loss" through evidence-based interventions & LEA maintenance of equity
Level of Aid Spent to Date Costs may date back to March 13, 2020	68% Reimbursed \$40,108,258	\$0	\$0
Main Purpose of Funds	 Ensure students and educators have devices, connectivity, support needed to continue to learn, and provide communication /support to families and students.	Measure and address learning loss among students disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and school closures, particularly students with high-needs.	Reopen schools and sustain safe operation aligned to CDC guidance for in-person learning. Provide evidenced-based interventions to meet social, emotional, and academic needs.
SEA Reservation (10% - NDE) Including 0.5% State Administration Maintenance of Effort and Equity Provisions	\$6,508,509	\$24,307,353	\$54,590,862
Budgeted Investments	60% Technology 19% Fall Planning 9% Unobligated 5% Administration 4% Inclusive Environment 3% SEL & Mental Health	 Developing strategic priorities-based planning guidance and supports for schools to achieve School Renewal and Acceleration through launchne.com and educational partners	
Level of State Reservation Spent to Date Costs may date back to March 13, 2020	91% Obligated \$59,227,427	\$0	\$0



More information available at: education.ne.gov/cares-act/

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- ii. To what extent ESSER I and ESSER II funds have been awarded to LEAs and, if funds have not yet been made available to LEAs, when they will be. In addition, please provide any available information on the total dollar amounts of ESSER I and ESSER II funds that have been obligated but not expended by the SEA and its LEAs, including whether the SEA is able to track LEA obligations.

See above graphics.

- iii. In supporting LEAs as they plan for the safe return to and continuity of in-person instruction and for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent to which the SEA is also using other Federal funding sources including but not limited to under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (“ESEA”), IDEA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”), funding for child nutrition services, and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness provided by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act.³

The NDE has supported districts in the blending and braiding of other federal funds in two ways:

- [CRRSA Guidance Letter](#) – Provides example scenarios for school leaders to consider when budgeting over the next year. (Appendix E)
- [NDE’s Renewal and Acceleration Budget Roadmap](#) – Provides a budgeting tool to inventory all federal and state funds, and prompts schools in their strategic allocation.

D. Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students

The Department recognizes that States have an extraordinary opportunity to address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students through the ARP Act’s required State set-asides to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, provide summer learning and enrichment programs, and provide comprehensive afterschool programs. In this section, SEAs will describe their evidence-based strategies for these resources.

1. Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 5 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) on evidence-based interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time by

³ Please note that the needs of students experiencing homelessness must be addressed (along with the other groups disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) through the use of the ARP ESSER SEA reservations and the required LEA reservation for the academic impact of lost instructional time; the funding provided to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act is in addition to the supports and services provided with ARP ESSER funds.

supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:

- i. A description of the evidence-based interventions (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those interventions on an ongoing basis to understand if they are working;

The following four themes were consistently noted in consultation sessions and survey results as priorities. The NDE will pursue the following evidence-based interventions (among others) to address these priorities, and ensure systems and infrastructure are present to carry them out successfully.

- Interventions to **support student and staff social emotional wellbeing and mental health** – This may include Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula and training for teachers, Mental Health First Aid Training, and expanding access to mental health practitioners, social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, and tele-health opportunities.
- Initiatives to **reimagine family and community engagement** – This may include dual capacity frameworks to systematize family-school-student partnerships, resources to support in-person communication with families linked to learning goals, expanding access to community school models, and strategies that provide the opportunity for parents and children to interact together.
- Investment in **teacher professional development, upskilling, and the teacher and leader pipeline** – This may include providing professional learning to improve culturally relevant teaching and learning, building teacher content knowledge, supporting the implementation of high-quality instructional materials, and investing in the teacher and school leader pipeline by creating opportunities to upskill credentials, certifications, etc.
- **Ensure students have equitable access to grade-level instruction to address unfinished learning and support learning acceleration** – This may include supporting learning acceleration anchored in high-quality instructional materials, evidence-based interventions and assessments, and high-quality professional learning to support equitable teaching and learning for all students, with particular attention to student most impacted by COVID-19.

The NDE will invest funds in statewide activities aligned to these four priority areas. The NDE will amend this plan in the future with specific evidence-based investments, and the evaluation plan for each investment.

- ii. How the evidence-based interventions will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to determine the impact of lost instructional time; and

Most Nebraska schools have served students through in-person learning this school year. Given that unique context, Nebraska schools should consider using ESSER III funds to support students most impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, including but not limited to:

- **Those students who attended the majority or even part of their year remotely.** While some students excelled during remote learning space, other remote learners may have found challenges. It is critical to determine the content remote learners may have not been taught in order to prepare them for learning acceleration.
- **Those students who were disengaged or did not participate when learning remotely.** While great efforts were made to serve students through any modality this year, remote learning provided its own set of challenges. The NDE is aware of and understands that some students were hard to reach, did not participate, and/or did not have the tools necessary to succeed. Determining some of the reasons why these students were disengaged and applying the most appropriate intervention will support these students upon return to school buildings and should remain an area of focus.
- **Those learners who were below grade level before the pandemic.** Disaggregate data from before the pandemic to better understand the student groups or specific students that were struggling and consider how the pandemic may have disproportionately affected them.
- **Students who have been historically marginalized,** including students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and the economically disadvantaged. Specifically, schools that are identified for targeted support and improvement or additional targeted support and improvement for one of these groups had opportunity gaps before COVID-19 which could have been widened during the pandemic.

The NDE will use these data, COVID-19 case counts, and other factors to determine where and how to specifically target the interventions and strategies acquired through state set aside funds.

- iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2)

students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

See above.

2. Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(2) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs, including those that begin in Summer 2021, and ensure such programs respond to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:
 - i. A description of the evidence-based programs that address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

The NDE has entered into a contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to support and monitor the implementation of expanded learning programs (both after-school and summer-school) throughout the state using ESSER III funds.

Under this agreement, the NDE will award subgrants to afterschool providers, but NCFE will help with specific tasks related to the afterschool programming. The NDE continues to make all substantive, final decisions about the program, while the NCFE provides oversight and technical assistance to the subgrantees.

The NDE, with the assistance of NCFE, selected sites using COVID-19 case count data, and prioritized schools that are designated for CSI, TSI, and ATSI. Sites either have existing programs or are new programs. Each program will create a plan and budget submitted for approval.

Programming will mimic 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and applicants will demonstrate the implementation of evidence-based enrichment activities consistent with the definition and tiers of evidence outlined in ESSA.

NCFE has unique capacity to provide services to NDE in support of this grant. First, the organization manages a \$60 million early childhood endowment and has the capacity and experience in providing grants to community organizations and districts across the state. NCFE has extensive Federal grant management expertise, and is home to Beyond School Bells, Nebraska’s Statewide Afterschool Network which has a longstanding partnership with NDE / 21st CCLC and provides community grants and support. In 2020, the NCFE provided immense

support to urban and rural communities most effected by COVID-19. More information can be found on the organization's website here:

<https://www.nebraskachildren.org/>

The NDE program administration has approved essential qualifications and specifications necessary to support summer learning, enrichment programs, and afterschool programs throughout Nebraska. These quality standards and requirements mirror the evidence-based summer and afterschool offerings outlined by the 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs. The NDE maintains administrative oversight and programmatic decision making including but not limited to identification of eligible sites which serve the most in-need populations, objectives of the programs, scope of allowable program services, reasonable and necessary budgets, and scheduled timelines for continued NDE leadership engagement for compliance of services being provided under the contract to meet program implementation objectives.

The NDE is contracting with the NCFE to assist the NDE in implementing summer learning and afterschool programs. The NCFE ensures accountability to the NDE in the following ways:

-The NCFE and the NDE designed the program, qualifications, specifications, and eligibility together. The three tiers (Incubator, Expansion, Centers for Innovation) all target funds for different purposes but allocate based on agreed upon criteria targeting historically marginalized student groups, those who experienced the most out of school time, and those who were most impacted by COVID-19. The final program requirements are approved by the NDE.

-The list of target schools was co-developed by the NDE and NCFE based on the impact of COVID-19, districts that were serving a large number of historically marginalized students, and those with the greatest academic needs. The final list and allocations will be approved by the NDE.

-The NDE and NCFE meet regularly for the NDE to assess the success of program implementation services provided and the NDE administrative expectations.

Evidence-basis for expanded learning ([After School Alliance, April 2021](#)):

- Expanded learning and summer enrichment has been found to lead to successful reengagement of learners.
- High-quality summer enrichment programs have been found to be particularly effective in supporting math and reading gains for students. Similarly, high-quality after school and summer enrichment programs yield improved grades.

- Expanded learning and summer enrichment leads to increased family and community engagement, which is a strong predictor of student success.
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers and other such expanded learning opportunities improve student attendance and decrease risky behaviors.
- Afterschool and summer school learning betters the overall health of vulnerable youth.
- Programs will be evaluated using a similar evaluation plan developed for the Nebraska 21st CCLC grant program by the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Munroe-Meyer Institutes.

Programming offered by the NCFE, in partnership with the NDE, will be aligned to quality standards outlined in Nebraska’s 21st century learning centers and may include:

- Daily schedule.
 - Considering this quality framework (NDE Policy statement), a recommended afterschool program daily schedule should include the following components:
 - Homework help and/or other academic support based on ongoing communication from school day educators,
 - Healthy snack (or meal),
 - Time for physical activity,
 - Enrichment and clubs, typically student-centered and based on individual interests.

- Allowable activities

Students must be provided with academic enrichment and expanded learning opportunities that are high quality, based on proven methods, if appropriate, and designed to complement the students’ regular academic program. An array of authorized activities are allowable that advance student academic achievement and support student success, including:

- academic enrichment learning programs, mentoring programs, remedial education activities, and tutoring services;
- well-rounded education activities;
- literacy education programs, including financial literacy programs and environmental literacy programs;
- programs that support a healthy and active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical activity programs;
- services for individuals with disabilities;
- programs that provide afterschool activities for limited English proficient students that emphasize language skills and academic achievement;
- cultural programs;

- telecommunications and technology education programs;
- expanded library service hours;
- parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy
- programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, to allow the students to improve their academic achievement;
- drug and violence prevention programs;
- programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including computer science; and
- programs that partner with in-demand fields of the local workforce or build career competencies and career readiness.

- Academic achievement.

While academic services in specific subject areas are not required, applicants must: 1) describe how the project activities are expected to improve student learning by providing student-centered, hands on experiences, 2) demonstrate that the eligible entity has experience, or promise of success, in providing educational and related activities that will complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and positive youth development of the students, 3) address how the project aligns with the school district learning objectives and behavioral codes and 4) describe how the project will allow students opportunities for program planning and selection of activities.

- ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3. i.--viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of summer learning and enrichment programs; and

The partnership detailed above will direct funds to schools serving the highest proportions of underserved students, large numbers of historically marginalized learners, and sites that experienced significant rates of COVID-19. Three types of grants will be provided:

- **Incubator** – three-year grants to support for start-up programming in currently underserved schools / communities
 - **Allocation Method:**
 - \$75,000 for new elementary and middle school programs
 - \$150,000 for new high school programs

- **Expansion** – one to three-year grants to support for expanding quality and capacity in existing programs serving historically underserved communities, including support for summer programming strands
 - **Allocation Method:**
 - Per pupil to mirror 21st Century allocation
- **Centers of Innovation** – one to three-year grants to support for new innovations that will support the expansion of ELO programs across the state.
 - **Supported through state and private funding**

Incubator and **Expansion** grants will be prioritized for historically underserved communities (students of color, students with disabilities, English learners and economically disadvantaged students) and communities experiencing disproportionate disruptions to in school learning due to the COVID pandemic during the 2019-21 pandemic. The selection process will prioritize applicants in all three areas who identify a balance of academic enrichment and engaging STEM-rich experiences, career exploration, outdoor education, entrepreneurship, Social Emotional learning opportunities and hands on engaged activities.

The NDE selected sites that have been impacted the greatest by COVID-19 and are most in-need. The identified schools included sites with current 21st Century or other expanded learning programs that ESSER funds could supplement and schools without afterschool or summer school programs to assist with beginning such programs. The identification process also prioritized middle and high schools as secondary settings having very few after or summer school opportunities for students.

- iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

See 2.ii. above.

3. Evidence-Based Comprehensive Afterschool Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs (including, for example, before-school programming), and ensure such programs respond to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:

- i. A description of the evidence-based programs (e.g., including partnerships with community-based organizations) the SEA has

- selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;
- ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of comprehensive afterschool programming; and
 - iii. the extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

The NCFE partnership detailed above will provide both summer and after-school programming. See 2 above for details on partnerships, evidence-basis, and selection criteria.

The provisions of the contract between the NDE and the NCFE expressly delineate the 1 percent funding activities available for summer school and after school programs through scope of work elements.

Under the terms of the ARP ESSER award, the NDE will adhere to all use of funds reporting required under the Federal award.

Each site will create a budget and budget narrative describing plans for use of funds that will meet all federal guidelines for use of funds.

4. Emergency Needs: If the SEA plans to reserve funds for emergency needs under section 2001(f)(4) of the ARP Act to address issues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, describe the anticipated use of those funds, including the extent to which these funds will build SEA and LEA capacity to ensure students' and staff's health and safety; to meet students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs; and to use ARP ESSER funds to implement evidence-based interventions.

