

## NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING NOTIFICATION AND AGENDA

- Meeting Date:** Friday, May 6, 2022 9:00 AM
- Meeting Title:** State Board of Education Meeting Notification and Agenda
- Location:** Sandhills Convention Center  
North Platte River Room  
2102 South Jeffers St  
North Platte, NE 69101
- Web Streaming:** Live web streaming will be available through the State Board of Education website: [www.education.ne.gov/StateBoard/](http://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](http://www.education.ne.gov/StateBoard/Agendas.html)
- Lunch:** On Friday, May 6, 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 (The Board will take a 45 minute recess at or after 12:00 p.m.)  
President Koch Johns
  - 1.1. Roll Call  
President Koch Johns
  - 1.2. Pledge of Allegiance  
President Koch Johns
  - 1.3. Announcement of the placement of the Open Meetings Act information  
President Koch Johns
  - 1.4. Meeting Protocol  
Commissioner Blomstedt
2. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS  
President Koch Johns

- 2.1. North Platte Public Schools Student Presentation
- 2.2. Provide an update and share a story of the impact of ESSER fund investments
3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT  
Commissioner Blomstedt
  - 3.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process  
Commissioner Blomstedt
    - 3.1.A. Commissioner's recommendations and items to be removed from consent agenda  
Commissioner Blomstedt
  - 3.2. Board Operations Information  
Ryan Foor
4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
President Koch Johns
5. CONSENT AGENDA  
President Koch Johns
  - 5.1. Board Member Out-of-State Travel Approval
  - 5.2. Committee Appointments
    - 5.2.A. Re-appointment of a member to the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts  
Bryce Wilson
  - 5.3. Contract Approvals
    - 5.3.A. Authorize the Commissioner to renew a contract with PTI Nebraska (Parent Training Information)  
Lupe Stevens and Lindy Foley
    - 5.3.B. Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Three Pillars Media Inc to create eight new virtual tours of Nebraska career opportunities  
Katie Graham
    - 5.3.C. Authorize the Commissioner to renew the contract with TransACT Communications, LLC  
Allyson DenBeste and Beth Wooster
  - 5.4. Grant Approvals

- 5.4.A. Authorize the Commissioner to approve a continuation grant to the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation for the Nurturing Healthy Behaviors/Rooted in Relationships program  
Melody Hobson
- 5.4.B. Authorize the Commissioner to approve a continuation grant to the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC) to operate the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nebraska ®Scholarship program  
Melody Hobson
- 5.4.C. Authorize the Commissioner to approve continuation grants to the specified Educational Service Units for Early Childhood Coach Consultation  
Melody Hobson
- 5.4.D. Authorize the Commissioner to approve a renewal grant to the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children for the WAGE\$ program  
Melody Hobson
- 5.4.E. Authorize the Commissioner to approve awards for continuation of the Early Childhood Education Program grants to the identified public-school districts  
Melody Hobson
- 5.4.F. Authorize the Commissioner to approve awards for continuation of the Early Learning Connection Partnership grants  
Melody Hobson

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#### 5.5. Lease Approvals

#### 5.6. Minutes of the Previous State Board of Education Meeting

#### 5.7. Miscellaneous Approvals

- 5.7.A. Approve the attached Special Grant Fund List for 2022/23 School District Budgeting  
Bryce Wilson

### 6. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Koch Johns

#### 6.1. Executive Committee

Patsy Koch Johns

- 6.1.A. Action Item: Reaffirm State Board Bylaw B20, *Board Membership in Associations*  
Patsy Koch Johns

6.1.B. Discussion Item: Report on Commissioner Appraisal Process  
Patsy Koch Johns

6.1.B.1. Potential executive session at end of business meeting

6.2. Budget and Finance Committee  
Maureen Nickels

6.2.A. Monthly Board Travel Expense Report

6.2.B. In-State Travel Authorization Reports

6.2.C. Action Item: Accept the 2021 Single Audit  
Bryce Wilson

6.2.D. Action Item: Approve the use of up to \$1,560,000 to fund grants to selected educational service units for preschool through grade two support  
Melody Hobson