The NDE plans to reserve 2.5% for "emergency needs." Initial planning around these funds has surrounded the bolstering of partnerships with community organizations, investments in liaison positions to serve as direct lines to youth- and family-serving organizations, and investing in the scale up of current initiatives. The NDE will provide greater detail on specific investments in a later iteration of this plan.

E. Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Students' Needs

The Department recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by

addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in developing high-quality plans for LEAs’ use of ARP ESSER funds to achieve these objectives.

1. LEA Plans for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds: Describe what the SEA will require its LEAs to include in LEA plans consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements for the use of ARP ESSER funds, how the SEA will require such plans to be made available to the public, and the deadline by which the LEA must submit its ARP ESSER plan (which must be a reasonable timeline and should be within no later than 90 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation). The LEA plans must include, at a minimum:
 - i. The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning;
 - ii. How the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;
 - iii. How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act; and
 - iv. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

The NDE is **dedicated to ensuring the responsible, accountable, focused, and transparent use of federal funds** at both the SEA and LEA level. Additionally, the American Rescue Plan provides an **opportunity of a lifetime** to implement evidence-based strategies that will close achievement gaps and advance the learning of all students. The NDE is providing significant support up front, and taking a measured, planful approach to providing resources, guidance, and technical assistance for educators as they develop their ARP plans.

The NDE will use planning documents, the application process through the Grants Management System, and the district-level monitoring to ensure districts meet the

requirements of ESSER III including consultation with stakeholders, publishing plans for safe return and use of funds to their individual websites, reserving at minimum 20% of the funding to address needs associated with learning loss, and selecting interventions that are evidence based to assure the quality of the interventions that students are receiving.

LEA applications are due September 15, 2021.

See additional responses to specific questions below:

- i. As mentioned above, the NDE has created a template for schools to complete as they consider safety procedures for the summer, fall, and throughout the grant period. Launch NE serves as a continued repository for best practices and guidance for safety procedures. A draft of this safety plan will be posted on each of the LEA's websites, reviewed at the local level at a minimum of every six months, and all documentation must be kept for auditing purposes. Documentation will include at minimum: who was involved in the writing of the plan, how public input was gathered, and screenshots of the plan posted on the LEA website. Safety plans are required to be published on the District's websites and during the monitoring documentation will be required to prove this has occurred.
- ii. Since Nebraska students have mostly been learning in-person, "learning loss" has a different meaning. The NDE began by providing a consistent definition and guidance for schools in understanding the disparate affect the pandemic has had on some learners and their families.

The NDE has also developed a list of vetted evidence-based interventions and considerations for schools to implement. LEAs will detail these evidence-based interventions in their plan for use of funds.

- iii. The NDE has developed budgeting and planning resources for districts, and will host technical assistance sessions throughout the summer and early fall to propose innovative, evidence-based, and transformational uses of funds. The NDE is also emphasizing the alignment of ARP ESSER plans to other plans implemented by the districts including improvement plans for designated schools, continuous improvement plans, etc. Finally, the NDE will be providing support for the creation of a theory of action for the strategic use of funds in an effort to ensure the tight alignment and evidence-based focus and assure accountability.
- iv. The budget roadmap and other previously developed resources consistently require schools to consider the differential impact of COVID-19 on their varied student groups through a data-informed approach, resources for selecting and evaluating evidence-based interventions, and alignment to processes already in place at their district.

2. LEA Consultation: Describe how the SEA will, in planning for the use of ARP ESSER funds, ensure that, consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements], its LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
 - i. students;
 - ii. families;
 - iii. school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and
 - iv. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.

The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:

- i. Tribes;
- ii. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
- iii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The description must also include how the SEA will ensure that LEAs provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA's plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds and take such input into account.

In every communication to districts about the use of their American Rescue Plan funds, the NDE has stressed the requirement to consult with myriad stakeholders. Budget and planning documents include draft communications, surveys which can be adapted by the district, and other strategies for seeking input and feedback.

Districts signed assurance statements that indicated they will involve stakeholders in required planning components. Additionally, the ARP grant that districts submit will include a section specifically asking districts to detail who was consulted, when, and how the input was incorporated into their planning documents. Failure to detail all necessary stakeholders will result in the return of the application to the district until a time which they can prove consultation meaningfully occurred.

3. Describe how the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds. The description must include:
 - i. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs' implementation of evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, such as through summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs – including

the extent to which the SEA will collect evidence of the effectiveness of interventions employed;

The NDE has supported schools and districts in the selection of evidence-based interventions beginning with CSI and ATSI designations in 2018 and 2019, respectively. This support has involved the clarification of definitions of evidence-based and introduction to tiers of support as outlined in ESSA, as well as steering districts to resources and tools that make the selection easier. It is upon this foundation that continued support will be provided to districts.

The NDE will host a session on evidence-based interventions this summer, and provide continued support and technical assistance in selection and evaluation of the appropriate evidence-based interventions tailored to the unique needs of schools and students.

Finally, the ARP application will require districts to indicate the evidence level of each selected interventions and investment. NDE staff will review, and, if necessary, return applications to districts until the appropriate evidence level is selected or the intervention is changed.

The NDE is developing further protocols for ensuring enhanced programmatic and fiscal monitoring to include the use of evidence-based interventions and strategies.

- ii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in specifically addressing the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii; and

The NDE will host several technical assistance sessions on inventorying and analyzing available data to identify the students and student groups most needing focused attention in summer 2021 and the 2021-22 school year. The NDE will also offer support for the identification and selection of evidence-based interventions for addressing gaps in achievement.

The NDE is developing further protocols for ensuring enhanced programmatic and fiscal monitoring to include the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on specific student groups.

- iii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds to identify, reengage, and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning, such as:
 - a. Students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;
 - b. Students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures; and
 - c. Students most at-risk of dropping out of school.

The Launch Nebraska webpage includes specific considerations for schools when addressing the disproportionate affects of COVID-19 on students who missed the most in-person learning or who did not consistently participate in remote instruction. These considerations are also captured in Nebraska’s resources on learning loss, which were created since the vast majority of students in the state learned in-person in 2020-21.

The NDE is developing further protocols for ensuring enhanced programmatic and fiscal monitoring to include identifying, reengaging, and supporting students with lost instructional time.

4. Describe the extent to which the SEA will support its LEAs in implementing additional strategies for taking educational equity into account in expending ARP ESSER funds, including but not limited to:
 - i. Allocating funding both to schools and for districtwide activities based on student need, and
 - ii. Implementing an equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction. An inclusive return to in-person instruction includes, but is not limited to, establishing policies and practices that avoid the over-use of exclusionary discipline measures (including in- and out-of-school suspensions) and creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

The NDE’s budget roadmap provides guidance to districts on the equitable investment of funds. This begins with a clear definition of education equity, an emphasis on utilizing disaggregated data to target specific students, and the sharing of strategies which are evidence-based and lead to improved student achievement.

In addition to planning resources, the ARP application for LEAs will require attention to and response for the distribution of funds for both schools and districtwide activities.

F. Supporting the Educator Workforce

The Department recognizes the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the Nation’s educators as well as students. In this section, SEAs will describe strategies for supporting and stabilizing the educator workforce and for making staffing decisions that will support students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

1. Supporting and Stabilizing the Educator Workforce:
 - i. Describe the extent to which the State is facing shortages of educators, education administration personnel, and other school personnel involved in safely reopening schools, and the extent to which they vary by region/type of school district and/or groups of educators (e.g., special educators and related services personnel and paraprofessionals; bilingual or English as a second language educators; science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”))

educators; career and technical education (“CTE”) educators; early childhood educators). Cite specific data on shortages and needs where available.

Complete the table below, changing or adding additional rows as needed, or provide a narrative description.

Nebraska public and non-public schools annually complete a [Teacher Vacancy Survey](#) outlining specific shortage areas. Response rate for 2019-20 was 37%, however, trends did emerge as high-need and shortage areas.

Table F1.

Area	Data on Shortages and Needs
Special educators and related service personnel and paraprofessionals	30.25% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 4 positions left vacant
Bilingual educators	0.42% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 0 positions left vacant
English as a second language educators	2.52% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 0 positions left vacant
STEM educators	Science: 7.56% of positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 7 positions left vacant Math: 6.72% of positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 10 positions left vacant
CTE educators	5.04% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 2.5 positions left vacant
Early childhood educators	2.94% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 3 positions left vacant
School counselors	2.10% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 0 positions left vacant
Social workers	Data Not Collected
Nurses	Data Not Collected
School psychologists	3.78% of the positions unfilled by qualified personnel; 3 positions left vacant

- ii. Describe how the SEA will assist its LEAs in identifying the most urgent areas of shortages or potential shortages, with particular plans

for individual LEAs facing the most significant needs (e.g., by avoiding layoffs, providing high-quality professional learning opportunities, and addressing the impact of stress or trauma on educators). Include a description of how other Federal COVID-19 funding (e.g., ESSER and GEER funds under the CARES Act and CRRSA Act) have already been used to avoid layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NDE encouraged districts to utilize CARES Act funding for maintaining all staff, including certified and non-certified personnel. Additionally, a Nebraska state statute ([NRS 79-8,106](#)) written after the 1919 Spanish flu pandemic required that in case of pandemics and when schools/districts are closed, “teachers shall be paid their usual salaries in full for such time as the school or schools shall be closed.” The NDE reiterated this requirement, and interpreted it to include administrators and all instructional staff.

Also, the implementation of enhanced safety protocols resulted in all 244 districts in Nebraska providing in-person learning during the 2020-21 school year. These safety protocols resulted in districts needing *more* staff to accommodate additional bus routes, reduced class sizes, and additional support for cleaning.

What’s more, the NDE has consistently administered the annual Teacher Vacancy Survey, providing data to higher education and state officials for the strategic deployment of educators for high-need areas and subjects. These data are shared with districts and Nebraska’s 17 intermediary agencies or Educational Service Units.

The NDE is providing technical assistance and professional development this summer through the [Budget Roadmap](#) and through recorded sessions on talent acquisition, retention, and elevation.

- iii. Describe the actions the SEA will take to fill anticipated gaps in certified teachers for the start of the 2021-2022 school year and to what extent the SEA will further support its LEAs in expanding the educator pipeline and educator diversity while addressing the immediate needs of students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (e.g., recruiting teaching candidates to provide high-dosage tutoring or implementing residencies for teacher candidates).

As part of its stakeholder survey at the end of May, the NDE asked the following question and received the subsequent responses from stakeholders on supporting the educator workforce.

Question 10 – Please select up to 3 ways in which the NDE can better recruit, support, and retain teachers during this time.

Support for Educators	Number of Responses
Provide scholarships for continued education, additional certifications, proper endorsements	212
Improve access to social, emotional, and mental health resources for educators	164
Support alternate routes to certification	159
Build or deepen programs to encourage students to become teachers for their own schools (often called “grow your own” programs)	135
Provide models or grant opportunities for teacher mentoring programs	126
Create specific strategies to recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse educators	126

In response to these needs, and even before, the NDE provided significant additional flexibilities for provisional certifications of teachers and will continue to extend flexibilities while ensuring quality.

Current rules regarding teacher certification are under review, with a specific emphasis on eliminating barriers to entry and elevation in the field.

The NDE also used ESSER II investments in partnership with other stakeholders to hire an “Educator Equity Specialist” tasked with:

- Rolling out elements of the new teacher and performance standards in Nebraska with special attention to culturally responsive practices contained therein,
- Identification and selection supports for high quality instructional materials and culturally relevant pedagogy,
- Specific supports for education preparation and certification to understand and eliminate barriers to educators of color from entering the field, and
- An explicit focus on the recruitment and retention of educators of color.

As noted above, significant investments will be made in statewide strategies for mental health and well-being, which must be accessible to educators as well.

Finally, the NDE continues to bolster its Educators Rising program to strengthen “grow your own” initiatives across the state. Additionally, the NDE successfully received a

planning grant from AmeriCorps which will enable the development of a strategy for deploying a corps of potential, current, and retired teachers to support communities most impacted by the pandemic.

2. Staffing to Support Student Needs: Describe the extent to which the SEA has developed or will develop strategies and will support its LEAs in increasing student access to key support staff within school buildings, including school counselors, special education personnel, nurses, social workers, and psychologists (e.g., hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students).

The NDE is elevating data on recommended student-to-support staff (ex. Counselors, nurses, social workers, etc.) ratios, and providing additional support and incentives to “grow your own” strategies for key support staff. The NDE will also be highlighting innovative approaches to whole child models and full-scale community schools models which schools can implement using their funding.

G. Monitoring and Measuring Progress

The Department recognizes that transparency on how ARP ESSER funds are used and their impact on the Nation’s education system is a fundamental responsibility of Federal, State, and local government. In this section, SEAs will describe how they are building capacity at the SEA and LEA levels to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting and to safeguard funds for their intended purposes.