6.2.E. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to sign an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Melody Hobson and Kristen Yates

6.2.F. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to enter into a new contract with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) for staff augmentation services in support of the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System (NECPRS)  
Melody Hobson and Kristen Yates

6.2.G. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to design, implement, support, and evaluate a full-service community schools program focused on rural schools  
Zainab Rida and Lane Carr

6.2.H. Action Item: Accept the Community Living, Traumatic Brain Injury State Demonstration Grant  
Keri Bennett and Lindy Foley

6.2.I. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE), the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE), and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)  
Keri Bennett and Lindy Foley

6.3. Planning and Evaluation Committee  
Patti Gubbels

6.3.A. Action Item: Approve the waiver request from the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF) to waive the requirements found in Rule 10, Section

007.04A in accordance with the waiver provisions in Rule 10, Section 013.01  
Brad Dirksen and Micki Charf

6.3.B. Action Item: Approve Interim-Program Schools to operate for the 2022-2023 school year under Rule 18 (92 NAC 18), Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Interim-Program Schools in County Detention Homes, Institutions and Juvenile Emergency Shelters  
Brad Dirksen and Micki Charf

6.3.C. Action Item: Approve accreditation for the Educational Service Units appearing on the accompanying list for the 2022-2023 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 84 (92 NAC 84), Regulations for Educational Service Units  
Brad Dirksen and Micki Charf

6.3.D. Discussion Item: Report on Mathematics Content Area Standards

6.4. Rules and Regulations Committee

6.4.A. Report On Rules

7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

President Koch Johns

8. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

President Koch Johns

8.1. Public Comment

8.2. Written Public Comment

9. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS

President Koch Johns

9.1. Contracts Approved by Commissioner

9.2. Grants Approved by Commissioner

9.3. Contested Case Update

10. 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.

President Koch Johns

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Koch Johns

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, June 3, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at a location to be determined. As needed, a work session will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2022 at a time to be determined.

The agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on April 28, 2022. 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](http://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.*

Out-State Travel Authorization Reports - May

<u>Name</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Trip Request</u> (i.e. 1st, 2nd, Other)
Lisa Fricke	(NONE)			
Jacquelyn Morrison	(NONE)			
Deborah Neary	(NONE)			
Kirk Penner	(NONE)			

**Out-State Travel Authorization Reports - May**

<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)		



**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE**

**DATE:** April 26, 2022

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

**FROM:** Bryce Wilson, Administrator, Office of Financial & Administrative Services

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Re-appointment of a member to the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Re-appointment of Ted DeTurk to serve another term (5 years) on the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts. Ted has been a valuable member of the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts since 2014. Ted’s experience as both a Superintendent and ESU Administrator provide valuable experience and insight into school reorganizations. Additionally, Ted has consistently shown the ability to ask informed and appropriate questions to ensure the Committee has complete understanding of their work.

Per State Statute §79-435, "...The State committee shall be composed of six members ...Three members of the state committee shall at all times be laypersons, and two members shall at all times be persons holding teachers’ certificates issued by the authority of the State of Nebraska..."

The membership and terms of office of the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts are as follows:

Ted DeTurk, Papillion, Educator	12/31/2022
Shad Stamm, Benkelman, Lay person	12/31/2023
Gerry Osborn, Ainsworth, Lay person	12/31/2024
Dale Fornander, Chappell, Lay person	12/31/2025
Alan Garey, Curtis, Educator	12/31/2026

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** None.



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 14, 2022

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

**FROM:** Lupe Stevens, Program Director of Transition  
Lindy Foley, Office Administrator of Nebraska VR

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Authorize the Commissioner to renew a contract with PTI Nebraska (Parent Training Information), 1941 S 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Suite 205, Omaha, NE for Nebraska VR from May 14, 2022 to May 5, 2023.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Nebraska VR previously contracted with PTI Nebraska to develop and implement Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT). FEAT is designed for families, young adults with disabilities and the professionals who support them to inform, supplement and enhance the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services. FEAT training also helps increase expectations for competitive integrated employment of the young adult and to increase the knowledge of state and federal resources to support the employment of the young adult. This contract will allow PTI Nebraska to host four (4) FEAT trainings with a focus on underserved areas of Nebraska. PTI Nebraska offers the 2-day trainings and a yearlong follow-up for each participant to help improve families' expectations and knowledge of work and work-related resources. PTI Nebraska will also provide continued engagement with all statewide Nebraska VR field offices.

FEAT provided training to 77 individuals in 2019, 120 individuals in 2020, and 146 individuals in 2021.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$105,409.24

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: 110 Federal Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: April 15, 2018



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 21, 2022

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

**FROM:** Katie Graham, Ph.D.  
Administrator, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

### PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

Grant the Commissioner the authority to contract with Three Pillars Media, Inc. to create eight new virtual tours of Nebraska career opportunities based on the Nebraska Career Cluster model and aligned with Nebraska's high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors.

### RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In partnership with the Nebraska Departments of Labor and Economic Development, Three Pillars Media, Inc. has been creating and updating the Nebraska virtual career tour videos based on Nebraska businesses and industries for the past nine years. The virtual tour videos are regularly used in classrooms across the state allowing students to explore various Nebraska businesses and industries without having to leave the classroom. These tours are used to help students explore careers, understand more about the economic base of Nebraska's economy, and breakdown stereotypes that students may have about certain industries.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May, 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$64,533.00

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source:

Federal - Strengthening Career & Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act of 2018 (Perkins V)

- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A



**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE**

**DATE:** April 28, 2022

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

**FROM:** Beth Wooster, Allyson DenBeste

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:**

Contract with TransACT Communications, LLC.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Authorize the Commissioner to renew the contract with TransACT Communications, LLC for the period from June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023. The contract with TransACT Communications, LLC provides unlimited use subscriptions for Nebraska school districts to provide parent notifications in multiple languages as required by ESEA, Section 504, and IDEA.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):**

May/2022

**ESTIMATED COST:**

\$115,000

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source:
 

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 504 (SPED funds)	\$16,600
Special Education Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Federal funds)	\$16,600
Special Education BASE Contract	\$11,180
Migrant Technical Assistance (Federal Funds)	\$ 8,000
Elementary Secondary Educator Act Title III (Federal Funds)	\$47,620
Elementary Secondary Educator Act Title I (Federal Funds)	\$10,000
American Rescue Plan Homeless Children And Youth (ARP-HCY Federal grant)	\$ 5,000
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: June 1, 2014



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 19, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve a continuation grant to the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation for the Nurturing Healthy Behaviors/Rooted in Relationships program.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Nurturing Healthy Behaviors/Rooted in Relationships is a program designed to work with early childhood planning groups in local communities to support early childhood social/emotional learning in community-based programs. This initiative uses multiple strategies in local communities, including implementation of the Pyramid for the promotion of social/emotional competence in young children. This is aligned with the Nebraska Department of Education early childhood MTSS system. Nurturing Healthy Behaviors/Rooted in Relationships is funded through multiple funding sources. Two different grants are issued from the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood. One grant is issued using federal Child Care and Development funds and is granted on a federal fiscal year timeline and a second is funded through a direct appropriation of state funds. In December of 2021, a grant was approved by the State Board of Education for support of Nurturing Healthy Behaviors/Rooted in Relationships using state funds. The current grant is being funded with federal funds and based on a federal obligation/liquidation schedule.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$150,000

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal fiscal year 2022 Child Care Development Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: December, 2014



# ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT

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2021

**MARCH 2022**

ROOTEDINRELATIONSHIPS.ORG



# nebraskachildren

AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION

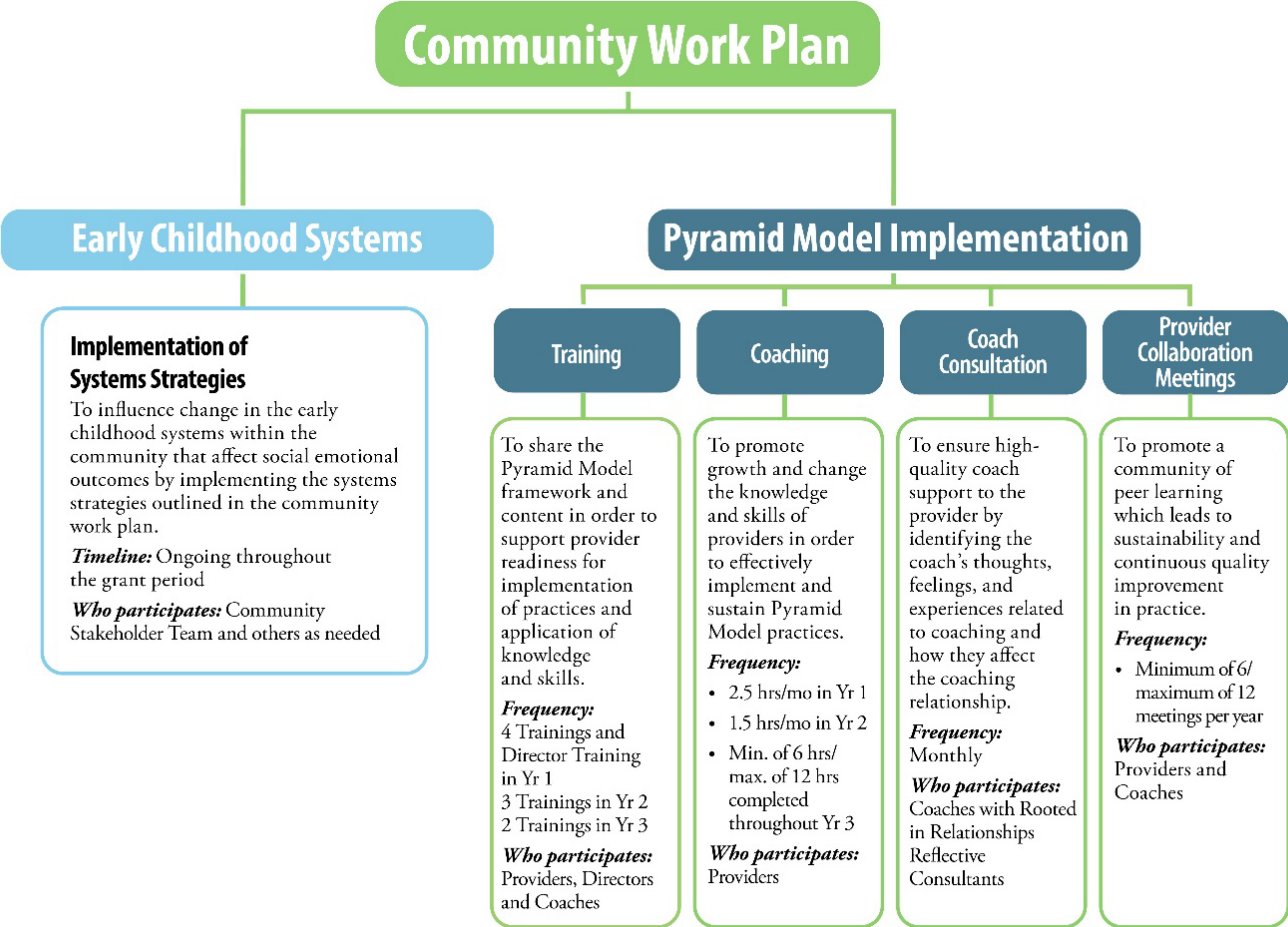


**Rooted in Relationships**  
nebraskachildren

[www.rootedinrelationships.org](http://www.rootedinrelationships.org)

# Introduction: 2021 Rooted in Relationships Evaluation Report

Rooted in Relationships (RiR) is an initiative that partners with communities to implement evidence-based practices that enhance the social-emotional development of children birth through age 8. One part of this initiative supports communities as they implement the Pyramid Model, a framework of evidence-based practices that promote the social, emotional, and behavioral competence of young children, in selected family child care homes and child care centers. In addition, each community establishes a multi-disciplinary stakeholder team charged with developing and implementing a long-range plan to enhance the early childhood systems of care in the community to support children’s healthy social-emotional development. The graphic below depicts the entirety of the Rooted Package.