1. Capacity for Data Collection and Reporting: It is important for an SEA to continuously monitor progress and make adjustments to its strategies, as well as to support its LEAs in making adjustments to LEA strategies, based on impact. Describe how the SEA will ensure its capacity and the capacity of its LEAs to collect data on reporting requirements, including but not limited to the examples of reporting requirements described in the SEA’s Grant Award Notification (listed in Appendix B). Describe the SEA’s capacity and strategy to collect data from its LEAs (disaggregated by student group, where applicable), to the greatest extent practicable, including any steps the SEA will take to build its capacity in the future (which may include the use of ARP ESSER and other Federal COVID-19 pandemic funds at the SEA and LEA levels), on issues that may include the following:
 - i. Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - ii. Opportunity to learn measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline; access to and participation in advanced coursework; access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology; access to high-quality educators; access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school

- psychologists; and results from student, parent, and/or educator surveys);
- iii. Fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels);
- iv. Jobs created and retained (by position type);
- v. Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources (e.g., summer and afterschool programs); and
- vi. Other reporting requirements reasonably required by the Secretary (please refer to Appendix B of this template; final requirements will be issued separately).

The NDE continues to invest and prioritize modernization of data collection and use systems and approaches to inform teaching and learning, equity, and continuous improvement. This includes prioritizing the use of ARP ESSER and other Federal COVID-19 pandemic funds, leveraging Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) resources, and leveraging other investments.

See specific responses to individual questions below:

- i. Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic;

The robust nature of moving to the EdFi® data standard has enabled agility of Nebraska to utilize data, provide near real time analytics tools, and ensure access to a variety of both structured and unstructured data more effectively. Nebraska is also focused on supporting “interoperability” capacity at the SEA and supporting efforts at the LEA level as well. These intentional and strategic efforts to support interoperability enable the capacity for insights among and across a variety of systems to more effectively understand the impact of lost instructional time among other topics.

- ii. Opportunity to learn measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline; access to and participation in advanced coursework; access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology; access to high-quality educators; access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists; and results from student, parent, and/or educator surveys);

The opportunity to address these key measures and inputs is very solid in Nebraska. Optional data elements have been available to support district submission of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) for a number of years along with the continued addition of new timely and appropriate data elements, a focused integration across systems (e.g., Health, Systems Involved Students, etc.), and using tools and systems that support timely and secure perceptual data

collection all provide a value-added approach to addressing the opportunity to learn measures.

- iii. Fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels);

Nebraska has successfully implemented methodologies to collect and report school level per pupil expenditures and is working through the approaches to include the resources from Federal COVID-19 resources as well. A strong commitment to the transparency and use of the funds is also in motion.

- iv. Jobs created and retained (by position type);

Nebraska does collect staffing information, but has not identified the jobs created or retained as part of ESSER investments. Work will need to be done to determine the best approach to address this metric including the depth and type of job, retained position definition, etc. See response in Section F Iii for more information.

- v. Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources (e.g., summer and afterschool programs); and

Nebraska is working through the strategies to most effectively capture the participation in the summer and afterschool programs that result from ARP ESSER resources and effectively consider the long-term opportunities to ensure the participation and impact data become a part of the information available for SEA and LEA decisions. Connecting the work of the 21st Century program and deep partnerships with Nebraska's Beyond School Bells, and other programmatic work continues and will be critical to ensure quality and useful data is collected.

- vi. Other reporting requirements reasonably required by the Secretary (please refer to Appendix B of this template; final requirements will be issued separately).

As the reporting and accountability requirements emerge, Nebraska is positioned well through to address and support the requirements. The targeted investments in system modernization are enabling this to occur. Depending upon the types of requirements, there may be a length of time to implement. The importance of thoughtful data governance, coordination with vendor partners, and processes for implementation, testing, validating, evaluating data quality, training, and other required steps take time.

2. Monitoring and Internal Controls: Describe how the SEA will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of and internal controls for the ARP ESSER funds (e.g., by updating the SEA's plan for monitoring funds and internal controls under

the CARES and CRRSA Acts; addressing potential sources of waste, fraud, and abuse; conducting random audits; or other tools). In this response, please describe the SEA's current capacity to monitor ARP ESSER; steps, if needed, to increase capacity; and any foreseeable gaps in capacity, including how the SEA will provide its LEAs with technical assistance in the anticipated areas of greatest need.

The NDE relies on internal controls critical to the success in grants management, illustrated by best practices to serve as a guide to prompt reflection, self-assessment, and improve outcomes ensuring ESSER funds are expended for allowable purposes and in accordance with cash management principles of 2 CFR, Part 200, subpart E of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. These internal controls include, but are not limited to using management systems, managing risk, understanding federal and non-federal requirements, translating a proposed award in a program plan, managing and administering sub-grants, managing budget and finances, keeping records and documentation, and continuous review. Internal risks, associated with implementing the program are based on past performance, internal reviews, independent audits which include single audits of federal and State, identifying strategies for mitigating such risks.

The Office of ESEA Programs has established a team of program managers assigned to each district to manage the various grant application, provide technical assistance to assigned districts, and programmatic monitoring activities identified through the assurances of the ESSER LEA applications. The Grant Management System (GMS) amendment process restricts districts' ability to move funds without the NDE program approval. The GMS provides multiple grant management reports designed to assist program and fiscal monitoring activities.

All subrecipients are required to submit adequate documentation for every reimbursement request to ensure the existence of primary documentation necessary to support fiscal reviews, including audits and improper payment assessments, by the NDE. Entities submit an annual independent audit report, which may include a single audit if those requirements were met.

Risk is mitigated by conducting fiscal monitoring reviews which targets accountability based on quantitative and then qualitative (sequential sampling, risk assessment categories, and field/desk determination) identified through subrecipient risk-based needs. The reviews focus on the financial management systems' internal controls developed and implemented by the subrecipient to demonstrate compliance with applicable requirements, including organizational operations, policies and procedures, financial reports, and record-keeping. The review also tests the allowability of expenditures charged to the federal grant, as well as compliance with federal program requirements. Ongoing financial and administrative training and technical assistance is provided to all subrecipients

and independently as assessed to enable subrecipients to comply with grant subaward requirements and maintain their funding. The NDE will utilize its current [Fiscal Monitoring Plan for LEAs and Subrecipients](#), revised and updated to reflect the expanded risks and opportunities associated with the ESSER grant program in July 2021.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

Indicate the date or time period represented by the following data.

The data provided represents the latest unvalidated numbers for the 2020-21 school year. The learning modality and approach is not available at the student level on a comprehensive nature, and thus is not provided. More detailed and specific information on learning modality will be collected during the 2021-22 school year.

Table 1

In the most recent time period available, how many schools in your State offered each mode of instruction or learning model described below? Each row should account for all schools in your State, so that, for each row, the sum of the numbers in the “offered to all students,” “offered to some students,” and “not offered” columns is equal to the number in the “all schools” column.

Add or change rows as needed

Number of schools	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only	7	#	#	#
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	88	#	#	#
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	941	#	#	#

To the extent data are available, please complete the above table for 1) all schools in the State, and 2) separately for each instructional level (e.g., pre-kindergarten/elementary schools, middle schools, high schools).

Table 2

In the most recent time period available, what was the enrollment and mode of instruction for the schools in your State?

Add or change rows as needed

Number of students	Total enrollment	Remote or online only	Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Full-time in-person instruction
Students from low-income families	151,729	#	#	#
White, not Hispanic	210,541	#	#	#
Black or African American, not Hispanic	21,627	#	#	#
Hispanic, of any race	64,566	#	#	#
Asian, not Hispanic	9,511	#	#	#
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	4,189	#	#	#
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	481	#	#	#
Two or more races, not Hispanic	13,670	#	#	#
Race/Ethnicity information not available	0	#	#	#
English learners	22,322	#	#	#
Children with disabilities	52,375	#	#	#
Students experiencing homelessness	2,318	#	#	#
Children and youth in foster care	2635	#	#	#
Migratory students	3460 (2019-20 school year)	#	#	#

Appendix B: Reporting Language Included in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”)

As described in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”), the SEA will comply with, and ensure that its LEAs comply with, all reporting requirements at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require, including on matters such as:

- How the State is developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools;
- Overall plans and policies related to State support for return to in-person instruction and maximizing in-person instruction time, including how funds will support a return to and maximize in-person instruction time, and advance equity and inclusivity in participation in in-person instruction;
- Data on each school’s mode of instruction (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to meet students’ social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs;
- Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ARP ESSER funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ARP ESSER funding, including on personnel, student learning, and budgeting at the school and district level);
- Student data (disaggregated by student subgroup) related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected instruction and learning;
- Requirements under the Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (“FFATA”); and
- Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.

Appendix C: Assurances

By signing this document, the SEA assures all of the following:

- The SEA will conduct all its operations so that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under the ARP ESSER program or activity based on race, color, national origin, which includes a person's limited English proficiency or English learner status and a person's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; sex; age; or disability. These non-discrimination obligations arise under Federal civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In addition, the SEA must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards issued by the Department under any of these statutes;
- The SEA will comply with all ARP Act and other ARP ESSER requirements and all requirements of its Grant Award Notification, including but not limited to:
 - Complying with the maintenance of effort provision in section 2004(a)(1) of the ARP Act, absent a waiver by the Secretary pursuant to section 2004(a)(2) of the ARP Act; and
 - Complying with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(b) of the ARP Act, and ensuring its LEAs comply with the maintenance of equity provision in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act (please note that the Department will provide additional guidance on maintenance of equity shortly);
- The SEA will allocate ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and, to the extent practicable, not later than 60 days after the SEA receives ARP ESSER funds (i.e., 60 days from the date the SEA receives each portion of its ARP ESSER funds). An SEA that is not able to allocate such funds within 60 days because it is not practicable (e.g., because of pre-existing State board approval requirements) will provide an explanation to the Department within 30 days of receiving each portion of its ARP ESSER funds (submitted via email to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov)), including a description of specific actions the SEA is taking to provide ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and the SEA's expected timeline for doing so;
- The SEA will implement evidence-based interventions as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act and ensure its LEAs implement evidence-based interventions, as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act;
- The SEA will address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity), gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender), English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act, and ensure its LEAs address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups, gender, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and

youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act; and

- The SEA will provide to the Department: (1) the URL(s) where the public can readily find data on school operating status and (2) the URL(s) for the SEA and/or LEA websites where the public can find the LEA plans for a) the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services required under section 2001(i) of the ARP Act, and b) use of ARP ESSER funds. SEAs should consider ensuring a standardized URL format in all cases (e.g., xxx.gov/COVIDplan).

Appendix D

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 06/30/2023)
NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act ("GEPA") that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access to, or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application. Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

- (1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education is to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living. As part of this mission, the NDE has aligned the contents of this ESSER plan to the Nebraska State Board of Education's position statement S1 – [Nondiscrimination and Equitable Educational Opportunities in Schools](#). Herein, the NDE commits to confronting the history of bias, bigotry and racism resulting in societal disparities and inequities, and the effects of those disparities and inequities on Nebraskans today.

Further, the NDE assures the following:

Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the Nebraska Department of Education, a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e), requiring Department grantees to describe the steps the grantee will take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, the Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. To the extent applicable, an LEA will include in its local application a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description contains information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede equal access to, or participation in, the program. Such assurances will be in effect for the entire duration of the program, unless there are substantial changes in relevant federal or state law or "other significant change [sic] in the circumstances affecting an assurance in that application.

Appendix E: CRRSA Guidance Letter



February 23, 2021

Dear school district leaders,

The purpose of this letter is to guide your funding conversations and decisions prior to the ESSER II funding application becoming available in early April. Below is the most recent information we have about the additional relief funding the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has made available to help state and local educational agencies prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

Overview

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) was signed into law on December 27, 2020. It provides additional funds for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER), programs created by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) in March 2020.

It is important to note these additional ESSER and GEER funds under CRRSA will come to local educational agencies (LEAs) as new awards that must be tracked separately from the ESSER and GEER funds LEAs received under CARES. To highlight that point, this summary will refer to the CARES funds as ESSER I and GEER I and will refer to the CRRSA funds as ESSER II and GEER II.

NDE’s Equity-Centered Priorities

School districts should consider the following equity-centered principles when developing plans for use of ESSER I and ESSER II funds:

- Distribute funds equitably to schools based on the greatest need within your district.
- Develop a plan for implementation using evidence-based strategies to accelerate student learning, with a specific focus on historically marginalized students and those most significantly impacted by the pandemic.

The NDE is committed to the following equity-centered actions:

- Using statewide funds to meet the needs of students who are the most vulnerable and investing funds by aligning to [Nebraska’s Framework for School Renewal and Acceleration](#).
- Publicly reporting on the use of ESSER I and ESSER II Funds and districts should anticipate a high degree of transparency regarding these expenditures.
- Ensuring additional allocations beyond ESSER II are allocated equitably.

Adapted from (Wallin, 2021) [The Education Trust](#).

ESSER II Overview

Allocations

ESSER II funds will be allocated to LEAs in the same way as ESSER I, based on the proportion of Title I, Part A funds each LEA received in the most recent fiscal year. For ESSER II purposes, the most recent fiscal year is 2020- 21, so ESSER II awards will be based on each LEA’s 2020-21 Title I, Part A allocation.