### The work of this initiative is focused on the following three goals and critical outcomes:

1. Nebraska's early childhood systems share principles, definitions, and collaborative practices across sectors to promote positive development and holistic wellbeing of children.
2. Early care and education environments across the state meet the social-emotional needs of all children.
3. Community-level systems enhance social-emotional development in young children by engaging parents, collaborating with partners, and educating the public.

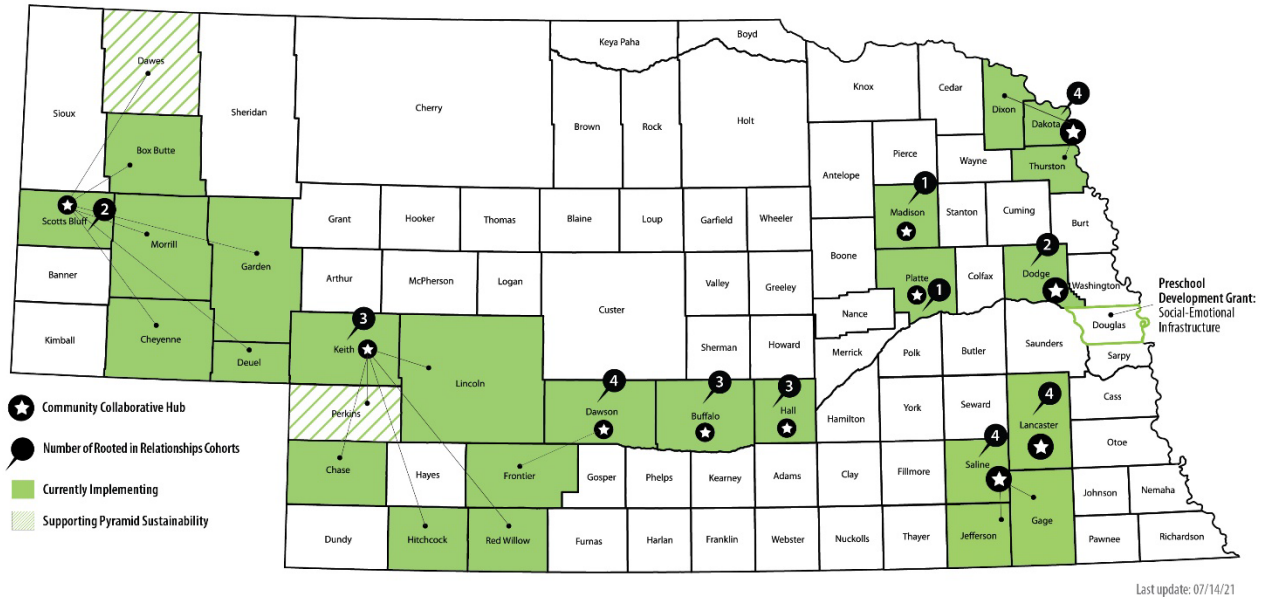
### Communities engage in three key activities:

1. **Community Work:** Stakeholders connect with additional local partners to develop a long-range plan to support the social-emotional development of young children. The plan includes community assessment, systems building, and a process to coordinate systems and services.
2. **Implement the Pyramid Model:** The communities identify 9-15 in-home and center-based child care providers to participate in a three-year, train-coach-train approach, initiative.
3. **Selection of a Systems Priority:** Communities choose at least one additional system (e.g., early care and education, early childhood mental health, family engagement, medical, partnerships with schools/Head Start) of evidence-based strategies to promote social-emotional development and to improve the overall well-being of children, families, and their community.