To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

Although ESSER II award amounts are calculated based on Title I, Part A allocations, they are not Title I, Part A funds. **Title I requirements do not apply to ESSER II.**

Period of Availability

ESSER II funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2023 and may be used for pre-award costs dating back to March 13, 2020.

Additional Spending Rules and Considerations for ESSER II

ESSER II funds are subject to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and the federal government's Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG), including the requirement that spending be necessary and reasonable.

In light of the necessary and reasonable requirement, LEAs should consider the following:

- ESSER provides LEAs with **short-term relief funds** to address the effects of COVID-19 on elementary and secondary schools. While it is possible Congress will appropriate additional relief funds in the future, ESSER is not an ongoing program to support long-term expenses.
- As noted above, we encourage LEAs to **spend down ESSER I funds** before spending ESSER II funds.
- USDE encourages LEAs to spend ESSER funds to ensure safe conditions for in-person learning, to restore and maintain high-quality learning environments, and to take comprehensive action to address unfinished teaching and learning. LEAs should especially **consider the needs of its most vulnerable students** including students living in poverty, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic groups, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.
- LEAs can spend ESSER funds on many activities that are not typically allowable under other federal programs like Title I and IDEA. The NDE strongly encourages LEAs to invest in areas aligned to [Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal and Acceleration](#). ESSER-funded activities can benefit all students and schools or be targeted to select students and schools, depending on local needs. **Consider the following questions, which will be incorporated into the ESSER II application:**
 1. How will your ESSER investments meet the needs of students that have been historically marginalized (including English learners, students with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged, and students of color) and/or those impacted most by COVID-19?
 - a) What data did you use to support these investments?
 - b) Will supports be provided to all students, specific student groups, or individualized to specific students?
 2. How does your application align to and support [Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal and Acceleration](#)?
 3. How does the application address both immediate (e.g. within the next six months) and long-term (e.g. within the next 12-24 months) needs and priorities?
 4. How did you engage a diverse set of stakeholders – including students, families, educators, and the broader community – to ensure that the highest-priority needs are met?

- We encourage LEAs to think **strategically about their needs, resource allocation, community and family engagement, and equity, and consider high-impact activities** aligned to [Nebraska’s Framework for School Renewal and Acceleration](#). Additional resources guiding schools in the budgetary process will be available mid-March. However, examples of potential strategies may include:

Framework Element	Examples
<p>Systems Considerations: Systems considerations integrate data, technology, and infrastructure to reexamine traditional school systems and structures. Systems considerations integrate the whole child needs with academic needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) to ensure that every student has the opportunity to participate in remote and/or hybrid learning models. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to bridge the digital divide, particularly in communities of color and low-income communities, by expanding access to technology and connectivity. • Use the Digital Hierarchy of Needs to guide investment decisions. • Leverage statewide resources and supports to reduce costs associated with purchases (e.g. Digital Equity Services, K12 Bridge to Broadband, Device procurement, Learning Management System, ADVISER data warehouse, Digitally available High-Quality Instructional Material, Nebraska (Open Education Resources, the Online Professional Learning Network) • Invest in additional educators to temporarily reduce class size to allow for continued social distancing • Hire short-term mental health practitioners, counselors, psychologists, and/or social workers to support adult/student Mental Health and Social-Emotional Learning • Train school staff, families, and community regarding mental health awareness and identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. Youth Mental Health First Aid Training • Reconsider master schedules and staffing needs to prioritize supports to those most impacted by school disruptions and COVID-19. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. hire additional staff, interventionists, para educators, school counselors, etc.

<p>High-Quality Instructional Materials & Content: High-quality instructional materials create coherence, offer consistency across all learning environments, and support student voice and social-emotional health. The predictable structure of coherent, consistent instructional materials and content are foundational for teachers and students alike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and purchase high-quality instructional materials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of “quality” for core instructional materials for ELA, mathematics, and science can be assessed using the Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative, in which case the instructional materials must meet expectations for EdReports’ first gateway, and partially meet or meet expectations for its second gateway at the majority of grade levels for which the instructional materials exist. • Support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials through ongoing professional learning, cycles of inquiry, etc. • Identify evidence-based intervention programs and practices aligned to core instruction, provide guidance around delivery and use of interventions, including matching intervention to student need, and, ensure a systematic process for monitoring intervention delivery, and examining effectiveness of interventions for individuals and groups of students to plan for next steps.
<p>Diagnosing Unfinished Teaching & Learning: Because of a disrupted school year, unfinished teaching and learning may impact students’ progress towards mastery of grade-level content. Determining the content that may not have been taught is critical to moving to grade-level content as quickly as possible. Leveraging data from multiple sources provides insight into what students know, what they don’t know, and addresses misconceptions about what students think they know.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide time and professional learning for teachers and leaders to diagnose unfinished instruction, determine individual students' learning needs, analyze and understand essential content for the grade, and make a plan for just-in-time support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in stipends for teachers and school leaders to provide professional learning in areas such as accelerating student learning, integrating social-emotional learning into instruction, and addressing essential content. • Expand formative assessment training and/the development of formative assessment process supports.

<p>Planning for Acceleration: When planning for the summer, next school year, and the following school year, “meeting students where they are” will not be enough. A mindset of “acceleration, not remediation” is needed so that students are met with grade-level expectations while also addressing students’ social and emotional needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic renewal and accelerated learning initiatives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending school day directly and/or through partnerships with after-school programs; • Extending school year, including summer intensives and acceleration academies; • Changing master schedules to promote accelerated learning, team teaching, and differentiated teaching to better support students' needs; • Designing and launching high-quality, high-dose tutoring programs (including pay for teachers and tutors) • High-quality afterschool and summer programming aligned to the school day. • Provide targeted resources, supports, and professional learning to help educators prioritize the students most impacted by school building closures, remote instruction, etc. • Hire additional staff and/or provide additional staff time to implement summer intensive programs and acceleration academies. • Provide strategies to assist students planning for graduation on how to navigate this unique time so that they graduate high school and successfully transition to postsecondary education.
<p>Ensuring Equitable Instruction: Leaders and teachers must continue to assess the extent to which the academic and social-emotional needs of historically marginalized student groups are addressed and ensure all students have equitable access and success in their learning opportunities. Special attention must also be paid to the Class of 2021 to ensure students graduate with postsecondary plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in additional McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons • Expand access to advanced coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement, dual credit, International Baccalaureate, etc.) through teacher training and certification • Invest in high school credit recovery strategies (e.g., University of Nebraska High School, summer school, etc.) • Intentionally target and include student groups in summer programming and implement principles of Universal Design for Learning to make grade-level content accessible for all students. • Expand outreach to families by adding counselors or partnering with community-based organizations that have ties with targeted family populations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategies that maintain students’ access to a well-rounded set of coursework that includes science, social studies, the arts, physical education, health education, Career & Technical Education, along with ELA and mathematics by leveraging community resources or extending the school day. • Add additional career development programming, tools, and resources to help students and families become knowledgeable of college and career training options.
<p>Professional Learning for Teachers & School Leaders: Professional Learning for Teachers & School Leaders - The traditional structures in which educators learn must be adapted to support teaching and learning. Content-specific professional learning that accelerates all students’ learning must support educators as they build knowledge and skills while ensuring their own sense of self-efficacy and social-emotional health and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality, ongoing, instructional materials-specific professional learning for teachers and school leaders to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality, instructional materials specific professional learning providers may be highlighted in the Professional Learning Partner Guide. • Leverage ESSER funds from school districts using the same high-quality instructional materials and provide professional learning to support implementation across district and ESU boundaries. • High-quality, ongoing professional learning to support social-emotional learning (SEL) of students and educators, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating SEL within academics (SEAD) • Training on identifying students who have experienced trauma and may need Tier 3 supports • Training and support for teacher care and wellbeing • Training for support personnel that are essential to the social-emotional learning (SEL) of students.

For a full description of allowable activities, please see the [NDE’s CARES Act Webpage](#).

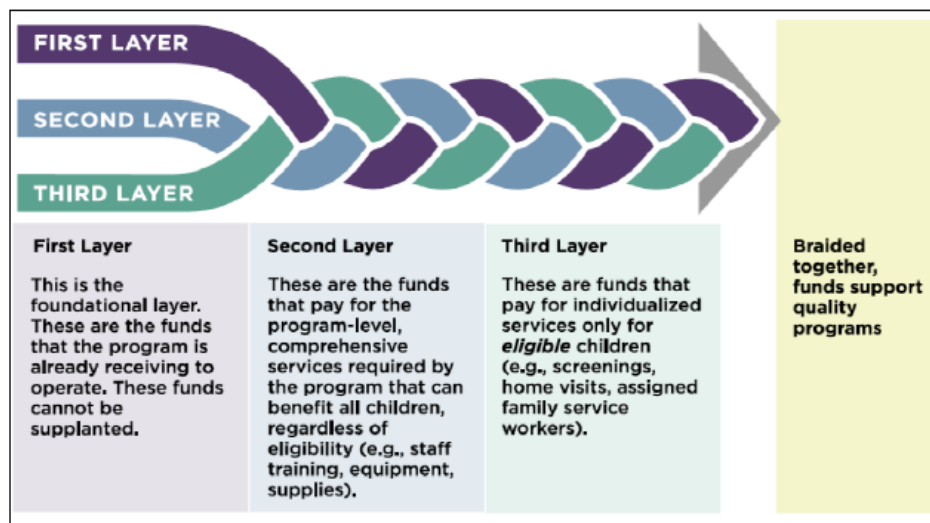
According to USDE, LEAs may **not** spend ESSER funds on:

- Bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures, unless related to disruptions or closures related to COVID-19,
- Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not LEA employees, or
- Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations.

Consider the Braiding and Blending of ESSER II Funds with Additional Federal Resources

Since ESSER II is a one-time investment, braiding and blending with other federal funds can provide one method for sustaining programming and maximizing investments well beyond the ESSER II deadline of September 2023.

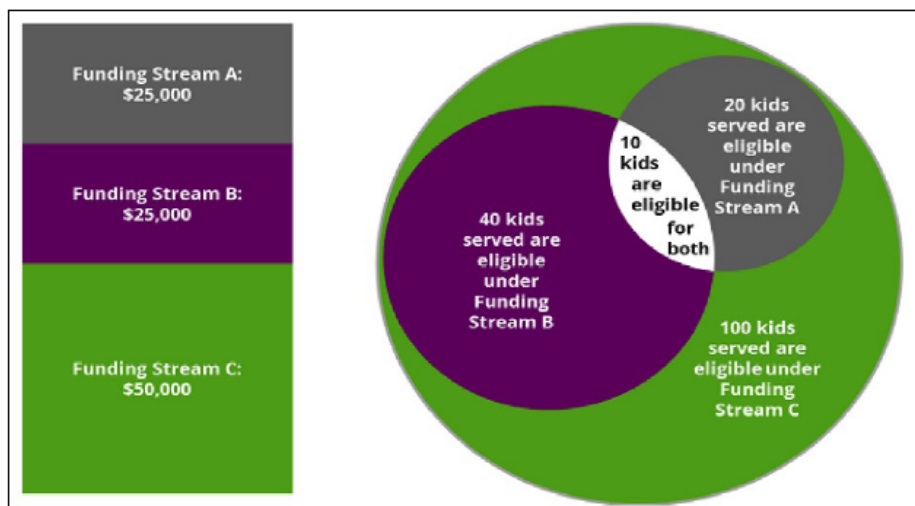
- Braiding funds means to **coordinate** different funding sources to meet one purpose. Individual funding sources maintain their identity for eligibility and reporting.



Source Image: [West Ed National Center for Systemic Improvement](#)

Example: Reading specialist is hired through Title funds, provides services to students receiving special education services and support to all students in a Title I Schoolwide Program.

- Blending funds means to **consolidate** different funding sources into one funding source to meet one purpose.



Source Image: [West Ed National Center for Systemic Improvement](#)

Example: The school district has determined summer school programming would accelerate all students to meet grade-level equivalency. This approach may differ from the originally intended plans resulting from additional needs sensing related to unfinished teaching and learning.

- *In the first layer of funding, the district examine what funds were already planned for use for summer programming, such as Title I funds already requested as part of the Title application (Funding Stream A above).*
- *In the second layer, districts examine funding available in other current applications, like Title, IDEA, and Perkins, that could also provide summer programming (Funding stream B above). The district would need to determine if submitted applications need to be amended to ensure proper alignment to supplement not supplant guidance.*
- *In the third layer, districts take an individual student level approach to personalize services available for eligible students (ex. IDEA funds for students with disabilities). This whole child planning approach allows a district to maximize federal dollars to support the overall plan for summer programming using ESSER II dollars as the main funding source (Funding stream C above).*

Other examples:

- Braid ESSER II and USDE Grants to support teaching and learning.
- Utilize Title II funds to train teachers and school leaders on teaching in blended learning environments.
- Leverage Title IV, Part A funds for educational technology aligned to any ESSER purchases to support longer-term and sustainability technology plans.
- Support Safe and Healthy Students initiatives through Title IV, Part A funds.
- Use IDEA, Part B funds to support the needs of students with disabilities in new learning environments.

- Adjust programs of study using Perkins funds given new needs.
- Braid several USDE grants to support the social and emotional needs of both students and staff.