RiR currently supports twelve collaborative hubs in various stages of the initiative inclusive of planning, implementation, expansion, and sustainability: Buffalo, Dakota (Dixon and Thurston), Dawson (Frontier), Dodge, Douglas (South Omaha), Hall, Keith (Chase, Hitchcock, Lincoln, Perkins, and Red Willow), Lancaster, Madison, Platte, and Saline (Jefferson and Gage) Counties as well as the Panhandle (Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Morrill and Scotts Bluff).

Funding for this initiative is provided by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund (beginning in 2013), Nurturing Healthy Behaviors funding through a grant award to Nebraska Children (NC) following a state funding appropriation to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) in 2014 and Nurturing Healthy Behaviors Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) in 2019. Additional funding to support the initiative work has been provided through the Preschool Development Grant (beginning in 2020) and NDE Special Education American Rescue Plan Funds in 2021.

## Rooted in Relationships Growth Map (Current)



### Technical assistance provided to support community success

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NC) provides the backbone support for Rooted in Relationships. Currently, 6 FTE staff provide:

- Technical assistance to communities inclusive of:
  - Community-based infrastructure and systems development utilizing the Collective Impact framework;
  - Planning and implementation of the Rooted Package to ensure fidelity and outcomes;
  - Research on Evidence Based Practices (EBP’s) for possible systems implementation;
  - Ongoing initiative development and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI);
- State level systems participation/development;
- Partnership with Munroe-Meyer Institute to develop/implement evaluation;
- Contract/grants management; and
- Infrastructure support for EBP’s such as Circle of Security-Parenting and Reflective Practice.

### Evaluation Completed to Monitor Progress and Outcomes

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation data is collected to monitor progress and measure outcomes on both Pyramid Model implementation and community-based systems work. Based on key findings from the evaluation, RiR staff continuously refine and update processes to improve outcomes, reduce burden, and support communities.

## STATEWIDE SUMMARY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REACHED THROUGH ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIPS

Communities reported on the number of children and families they directly and indirectly served as part of RiR over the past year. The overall numbers reported below represents statewide totals of any family or child that was active at any point during the past year. “Served Directly” includes sustained contact with children or families such as Pyramid Model Implementation in the child’s center or home childcare, participation in Circle of Security Parenting™, etc., while “Served Indirectly” typically reflects short-term activities with children and families, such as numbers attending a family fun night or parent training.

Summary of Children and Families Reached			
Number of Families Served Directly	<b>5,018</b>	Number of Families Served Indirectly	<b>26,102</b>
Number of Children Served Directly	<b>5,714</b>	Number of Children Served Indirectly	<b>28,334</b>

This evaluation report is organized in three major sections: Building Statewide Capacity to Support Early Childhood Systems of Care, Supporting Community Early Childhood Systems of Care, and Pyramid Model Implementation. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have negative impacts on families and early childhood providers. It also affected some aspects of the program implementation and data collection efforts. COVID impacts will be described in the Pyramid Model Implementation section.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Introduction: 2021 Rooted in Relationships Evaluation**

**Report ..... 1**

- Statewide Summary of Children and Families Reached Through Rooted in Relationships..... 4**
- Table of Contents..... 5**
- RiR Acronyms..... 7**

**Building Statewide Capacity to Support Early Childhood Systems of Care..... 8**

- Collaborative Efforts to Align Early Childhood Social-Emotional Initiatives ..... 8**
- Nebraska Center on Reflective Practice ..... 11**
- Cross-Agency Collaborations ..... 11**
- Support of Evidence-Based Practices ..... 14**
- Policy ..... 16**

**Supporting Community Early Childhood Systems of Care ..... 18**

- Early Care and Education..... 19**
- Early Childhood Mental health ..... 20**
- Family Engagement..... 21**
- Medical..... 24**
- Partnerships with Schools ..... 24**

**Pyramid Model Implementation:..... 26**

**Program Description and Evaluation Findings ..... 26**

- About the Pyramid Model ..... 26**
- About the Implementation..... 26**
- About the Programs and Providers..... 28**

About the Children.....	30
About the Coaches.....	31
Fidelity to the Pyramid Model for program-wide implementation .....	32
Outcomes for center-based classrooms.....	36
Outcomes for Providers.....	38
Coaching .....	44
Social Emotional Needs of Children Involved in Pyramid .....	48
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Building Statewide Capacity to Support Early     Childhood Systems of Care.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Supporting Community Early Childhood Systems of     Care .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Pyramid Model Implementation .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>53</b>

## RIR ACRONYMS

**BOQ v.2**-Benchmarks of Quality, version 2

**CCDF**-Child Care Development Fund

**CDN**-Coach Development Network

**C4K**-Communities for Kids

**COSI**-Circle of Security International

**COSP**-Circle of Security Parenting

**CPP**-Child Parent Psychotherapy

**ECMH**-Early Childhood Mental Health

**ESU** – Educational Service Unit

**FAN**-Facilitating Attuned iNteractions

**FCCH BOQ** – Family Child Care Home Benchmarks of Quality

**MMI**-Munroe-Meyer Institute; located at the University of Nebraska Medical Center

**MTSS**-Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

**NeAEYC**-Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

**NAIMH**-Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health

**NC**-Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

**NCAPF**-Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund

**NCRP**-Nebraska Center for Reflective Practice; part of Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children; located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center for Children, Families and the Law

**NDE**-Nebraska Department of Education

**NRPVYC**-Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children; located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center for Children, Families and the Law

**PCIT**-Parent Child Interaction Therapy

**PIWI**-Parents Interacting with Infants

**PDG**-Preschool Development Grant

**PSLT**-Pyramid State Leadership Team

**RiR**-Rooted in Relationships

**SUTQ**-Step Up to Quality

**TPITOS**-Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale-Revised

**TPOT**-Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool-Research Edition

# Building Statewide Capacity to Support Early Childhood Systems of Care

A primary goal of Rooted in Relationships (RiR) is to strengthen the system of care at the state level through cross-system collaboration and partnerships to ensure alignment across initiatives and build state infrastructure and capacity. This cross-system collaboration is accomplished through various meetings and ongoing communication with statewide initiatives that are working towards similar goals. Key areas that were addressed during this year included:

- Ongoing support of early care and education providers during the pandemic,
- Support of equitable and inclusive practices,
- Continued establishment of common coaching processes including the development and refinement of the Nebraska Early Childhood Coaching Guidebook: Competencies for Professional Practice,
- Increased awareness and access to quality early childhood mental health services,
- Collaboration among initiatives with focus among partners regarding regional systems of support for Pyramid,
- Development of infrastructure to expand Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI).

## COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO ALIGN EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL INITIATIVES

**Pyramid State Leadership Team.** The Pyramid State Leadership Team (PSLT) is co-led by RiR staff and partners at the Nebraska Department of Education-Office of Special Education. Together they work on the long-term goal of integrating the Pyramid Model into early childhood systems of care serving young children and their families. This team, consisting of partners from across various systems (government, universities, and private organizations) works together to implement the Pyramid process consistently in a variety of settings. Many elements are necessary to implement Pyramid to fidelity: coach training and support, Pyramid Module trainers, and evaluation observers.

RiR collaboration with statewide partners has resulted in **common processes** across initiatives and has **promoted alignment** of cross-agency activities.

In lieu of an in-person conference in 2021, the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations conducted a series called “Equity and the Pyramid Model”. Through this series, three members of the PSLT were able to attend and view a presentation by the Children’s Equity Project on their recent report: “Start with Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education”. These three members were also given the opportunity to reflect on equity practices in the Pyramid Model across the state and identify gaps and barriers. This led the PSLT towards reevaluating and updating their work plan to ensure equitable practices are embedded in Pyramid work across the state.