Supplement not Supplant

ESSER II funds are not subject to a supplement not supplant requirement.

Maintenance of Effort

ESSER II does not include a local maintenance-of-effort requirement. In other words, LEAs are not required to maintain effort to receive ESSER II funds. LEAs must, however, continue to comply with maintenance-of-effort requirements in other federal education laws such as ESEA and IDEA. (ESSER II includes a state maintenance-of-effort requirement, which prohibits states from reducing education spending at a greater proportion than other parts of the state budget. USDE can waive this requirement in certain circumstances.)

Equitable Services for Non-Public School Systems

LEAs are not required to provide equitable services with ESSER II or GEER II funds. Instead, Congress created a separate program under CRRSA (the Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools program) for non-public schools administered by the state.

LEAs must continue to comply with CARES Act equitable services requirements for ESSER I and GEER I.

Reporting

ESSER II and GEER II are subject to the same reporting requirements as ESSER I and GEER I. Therefore, the state will continue to collect the information necessary to comply with CARES reporting requirements, which is done through Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting. In addition, we will collect additional information if required by USDE. **For more technical information related to budgeting and financial coding please [click on the following link](#).**

If you have any questions, please contact the following for:

- Funding Application Questions:
 - ESEA Federal Programs Contact (list [here](#))
- Renewal and Acceleration Framework Questions:
 - Cory Epler, Academic Officer, cory.epler@nebraska.gov
 - Dean Folkers, Information Systems Officer, dean.folkers@nebraska.gov
 - Amy Rhone, Special Education Administrator, amy.rhone@nebraska.gov
 - Shirley Vargas, School Transformation Officer, shirley.vargas@nebraska.gov

Thank you.



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE January 8, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Jen Utemark, Office of Budget & Grants Management Administrator

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

Grant the Commissioner the authority to contract with FACTS Education Solutions, LLC for services and support for the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund to supplement nonpublic schools not fully supported by the Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools program or the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for the period of January 8, 2021, through December 30, 2023.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021, [public law 116-260](#), was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides an additional [\\$7,162,159](#) in GEER II funds for Governor Pete Ricketts to help mitigate the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on all students and families, including those who choose nonpublic schools

The Governor has awarded \$3.5 million of those funds be used to supplement nonpublic schools most impacted by the pandemic and not equitably served by the EANS or PPP programs.

The Governor awards the following to the NDE for administration of:

- \$920,000– to provide services or assistance to 4 nonpublic schools identified as most impacted based on EANS I, EANS II, and PPP levels of services or assistance at this time:
 - St. Michael Elementary of South Sioux City
 - All Saints Catholic School of Omaha
 - Holy Name Elementary School of Omaha
 - Sacred Heart Elementary School of Omaha
- \$2.3 million – governor identified most-impacted, underserved, and/or not reimbursed under the EANS II program, and
- \$280,000 for contracting services to provide gap services or assistance to nonpublic schools.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2021

ESTIMATED COST: contract for services up to \$3,500,000

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: 100% Federal GEER II Funds
- New or Renewal: New Formula Grant
- If renewal, date of first approval: First Approval

From: [Halstead, Brian](#)
To: [Utemark, Jen](#)
Cc: [Blomstedt, Matt](#)
Subject: Re: Waiver Request & Intent to Contract with FACTS for Nonpublic Gap Funding
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 11:23:15 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Waiver granted as requested below.

Brian L. Halstead
Deputy Commissioner
Nebraska Department of Education
(402) 471-0732
brian.halstead@nebraska.gov

From: Utemark, Jen <Jen.Utemark@nebraska.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 20, 2021 10:56 AM
To: Halstead, Brian <Brian.Halstead@nebraska.gov>
Cc: Blomstedt, Matt <Matt.Blomstedt@nebraska.gov>
Subject: Waiver Request & Intent to Contract with FACTS for Nonpublic Gap Funding

Memo

To: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education

Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner of Education

From: Jen Utemark, Office of Budget & Grants Management Administrator

Date: 12/20/2021

Re: **Waiver Request & Intent to Contract with FACTS for Nonpublic Gap Funding**

Commissioner Blomstedt and/or Deputy Halstead:
Per NDE AM 110, please accept this note as evidence of intent to contract with FACTS Education Solutions, LLC for services in support for the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund to supplement nonpublic schools not fully supported by the Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools program or the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

The term is requesting to obligate fixed-term and employer/employee relationships over 22 months, January 8, 2021, to December 30, 2023.

The financial consideration of the fiscal staff augmentation is an amount not to exceed \$3,500,000 sourced with budgeted Federal GEER II relief aid funds.

Waiver requested to allow obligating resources beyond one year.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,
Jen



Jen Utemark

Administrator

Office of Budget & Grants Management

500 S. 84th St., 2nd Floor

Lincoln, NE 68510-2611

P: (402) 471-4313

E: jen.utemark@nebraska.gov



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 15, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Amy Rhone

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Tamera Miyasato, dba Ha'hanna Consulting, LLC

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The contractor shall facilitate year one of the Nebraska Department of Education Pedagogies Project. The goal of this project focuses on the alleviation of the “overrepresentation of Indigenous learners identified for special education services by creating spaces where educators, learners, and community are inspired to acquire, share, and act on the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to embody relative-ships.

The Pedagogies Project was initially planned as the The Cangleska Fellowship through a grant with ESU 1, working with the Liber Institutue and was brought to The NDE State Board. This grant was written and approved by the board with a September start date. As the NDE, Office of Special Education began the project, it became evident that the Liber Institute was not fulfilling some of the initial intended supports as outlined in the project. The primary provider for the Liber Institute, Dr. Tamera Miyasato left the Liber Institute as she did not believe they were fulfilling the initial intent either, taking the Wo’awacin Framework for Enhancing Teacher Practice with her. The primary purpose of the NDE entering into the agreement was to support the schools identified with disproportionality with the supports that Dr. Miyasato would provide through the Liber Institute and use of the Wo’awacin Framework. With Dr. Miyasato’s departure, the NDE, in agreement with ESU 1, ended their contractual relationship with The Liber Institute as they would no longer be able to fulfill the contract.

Beginning in January of 2022, The NDE, Office of Special Education will contract with Dr. Tamera Miyasato with the Ha’hanna Consulting, LLC. to provide The Indigenous Pedagogies Project.

The goal of this three-year project is to alleviate the overrepresentation of Indigenous learners identified for special education services by creating spaces where educators, learners, and community are inspired to acquire, share, and act on the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to embody relative-ships. Year One of the Project focuses on educators by equipping them with the necessary time, skills, and support to “re-story” educational practices that center Indigenous language and culture. Ha’hanna Consulting, LLC will work closely with school partners to identify educators with demonstrated leadership in the area of Indigenous culture integration to serve as the Indigenous

Pedagogies Cadre (IPC). Ha'hanna Consulting, LLC will support educators through a process of learning, reflection, and opportunities for re-examining their pedagogical practices.

The professional learning and mentoring support series will take an “inside-out” approach to educator growth. The cadre will share stories—successes and barriers—to create and strengthen relationships with learners, families, community, and colleagues. The workshop sessions will help educators identify beliefs and biases in themselves and their institutions. They will collaborate to set goals, develop implementation plans, and engage in action research that will enhance educator practice. The IPC will review and revise curriculum, where needed, to incorporate Indigenous language and culture. They will eventually serve as lead teachers in developing Indigenous culture-aligned lesson plans and units across content areas. Finally, the IPC will assist in developing application components for Year 2 expansion of the Project.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: \$139,200

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: ESSERS II Funds
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: NA



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: December 15, 2021

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Amy Rhone

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to approve a grant to fund NDE Journey to Inclusion Project in partnership with SPED Strategies, LLC

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: NDE developed the Launch Nebraska framework to support school systems as they work to restart school and support students as they transition back to school buildings. Within Launch Nebraska, NDE identifies a framework for school renewal and acceleration and core actions for school systems to align resources. Each of these present opportunities to provide greater guidance and support for students with disabilities. For the last six month, The NDE, Office of Special Education has been in partnership with SPED Strategies to begin the work of the NDE Journey to Inclusion through the OSE, Part B Discretionary Dollars as a means to create sustainability beyond the ESSERS funding.

SPED Strategies is a Louisiana-based organization with over 20 years of experience at every level of the education system. SPED Strategies works to ensure every student with a disability will receive a high-quality education in an environment where they thrive. We support leaders across all levels of the education system and community by connecting the dots between policy, funding, and academics to advance outcomes for students with disabilities.

PILOT SCOPE

In this pilot, we all work together to define a clear vision for success. Beginning in Spring 2022, SPED Strategies will work with ESU, district, and school leaders to identify and execute the key governance structures for a strong inclusion model in the 2022-2023 SY. Then, in Summer 2022 SPED Strategies will begin directly supporting teachers with professional learning so they are equipped to meet the needs of all learners in an inclusive setting.

SPED Strategies will facilitate regular collaboration sessions with NDE throughout the duration of the project:

- Co-design the Journey to Inclusion including, but not limited to, pilot design and evaluation, universal technical assistance resources, and capacity building of NDE staff.

- Collaborate through the next 18 months on implementation and scale-up of the Journey to Inclusion.
- Facilitate regular conversations with the participating ESU on key inclusion shifts at the pilot districts and schools.

SPED Strategies will provide the following supports to implement strong ESU, district, and school-level Inclusion Structures:

- Co-design the ESU, district and school-level conditions necessary to create an inclusive school model that ensure students with disabilities are participating in grade-level learning with their general education peers
- Lead a Core Inclusion Series (appr. 6 sessions) over Spring/early Summer 2022 that will help the ESU, district, and school make the key governance shifts
- Provide year-long, ongoing technical assistance to ensure key shifts are implemented successfully over the 2022 - 2023 SY
- Facilitate regular implementation support with ESU, district, and school-level leaders; share progress and align on priorities

All the while, building the capacity of the NDE, Office of Special Education to provide these supports.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): January 2022

ESTIMATED COST: \$495,000

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: ESSERS II Funds
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: NA

TO: MATTHEW L. BLOMSTEDT, PH.D.
FROM: BRYCE WILSON, DENISE THEGE
DATE: January 7, 2022
SUBJECT: MONTHLY LIST OF CONTRACTS \$10,000 TO \$50,000
RATIONALE: As stated in the Nebraska State Board of Education Policy Manual P5 the Commissioner shall provide the Board each month with a list of contracts between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

1. Contractor(s): PRISM Advisors
Contract Amount: \$37,500
Funding Source: General
Scope of Services: Conduct facilitated work sessions with the State Board.
Date of Contract: 12/3/21-4/30/22
Contact Person: Ryan Foor
2. Contractor(s): Stephanie McDonald
Contract Amount: \$31,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Coaching/Training svcs.
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
3. Contractor(s): Laurie Miller
Contract Amount: \$18,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Completion of program quality observations and training.
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
4. Contractor(s): Michael Stiehl
Contract Amount: \$14,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Coaching/Training svcs.
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
5. Contractor(s): Heather Schmidt
Contract Amount: \$14,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Coaching/Training svcs.
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
6. Contractor(s): The Wellbeing Partners
Contract Amount: \$26,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Support staff wellness.
Date of Contract: 12/10/21-7/15/22
Contact Person: Zainab Rida

7. Contractor(s): Catherine Barmettler
Contract Amount: \$27,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Serve as PBIS Regional Coach
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
8. Contractor(s): Mary Osterloh
Contract Amount: \$32,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Serve as PBIS Regional Coach
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
9. Contractor(s): Linda Clavel
Contract Amount: \$27,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Serve as PBIS Regional Coach
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
10. Contractor(s): Nancy Woodhams
Contract Amount: \$30,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Serve as PBIS Regional Coach
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
11. Contractor(s): HHS
Contract Amount: \$18,921
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Provide TBI Registry list.
Date of Contract: 11/11/21-11/10/22
Contact Person: Lindy Foley
12. Contractor(s): NCSA
Contract Amount: \$40,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Assist w/conference.
Date of Contract: 12/8/21-8/31/22
Contact Person: Katie Graham
13. Contractor(s): Susan Wiggins
Contract Amount: \$30,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Serve as PBIS Regional Coach.
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
14. Contractor(s): UNO
Contract Amount: \$30,816
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Co-lead Experiences of Service Coordinators project.
Date of Contract: 1/1/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Amy Rhone

15. Contractor(s): KJS Consulting
Contract Amount: \$49,800
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Serve as consultant.
Date of Contract: 1/3/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Katie Graham
16. Contractor(s): Julie Jones-Branch
Contract Amount: \$21,600
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Monitor student progress.
Date of Contract: 2/1/22-1/31/23
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
17. Contractor(s): Brain & Body Balancing
Contract Amount: \$18,000
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Coaching/training services.
Date of Contract: 1/15/22-1/14/23
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
18. Contractor(s): UNL
Contract Amount: \$13,129
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Provide graduate student.
Date of Contract: 1/10/22-5/13/22
Contact Person: Kristin Yates
19. Contractor(s): Margaret Schneider
Contract Amount: \$33,249
Funding Source: Federal
Scope of Services: Support Nebraska DECA State Advisor.
Date of Contract: 1/3/22-12/31/22
Contact Person: Katie Graham

Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

Pursuant to State Board of Education Bylaw B9 - Public Participation at Board Meetings:

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Submissions must include your complete first and last name, city and state. You will also be required to electronically sign the submission. This information will be included with your comments.

Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Teresa

Last name *

Cook

City *

Kearney

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

As a grandmother I continue to be appalled by the lack response to the demand of scrapping the sex standards. It is not something that the vast majority of parents and grandparents want for the children nor will they stand for.

The trust in the Board has been diminished as you are only tabling the discussion and waiting until you hope the parents are not paying attention. Parents are now awake. You must scrap the standards now.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Teresa

Last name *

Cook

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Andrea

Last name *

Schmidt

City *

Fairbury

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Welcome to the school board Kirk Penner. Excited to have representation for my district. I wish you the best in exposing the corruption to the core and may the other three seats up for election this year be filled with like-minded individuals who love children and will stop at nothing to protect their innocence. Nebraska believes in you and thanks you for being willing to take on this difficult task!

Jacquelyn please keep speaking the truth and standing for what you believe. Out of all the board members I really feel you have a good heart and do care. You call out what doesn't seem right and that should be commended when you are standing up alone as no one else seems to see it or care to see it!

To the rest of you, we all see right through you and know exactly what you stand for and it has no place Nebraska!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Andrea

Last name *

Schmidt

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Kari

Last name *

McGrew

City *

Lincoln

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Welcome to Kirk Penney to the board! We are grateful to the governor for your appointment and look forward to supporting you in your new role!!!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Kari

Last name *

McGrew

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Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Alaina

Last name *

Bumgardner

City *

Hastings

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Dear Nebraska Board of Education,

I am a mother of four and continue to want the education of our children to be decided by the ones that love the most, their parents. It is not the job nor the right of an education department or school to decide for parents what their children should learn. Especially when what they are learning is either pornographic or against what the word of God says in the Bible. I continue to ask that you keep opinions out of education.

The desires of parents need to be respected above all. Thank you for your time.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Alaina

Last name *

Bumgardner

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Elizabeth

Last name *

Davids

City *

LINCOLN

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Nebraskans are still frustrated and disappointed with the NDE Board, and Deb Neery in particular. You haven't protected parents from being considered "terrorists" by the NASB, but Neery still praises the NASB. This is a completely political and self-interested. Neery's participation in seeking to sway the proposed "health" standards towards disgusting, unacademic, unscientific, inappropriate predatory grooming of our students through SIECUS- and Planned Parenthood-derived ideologies is unacceptable. This is NOT the best for our children and our school system is responsible for doing the best for our students! NDE needs to come out against and create policies to guide our schools away from the incredibly divisive teaching of Critical Race Theory in Nebraska schools as well, which seeks to divide people into categories based only on the melanin spectrum and not on character or behavior. NDE should remove racist, divisive, and disgusting books like "Not My Idea: a book about whiteness", "Every Day", "Everybody Sees the Ants", and "Far From the Tree". NDE is responsible for the shaping of young minds of ALL Nebraskan public school students and should not discriminate based on race, gender, etc, so that means all students should have equal respect and treatment - which is far from what we see for conservative and moderate families. Do right by your constituents who vote you in or out.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Elizabeth

Last name *

Davids

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Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Twyla

Last name *

Gallino

City *

Valentine

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Please eliminate these standards in their entirety. These are child abuse, anyone on the state board in favor of these standards should be prosecuted by law. These decisions are made by local boards, not government, government and politics should not be allowed in our schools.

Please eliminate these standards in their entirety.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Twyla

Last name *

Gallino

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Pamela

Last name *

Frecks

City *

Cambridge

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Just coming through a celebration of the greatest miracle ever, the birth of our Savior Jesus, surely you are aware that all of God's children are too precious to corrupt with thoughtless evil lies. Be a catalyst of goodness and pray for Godly wisdom. You may believe this to be a decision made and endorsed by man with no far reaching consequences but not so. As we listened to the Omaha residents at the board meeting a few months ago sharing the suicide rate of those students who have been exposed to this curriculum, there is evidence enough that these standards are nothing but pure evil! Save yourself and the students of Nebraska from this evil!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Pamela

Last name *

Frecks

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Sherr

Last name *

Helman

City *

David City

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

This CRT is the downfall of our next generation. Teachers should not teach differences in children, they should teach expectation! Parents should teach morals and sex education. These accelerated demoralizing principles of sexuality are not what children need, they are "children" they have not met the emotional maturity necessary to process this messed up ideology! I don't want my grandchildren have their "teacher" point out anatomical differences in their respective bodies EVER! That's inappropriate with a capital "I" keep our children innocent, it's robbed of them far too soon. You want to teach CRT? Then couple it with God, the Creator...who made two races, man and woman. Let our schools be a safe place...

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Sherri

Last name *

Helman

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Sean

Last name *

Case

City *

Lincoln

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Keep the masks off our kids. They damage psyche, growth, and inhibit the constant breathing of bacteria left on this inside of the mask. My oldest child is to start school in the LPS system next year, and I am gravely concerned with the curriculum and the rules set in place following all of this Covid non-sense. Keep the politics out of the school system. Keep the health decision of a brand new, not long term studied, vaccination up to the individuals and families. Please practice some decency and let kids be kids again, without all the racial, gender, and sex filled criteria trying to be put in place. Not sure how many I speak for when I say, I strongly consider moving out of this city just so my children do not have to be subjected to this junk. Thank you.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Sean

Last name *

Case

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

Pursuant to State Board of Education Bylaw B9 - Public Participation at Board Meetings:

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Jenna

Last name *

McGrain

City *

Bennington

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am still deeply concerned on the boards behavior (especially Debra Neary) when creating the comprehensive sex education. It shows that you dont care about what's best for our children but agendas only. Sex education and CRT are very personal subjects to be coming from a school. What you teach our children, we cannot unteach. This disturbing attempt to quietly put it into our schools, has left a lot of us parents untrusting towards the board. To those who have been abusing your position, you need to step down. As for the curriculum you attempted to put in, my vote will continue to be no (no matter what changes you think helps it). It has no place in school. Start putting all energy on improving our children's reading, writing and arithmetic skills. Leave the rest out.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Jenna

Last name *

McGrain

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Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Kendra

Last name *

gauksson

City *

lincoln

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am writing to let you know that we are still here and we are still willing to do whatever it takes to ensure the next generation does not fall victim to your leftist Marxist agenda.

Your goal for 2022 should be raising test scores and graduation rates. This should be your one and only focus!

Lastly, we need you and the local school boards to get out of the governments pocket and stop abusing our sweet innocent children by masking them! Almost 2 years later, there is study after study showing the inefficacy of mass masking! They do not deserve this. They are not affected by covid. Nor can healthy people spread this virus! Stop the abuse now!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Kendra

Last name *

Gauksson

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Scotti

Last name *

Finn

City *

Gretna

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

When a child is born or adopted into a family, the parents of the child are filled with joy and hope for the future of that child. With this beautiful God-given blessing, the parents are given the opportunity to choose how they will raise their child, what they will teach that child, and what values they will implant in the child. Not only does the curriculum of CSE strip parents of the freedom in their own values, but it also creates a larger problem for students at the middle school level. The first issue is in the overall development of students at that age. They are tweens and beginning teens who are highly hypnotized by social media and their cell phones. Because of their constant use of technology, some struggle with social interactions and distinguishing between love and friendship. Having a class that tells students at this age who don't fully understand their own bodies and feelings, because they're constantly changing, that it's okay to have sex changes other than what God provided them with is highly concerning. Furthermore, if CSE is allowed in our schools, the possibility of many parents opting their children out of the program is high. With nationwide shortages in school staffing, this creates a problem. Where will the students who have been opted out go during Health? Do we have the money and staffing to place them into a different area where they are still able to learn? Additionally, there may be teachers who strongly feel against this issue who choose to leave their jobs. Choosing to incorporate this curriculum into our schools could cause us to lose many great teachers throughout the state. When the negatives outweigh the positives on such a crucial issue, is it really worth putting into our schools? I know I don't want to be responsible for influencing another's life in a negative way.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Scotti

Last name *

Finn

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Mike

Last name *

Irons

City *

Aurora

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

The Hamilton County GOP would like to extend congratulations to Kirk Penner to his appointment to the board and we look forward in working with him in the coming years. We are sure his 16 years of experience on the Aurora School Board will bring a new and welcomed perspective the State Board of Education needs. THANK YOU Kirk Penner!!!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Mike

Last name *

Irons

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Corinne

Last name *

Jarrett

City *

Lincoln

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

CRT promotes racism,sexism,discrimination. People of all ages are treating others fairly until CRT is introduced. That is when they see color. Children do not need crt in the classroom. Common sense needs to be introduced instead. Teach them math, science, the basics. Promoting alienation and anger amongst people is one of the many steps to socialism.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Corinne

Last name *

Jarrett

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Laura

Last name *

Rasgorshek

City *

Omaha

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

NE schools should not be teaching our children sex education. This is a parent's role. NE schools should not be teaching racism to our children, under the guise of anti-racism, critical race theory, critical theory, or any other name. The board of education needs to be transparent with state tax payers about the curriculum that is currently in place and any new curriculum that is being considered.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Laura

Last name *

Rasgorshek

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Mike

Last name *

Anderson

City *

Lincoln

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

As the Board that oversees what our Children will receive from an education standpoint you have a high responsibility as this is the next generation that will one day be sitting in your chairs. Teaching our youth about social issues of the day is really not the school's responsibility. When we send our Children off to school we are putting them in your care to teach them about our History, Math, Reading, Science, etc... As a parent, it is my duty to teach my children the values that we uphold in our family as I have a God given responsibility to do this well as I am held accountable to this by God. Please do not take it upon the school as your responsibility to teach my children about what they they should think about sex or gender as life is confusing enough when the people our children look up to (their teachers) are giving them a different message about these topics then what they are receiving at home and are really trying to divide our Children from their parents. This will have negative consequences if allowed to continue for this generation and the generations to come.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Mike

Last name *

Anderson

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Sandra

Last name *

Rucilez

City *

Kearney

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Please, do what's right and not what pads your pockets. What's done in the dark will come to the Light.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Sandra

Last name *

Rucilez

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Cheryl

Last name *

Beck

City *

Atkinson

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am totally against the proposed new "sex education " agenda and any other propaganda such as "CRT", being allowed in the Nebraska School System. I ask our representatives to vote "against" any such educational additions or requirements at this time and forevermore.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Cheryl

Last name *

Beck

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Sharon

Last name *

Sevenker

City *

Lincoln

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Nebraska State Board of Education,

As you continue to ponder the sex education standards, please do what is best for the children of our state. We are not California nor do we want to be. We are a wholesome, genuine group of people, a lot of us farmers and raised in small towns and kept our families here because of our Nebraska values. Now, some of those values are proposed to be stomped on and the moms, dads, grandmas and grandpas don't want those proposed standards to become the norm in our state. THAT'S NOT NEBRASKA and, if you were born and raised in our great state, I don't understand why you can't see that. Parents have every right to be involved in what their children are being taught and also, the right to teach them some of their own values without competition from the State. Please do what's right for our children and let go of those inappropriate sex standards. If allowed, there will be an exit of families from the school system and likely, from the state. Thank you.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Sharon

Last name *

Sevenker

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Janice

Last name *

Schiferl

City *

Fordyce

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

As a Nebraska mother of 4, grandmother of 6 I believe that our future lies in the hands of children. In many areas recently, the federal government seems to feel that it is their duty to decide what is best for American individuals. This idea is not what our country was founded upon. Not only that, but many of the ideals that the federal government seem to want to implement are proving to actually do the OPPOSITE of what was intended. This tells me that approach does not work in a free society in which I hope to stay living. I implore the board to realize that the best decisions for our state's children will first come from their parents and secondly from their local community and schools. To approach this any differently has severe unintended consequences that will last forever. Our local schoolboards and administrators need to make their own decisions regarding what is being taught in the school, NOT the federal government. This is a clear overreach of power and needs to be stopped. When you lose LOCAL control, you have lost America and its future. If you do not believe that, look around to where it is already happening. Protect Nebraska's children. Do not allow the federal government to control their education.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Janice

Last name *

Schiferl

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Denise

Last name *

Gustafson

City *

Holdrege

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am writing to object to the process currently in place within our school boards, school administrations and curriculums to require that children be taught to assimilate perverted thought and behavior patterns that circumvent parental controls. I was introduced to some of these under the titles of CRT and CSE, which I object to strenuously no matter what they are called to disguise their content. These need to be abolished to protect our children and future generations of American families.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,**First name ***

Denise

Last name *

Gustafson

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Maris

Last name *

Bentley

City *

Plattsmouth

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Kirk Penner, Welcome to State Board of Education!

I was a resident of District 5 until the recent redistricting. I ran against Patricia Timm in 2018 because, as a retired teacher, I saw first hand the decline in our public schools (but not the expense), as a result of the introduction of all kinds of anti-American, anti-Christian indoctrination.

Yes to local control!

Yes to more parental involvement!

No to comprehensive, perverted sex education!

No to Marxist, divisive critical race theory!

No to the 1619 Project!

And thank you to Mr. Penner for stepping up to change the awful trajectory we are on.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Maris

Last name *

Bentley

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Cora Charlene

Last name *

Martin

City *

Broken Bow

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

You are accountable for the decisions you make on this board and an explanation has not yet been given regarding the process used to create the health education standards that I am opposed to.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Cora Charlene

Last name *

Martin

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Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Melanie

Last name *

Stoner

City *

Lincoln

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Dear Boarmembers,

I am writing to give you my thoughts regarding the direction of education in the state. I am very concerned that Nebraska has not cut ties with the NASB after the highly contentious letter was sent out labeling parents that were voicing their opinions as domestic terrorists.

I have become very alarmed at the growing idea that parents should not have a voice in the subject matters being taught to their children. I am also alarmed that NDE does not appear to dissent from that opinion. I believe that education should not be a debatable topic. I think that all of you at the board understand that the majority of parents send their children to public schools expecting them to learn math, science, spelling and grammar. They expect their children to be given the basic fundamentals that will set them up for high school and, in many instances, college. But i do not think that is the intention of many educators, or this board.

I will get right to the point. I believe that you, and many other boards of education, have taken advantage of the trust of so many parents across this state and this country. You have broken the trust given by families who just wanted their children to have a safe place to learn and grow. I know in my case, it is definitely true. I removed my child from LPS system, even though my childs school was wonderful and I did not see objective concerns at the time they were enrolled. However, after hearing some of the school board meetings and responses made, and lack of response in many cases, I can emphatically say I made the best decision by removing my child.

I have seen educators that seem to think their job is to raise and parent my child. I will remind them, it is not. Teachers may be experts on the subject matter taught in school, but they are not experts on the children. The parents are the experts.

Schools and families were supposed to work together to support the child. The school is only a tool that is utilized by the families.

keep teaching the basics. Let the parents handle the rest.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Melaniie

Last name *

Stoner

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Vanessa

Last name *

Fanning

City *

Wauneta

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

The Nebraska Department of Education has a duty to the parents of this state to provide educational materials without a political agenda. The innocence of children is under attack. No child should leave school questioning their gender/sex or sexual orientation. Teaching children about topics that are of a private and personal matter will only lead to self analyzing and encourage exploration. As an elected school board, it is your responsibility to set an example to the children of Nebraska by doing what is right. Do not poison their minds with ideology. The proposed health standards is contradictory of most Nebraskans values. Also against Nebraskans values is SEL (CASEL) and programs like GLSEN. Both of these programs teach children to not only see each other by the color of their skin, they teach children to turn a blind eye to any internal instinct of right or wrong. This is a pedophiles dream come true. There should never be programs in our schools that teach kids they have an uneven playing field due to the color of their skin. Get EQUALITY back in our schools and not equity. GLSEN should not be a program offered by Nebraska schools, it is the equivalent of the proposed health standards. Stick to school subjects and leave sex out of the classroom. SEL (CASEL) is nothing more than CRT under a new name. Anyone can view their information on their websites and webinars (Dena Simmons). Words like "white power", oppression, equity, social justice, and privilege should tell you that this is not a program teaching "anti-racism". CASEL is an anti white program. Major supporters of CASEL are George Soros, Bill Gates, and Buffet. Get this junk out of our schools so that this state can remain "the good life". Homeschooling numbers will soar if programs like this are allowed and pushed in our school systems.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Vanessa

Last name *

Fanning

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

S. Wayne

Last name *

Smith

City *

Lincoln

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

The health sex education standards process appears to have been manipulated from the very beginning. How can we trust the Nebraska Department of Education or the State School Board Members after submission of the first and second drafts? The majority of Nebraskans overwhelmingly oppose development of these unnecessary standards. Please PERMANENTLY SCRAP THE STANDARDS!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

S. Wayne

Last name *

Smith

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Teresa

Last name *

Carey

City *

Wilcox

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am the grandmother of three precious girls that will be in the public school system, and I will NOT allow them to be taught the racist ideology that is CRT! Why are we teaching our children that the color of their skin matters more than who they are as a person? We are teaching them to hate! Schools need to stick to teaching the basics, reading, writing/penmanship (including cursive), math, science, and History as it happened!!! There are plenty of people that overcame adversity and left a great legacy in human history that we could learn from. We learn from history; we can't change it! We can be better than that! The "Be Kind" rules pretty much cover how you should treat others. Teach them to respect others. I am sorry that in some places there is still racism, and it goes both ways, but we must teach our children a different way. Children do not see color! We have laws against hate crimes already on the books. We don't need the schools indoctrinating our children with Racist & Marxist ideology.

And the CSE has no business being in the classroom. Why are we making concessions for a small group of students that leaves out many of the other students? It is one step toward grooming our children for pedophiles and sex trafficking with the perversion of Comprehensive sexuality! A lot of people would have a hard time talking about this stuff let alone trying to teach it to minors! It is illegal!!!! Don't be trying to take over the job of the parent and confusing our children with alternative lifestyles!

Let the kids be kids!

They shouldn't have to be burdened with these heavy issues!

There are just so many things wrong with both CRT & CSE!!!!

THEY ARE NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF OUR CHILDREN!!!!

#SCRAPTHESTANDARDS

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Teresa

Last name *

Carey

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Richard

Last name *

Mlinar

City *

Doniphan

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Dear Board of Education, It's great to see the public actively involved in the discussion of CSE and CRT. It's a huge responsibility as an elective board member to hear from the public. It's a big responsibility to actively be involved and review who is involved in recommending policies or standards to the board. It is surprising to hear that this hasn't been done at the board level consistently. It especially appalling that the commissioner and deputy commissioner have failed in their responsibility for their action on the advisory boards. We the people are a well diversified and organized group of concerned voting citizens in this great state of Nebraska. I believe change is coming for the board in many aspects. I believe the board could get it started. I believe one way or another the voters will decide on major changes. Sincerely, Richard Mlinar

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Richard

Last name *

Mlinar

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Mark

Last name *

Bonkiewicz

City *

Omaha

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

1. Welcome Kirk Penner!

2. Do your research! The equity and anti-racism being promoted in Drafts 1 & 2 are in violation of the Americanism Statute passed by the Legislature in 2019. If you don't permanently scrap these standards and you somehow vote yes on them despite the 30,000+ parents and grandparents opposing the standards, you will then have to face multiple lawsuits because your CRT standards violating LB399. Don't let your pride lead you down the path of stupidity and more wasted taxpayer dollars defending your position in lawsuits.

3. Silence on a critical issue equals consent. Not a single one of you board members has refuted the facts contained in the Omaha World Herald article dated 10-10-21 or the Washington Free Beacon article dated 10-13-21. The emails acquired by public records request are full of the deceitful evidence. The longer you delay admitting to the deception that you SBOE members and NDE employees foisted on parents and taxpayers, the uglier will be the final outcome. Now is the time to admit to the lies and PERMANENTLY SCRAP THE 'HEALTH' STANDARDS. Every month that you delay, the opposition team increases in numbers -- and we are not going to lose interest or quietly disappear. In chess, the term is checkmate...

Thank you, Mark Bonkiewicz, Omaha, NE

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Mark

Last name *

Bonkiewicz

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Identification

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First name *

Vicki

Last name *

Ahrens

City *

Kearney

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I look forward to change to NE's SBE members; our current Board sadly&weirdly don't listen to the people's voices. The majority abhors indoctrination of children on CRT&CSE being taught in our schools. Please keep the innocence of our children; drop these intrusive topics from NE's curriculum. Race&sex ed. is up to families to know when&how to guide&teach children based on each child's readiness. Only families know their kids personalities&maturity levels intimately enough! It's not up to public educators to decide what, when, how to teach children these topics. I can't wait for Nov '22 to help vote in leaders who focus on the 3R's, leaving CRT&CSE out of schools.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Vicki

Last name *

Ahrens

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Identification

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First name *

Janet

Last name *

Wolken

City *

MADISON

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am writing to implore you to please delete the sex education portion of the proposed K-12 Growth and Development Health Standards.

As a Mother and a Grandmother, I am deeply concerned about this being put into our schools. Our public schools are unable to teach/promote God, so why would it be permissible to teach about lesbian, gay, transgender ideologies, etc. in the public school classrooms?

It is NOT the "schools" place to teach about these things. It is the job of the parents to teach them about religion and so it's also their job to teach them about other ideologies. This should not be forced upon our children, especially in our public schools.

I do believe that all people should be treated with kindness, love and respect.

Also of concern is the educators. What about their rights and beliefs on these matters? Three of my children are educators. If the sex education portion of these proposed growth and development health standards are adopted, teachers and administrators, despite their moral objections and beliefs, will be forced to teach this content or leave their profession. This is WRONG!! Will their careers be compromised if they can't go along with these ideas? Will they be forced to teach something they don't believe in? Isn't this just the same reason that talking about God in schools was banned? You are forcing your ideas and opinions on to our children. This is NOT your place.

Teachers need to be teaching the CORE CONTENT such as reading, writing, english, math science and social studies. These are the subjects our children need to be successful. Let the parents be responsible for the morality of their children, centered around their own personal religious beliefs.

Again, I am asking you to DELETE and drop the Sex Education portion of the Growth and Development standard of the proposed health standards K-12. I ask you to see that this is NOT the job of the Nebraska Department of Education, nor the job of individual public school systems.

Thank you for considering my view points,
Janet Wolken

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Janet

Last name *

Wolken

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Mary

Last name *

Nickel

City *

Cambridge

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Good morning to the State Board of Education and a welcome to newcomer Kirk Penner for District 5! I am hopeful that the Board and Commissioner will start 2022 with true Nebraska values to be in place in our public schools and focus on academics which we seem to be behind in . If I am not mistaken that is your boards main function. I am expecting extra efforts this year in regard to integrity and transparency in what your boards goals are because frankly otherwise not one parent, guardian, grandparent or Nebraska patron will have any trust in anything you say or do! The proposed health standards are not needed. Period! If local schools on an individual basis feel a need , let them find recommendations locally. One size fits all is not the approach the entire state of Nebraska needs! I pray that you as a board can be the best for the children of Nebraska in 2022!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Mary

Last name *

Nickel

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Paul Fredricks

Last name *

Fredricks

City *

Hastings

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

My Wife and I are very concerned that the State School Board is using the Ad hoc committee to push through the very bad policies that were rejected in the final draft of Health Standards. The State School Board does not need to tell the people of this great state how to think. That was never your purpose and should never be. Thank You

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Paul

Last name *

Fredricks

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Deanna

Last name *

Grund

City *

Omaha

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

The people of Nebraska do not want your critical race theory, your definition of sex education and transgenders to only use bathroom of sex at birth.

An overwhelming number of your constituents are not happy with your deceitful actions.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Deanna

Last name *

Grund

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Kelly

Last name *

Corey

City *

Omaha

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Let the parents teach sex ed to their children according to their values and leave it out of the standards. The teachers have a hard job, don't make their job harder by making them address controversial topics. This will upset too many teachers and too many parents so stick to math, reading, writing and science please.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Kelly

Last name *

Corey

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Kathy

Last name *

Adams

City *

Kearney

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

First of all I want to welcome Kirk Penner as the District 5 State Board of Education Member. I am grateful for his appointment.

I will be watching the live stream of both meetings and taking notes because I am still against the manipulation, the collusion, the lies, and your insistence to align with special interest groups. By aligning with special interest groups you are contributing to the destruction of families, contributing to child abuse and mutilation - irreparable damage and mental harm that will last a lifetime while lining the pockets of your special friends you are aligning with. Maureen, Patsy, Patty, Jacqueline, Lisa, Robin, and Deb, I ask you to please, stop the madness with the ad hoc committee as it is a waste of time that could be better served by looking at how to get our test scores up, by really looking at our budget and making sure you are good stewards of the money that is given to the NDE, and getting a good grip on what your true work is here - teaching and educating - NOT INDOCTRINATION and FALSEHOOD!!! Get the children off of the computers and let them engage their minds with reading, writing, arithmetic, science, geography, history (not CRT), thinking and working their brains and exercising their muscles. Children spend approximately 44.5 hours a week on their computers and screens. I can tell you from experience that these kids know how to be on things they should not be on in class and listening to things they shouldn't be instead of really focused on school work. Research shows that all this screen time is not good for children. Thank you for your time.
Kathy Adams, Kearney NE

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Kathy

Last name *

Adams

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

Pursuant to State Board of Education Bylaw B9 - Public Participation at Board Meetings:

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Delwayne

Last name *

Epp

City *

York

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I don't want sex education taught to my grandchildren by our public schools. I don't want critical race theory taught to my grandchildren . All these things do is cause controversy among the students and general population.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Delwayne

Last name *

Epp

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Nebraska State Board of Education

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Jodi

Last name *

Jones

City *

Springfield

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I find it extremely concerning that it appears our state education leaders have adopted a far-left ideology when it comes to teaching the children of Nebraska.

Our future generations should not be taught that they are racist or that they are victims because of the color of their skin. Content of character should ring true. We all are created equal.

Our children should not be taught, or have access to, what would be considered pornography. Materials that couldn't even be shown on a television news show or read in a hearing due to the moral depravity of the content are being introduced to children too young to know and process such things.

And Planned Parenthood should have no place in our schools. An entity that advocates for the killing of hundreds of thousands of babies each year should be the first one banned from coming anywhere near children with the guise of 'teaching' them.

The above will infect these precious new minds with doomed futures and warped mindsets that will do nothing to advance our society for the better.

Stick to the basics. Our state will be better off for it.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Jodi

Last name *

Jones

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Dallas and Marilyn

Last name *

Asher

City *

Omaha

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

As grandparents of eleven Nebraska grandchildren, my husband and I are very excited to welcome Kirk Penner to the Nebraska State Board of Education. We believe that Kirk Penner will represent Nebraskans who favor conservative values for education. We believe that Kirk Penner will oppose the proposed Health Education Standards which have been overwhelmingly opposed by the majority of testifiers in each Board of Education meeting that has occurred since the Health Standards were proposed. This was an excellent appointment by Governor Pete Ricketts.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Marilyn

Last name *

Asher

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Joan

Last name *

Ruskamp

City *

Dodge

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Thank you for receiving my comments. I believe all people of good will want to develop students with strong character traits. Rather than trying to bring about further division through questionable methods of developing respect and understanding for each person no matter their race, religion, etc..why not go back to the basics? We already have curriculum called Character Counts!

Character Counts! is a character-education and ethical decision making program incorporated into the school curriculum at all grade levels. It promotes six "pillars of character"--caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness--to reinforce a safe and positive school environment conducive to teaching and learning. Students and their families are expected to model good character when attending or participating in extra-curricular activities and community events.

I have experience with this program through our 4-H program in Dodge County. We promote the pillars of character with all interaction the kids have with one another and other adults.

Please consider methods that build a society of mutual respect versus victimization and shaming.

Thank you.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Joan

Last name *

Ruskamp

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Jennifer

Last name *

Zeilinger

City *

FREMONT

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

It is time to STOP the "Equity and Anti-Racism" agenda. It does nothing but promote greater inequity and more racism. That agenda clearly violates the Americanism statute LB399 passed by our Unicameral.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Jennifer

Last name *

Zeilinger

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Donald

Last name *

Sutton

City *

Omaha

State *

Nebr

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Please do not proceed with the board's sex education. Parents have the right to educate their children first and foremost before the school.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Donald

Last name *

Sutton

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Lola

Last name *

Tiller

City *

Holdrege

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Thank you for accepting my input on the proposed health sex education standards. I would recommend that the Nebraska State Education Board permanently discard these standards and leave this issue to be handled and addressed within and by residents of each individual school district in Nebraska. Each community can develop the health sex standards they deem necessary for their area. A one size fits all does not and cannot be administered when morals and values are at stake. Thank you.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,**First name ***

Lola

Last name *

Tiller

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Michelle

Last name *

Irions

City *

Omaha

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

We are 100% AGAINST the proposed Nebraska sex/health education standards. We are against CRT which in and of itself, is completely racist. The progressive left wing narrative is a danger to our society. PARENTS should be in control of what their children are being taught. Every bit of these proposed standards are meant to divide and distort reality. Please, do not support this.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Michelle

Last name *

Irions

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Robert

Last name *

Derr

City *

Amherst

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am extremely concerned, along with others, that there will not be any public comments at the January meeting. It is also concerning there is an ad hoc committee regarding the tabled proposed health standards. The majority of Nebraskan's want THESE PROPOSED HEALTH STANDARDS PERMANENTLY GONE! I would also like the SBOE to conduct a portion of their meetings outside of Lincoln, which would include the entire state! Thank you.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,**First name ***

Robert

Last name *

Derr

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Judy

Last name *

Derr

City *

Amherst

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am very concerned about the proposed health standards, which were tabled in September. The citizens, taxpayers, parents, guardians, stakeholders of Nebraska have overwhelmingly made it clear they want the proposed health standards to be permanently deleted!! I am also extremely concerned, along with many, many others, about the quality of education in Nebraska. There are more and more questions that are coming to light regarding issues such as accreditation of schools, curriculum, teacher evaluations, etc. Unfortunately, there is little to no trust in the SBOE and NDE and this must be addressed!!! We are calling for full transparency and accountability, especially with past FOIA findings and board members!!! Thank you.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Judy

Last name *

Derr

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Lin

Last name *

Jurgena

City *

Lincoln

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Nebraska State Board of Education,

I am submitting these comments for myself and my husband, Steve. We are appalled at the introduction of CRT and CSE in our schools. We know they already exist. Our school systems from elementary through senior high, have become more social engineering than learning the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Our kids are not keeping up with other countries in expanding their knowledge and becoming educated in areas that will actually help them. The United States is a Republic, most kids don't know that. Teaching our kids their skin color is what determines their character, their opportunities, their success is outrageous. No one has a choice in their skin color.

Teaching sexual orientation, sexual gratification and encouraging kids to allow experimentation on each other, has no place in our schools.

If the Board continues down the path of the CRT and CSE indoctrination, more and more parents will remove their kids from the public school system. Parents have not paid attention in the past, but they are now.

Lin and Steve Jurgena

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Lin

Last name *

Jurgena

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Sue

Last name *

Rikli

City *

Kearney

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Please completely drop these health "standards" which you had written in two forms and then shelved temporarily. We need Nebraska education improved in the basic subjects of math, science, English, history (not rewritten history).

Welcome, Kirk Penner, to the Nebraska Board of Education. Thank you for representing a large segment of very concerned Nebraska citizens who are parents, grandparents and educators.

I am praying for wisdom and direction from our Father God our Creator as you make decisions affecting the children of our fine state.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Sue

Last name *

Rikli

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Dallas

Last name *

Asher

City *

Omaha

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

My name is Dallas Asher. I have testified several times in opposition to the proposed Health Standards. I want to reiterate that the standards should be scrapped! My wife and I have eleven Nebraska grandchildren and we are extremely concerned about the quality of their education. The basics of math, English, social studies and science should be emphasized instead of trying to instill comprehensive sex education and critical race theory.

We are still concerned that there were actions and statements of deceit by SBOE members that were publicized on 10-10-21 in the Omaha World Herald. No one on SBOE has refuted these statements so we are convinced that lying and deception took place during the creation of the health standards. This lying and deception is yet to be addressed, but we, as Nebraska citizens, will continue to pursue the truth.

The best way for you to serve the public is with truth, integrity and respect of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Dallas E. Asher

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Dallas

Last name *

Asher

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Leslie

Last name *

Nordstrom

City *

Omaha

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I am writing to ask that you protect the health & innocence of NE children. There are numerous parents who are concerned about children's sex education. Many parents do not want schools teaching CSE = Comprehensive Sexuality Education, gender ideology, pornography to their children. NE schools have no right or even a positive reason to implement, promote or distribute such things. Parents have the right to direct the education, healthcare & upbringing of their children.

Before any updates or new measures are adopted, the info needs to be presented to parents openly, honestly & in their entirety. The Board should be forthright & honest re: the source of the data (where / whom the ideas come from).

Leslie Nordstrom

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Leslie

Last name *

Nordstrom

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Click the "Next" button below to begin.

Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Michaela

Last name *

Lewis

City *

Broken Bow

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I'm just continuing to hopefully provide this board with a perspective I think is necessary when we are discussing the importance of injecting special interest theory into our children's curriculum concerning the sex education standards.

What I hope this board can see is that these children who are getting personalities and gender identities from the internet have already been failed by their families and communities; not necessarily their schools. Because of our American freedoms, a demographic of children who have either been so consistently abused and/or neglected, actually are free to live and see themselves as they want without prejudice, even if it's in a way that doesn't necessarily address their trauma or their confusion based on unhealthy exposure to a topic that is not meant for their age category.

They do have teachers that care about them and they are slowly reaching a place where they are able to heal and accept themselves.

What is sad about that is that we already have a statistic that over 10% of transgenders regret their sex change operation.

That's not including those who regret living a homosexual lifestyle, engaged in general promiscuity and sexually risky behaviour or those who got sex change operation and can't bare the psychological pain to undo it through highschool/college.

Broadening a lifestyle choice for children, that is clearly meant for mature adults to make, will only make this statistic go up.

And there is no school board, teacher, counselor, or public school system that will help these already abused and manipulated kids once they become apart of that statistic.

Blair White, who is a proud Transgender person that identifies as a woman, knows exactly what Gender Dysphoria is and made the journey to transition into a woman.

Even with this said, Blair White made a YouTube video back in 2018 talkng about the the very real life she still lives feeling uncomfortable within her own skin and even taking about destransitioning.

Blair goes on to say that she has never been ridiculed, oppressed, or stigmatized for being who she is. However, she has been ripped apart for her honest beliefs, conservative values and has been hatefully slandered for even discussing the topic of destration by her own community.

There is nothing wrong with becoming who want to be when you are of consenting age to do so.

However, there is something morbidly unethical in promoting an idea to children they don't even understand; regardless if they learned about it from the internet or through abuse at home.

By law, children are not even old enough to be engaging in sexual activity so, why should our children's curriculum be promoting sexually charged identities?

Helping kids protect themselves from sexually victimizing situations or helping them heal past trauma is not an LGBTQIA+ initiative and hypersexualization through these CSE standards should never be the cure.

We need to create something that actually helps children prevent and heal from sexual abuse, not

encourage the symptoms.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Michaela

Last name *

Lewis

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Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment January 2022

Nebraska State Board of Education

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Marian

Last name *

Holstein

City *

Winnebago

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

January 6, 2022

TO: Nebraska State Board of Education President Nickels
Nebraska State Board of Education Members
Commissioner Blomstedt

FROM: Marian Holstein, Executive Director
Nebraska Indian Education Association

RE: Comments on Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement

As the NDE 2017-2026 Strategic Vision and Direction endeavors to “strengthen stakeholder engagement” by “new and different ways of working together” and in “supporting other agencies,” the Nebraska Indian Education Association (NeIEA) is requesting comprehensive support as we plan and execute Phase II of our Indigenous Institute.

On August 17, 2021, NeIEA sponsored Phase I of our Indigenous Institute in South Sioux City, Nebraska, attended by over 50 educators and partners. Our goal is to support front-line staff as they implement elements of the revised Social Studies Standards in reference to Native Americans, and to provide an underlying historical context to each lesson as possible. We also believe all school staff will gain a deeper understanding of the Native American family and child in their school.

The four schools located on tribal lands are still in need of support. If anyone is to effect real change within these schools, efforts must continue to be made to support school board training as NeIEA initiated in June 2019 with its first ever Native American School Boards Summit. NeIEA is here to support; however, we are rarely asked to participate in meaningful ways.

In addition, we believe our plans may be adapted to other cultures and peoples, again through stakeholder engagement. We request time in the future to share our plans and the intricacies of working within tribal governments.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Marian

Last name *

Holstein

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

stacey

Last name *

skold

City *

malcolm

State *

NE

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

I have 2 daughters attending public schools in NE. My youngest is in 8th grade at LPS. This is her first year with LPS, as she has attended private school. My oldest currently attends Malcolm High School.

There have been many aspects of my childrens' education we have been happy with thus far—namely, they seem to be learning and their teachers seem to have very good intentions and to be dedicated to academics. I believe academics should be the primary focus at school. (This does not mean more screen time. In fact, less would be better.)

But, I am concerned about the direction of LPS specifically. This became clear when the school board hired HYA for the superintendent search. I am 100% for teaching accurate history lessons and history books, but there are aspects of CRT that go too far.

We have had negative experiences with activities related to CRT in other contexts. In fact, they have contributed to our decision to leaving a church (for a period of time, possibly permanently). For example, the "privilege walk" was one activity that had a negative impact on my oldest daughter in a youth group. At the time, I didn't know what it was, but later I came to learn more about it. Recently, I even found a warning on a website about doing this activity: it states: "*NOTE: This is a very "high risk" activity that requires trust building and safety for participants; introducing this activity too early in the training or before building trust risks creating resentment and hurt that can inhibit further sharing and openness" (doloreshuerta.org).

I do not want such an agenda or experiences in my daughters' schools. We have accepted we may need to leave LPS because of this. I know many others who feel the same.

In addition, cloth and surgical masks are not PPE. They have detrimental effects—especially on our youth. See info by Stephen Petty, Industrial Hygienist, Engineer. Have you noticed you don't hear testimony from Industrial Hygienists/experts on cloth masks/PPE? It is because cloth masks don't work for an aerosolized virus. They should be optional at school. Same goes for the injections - the risk benefit ratio for our youth does not support coercing students (via pressures directed towards them as well as via their parents) into this experimental medical procedure with limited immunity and long-term unknown and known negative consequences to their immune systems. In fact it is our youth who can develop natural immunity without high risk of severe disease. A high level of natural immunity would help stop the variants and continued infections.

I am not an expert in these areas, but have engaged a considerable amount of research. I am trained in research methods and statistics and have a PhD in Human Sciences. My dissertation encompassed the areas of educational psychology and environmental toxicology. (Incidentally, I am a registered Independent who has voted Democrat. I advise against stereotyping those who have concerns about CRT, the injections, and masks.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Stacey Skold

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

stacey

Last name *

skold

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Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name *

Barb

Last name *

Smith

City *

Lincoln

State *

Nebraska

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments *

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Welcome to the State Board of Education Kirk Penner!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name *

Barb

Last name *

Smith

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