**Coach Collaboration.** Ongoing collaboration is occurring with other coaching initiatives (such as Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) and Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Office of Special Education) to align coach trainings, reduce duplication of services, and increase the capacity of coaches in each initiative. In addition, staff are involved in the cross-systems Coach Collaboration Team and the two subgroups of this team, the Systems Infrastructure Group, and the Coach Development Network (CDN). The mission of the Coach Collaboration Team is to encourage the optimal development of young children in Nebraska by supporting high quality child care, home, and educational environments and experiences through the provision of effective on-site coaching. Its purpose is to coordinate the development and sustainability of cross-system early childhood professional development in Nebraska focusing on coaching as one delivery mechanism.

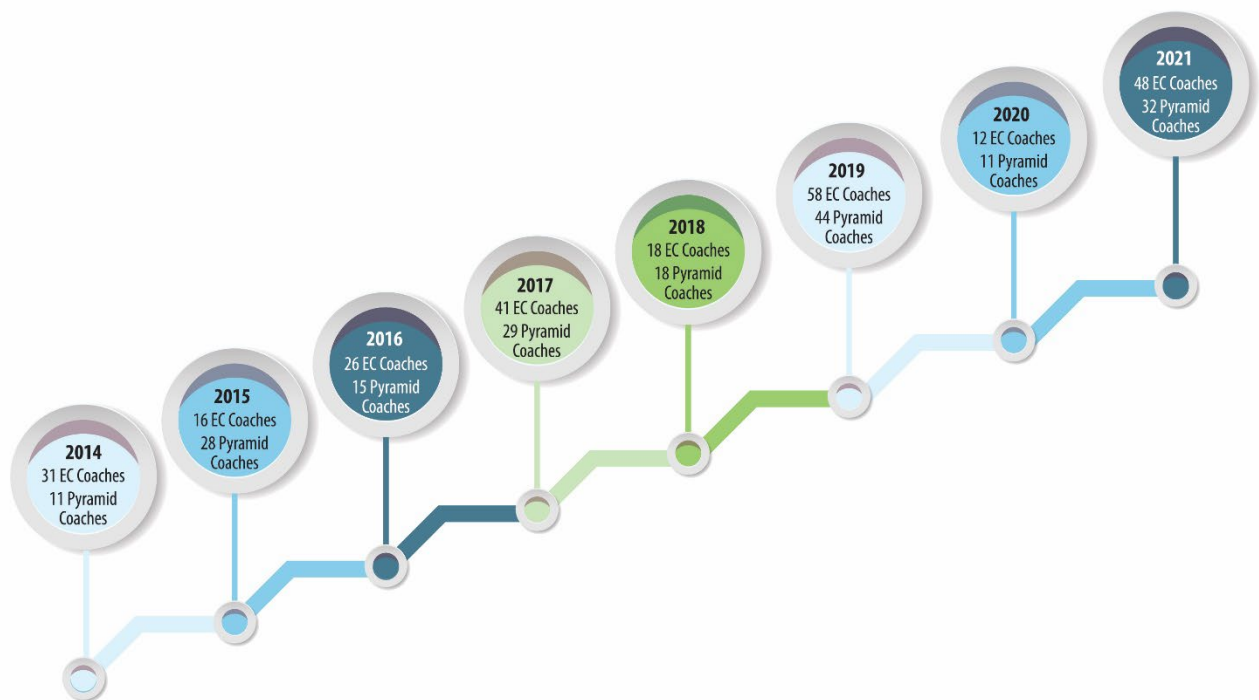
The Coach Development Network (CDN) coordinates the development of initial and ongoing coach training and support. The CDN plans a series of coach booster trainings provided at least twice a year to address ongoing coaching needs. RiR provides resources to support these coach booster sessions. In 2021, three coach booster sessions were offered to coaches. The January booster called “An Introduction to The Nebraska Early Childhood Coaching Guidebook: Competencies for Professional Practice” took place virtually with three sessions. The April booster called ‘Data-Informed Coaching’ took place virtually with two sessions. The October booster titled “A Closer Look at Domain 1: Setting the Foundation” took place virtually with three sessions. The plan for 2022 coach boosters includes “A Closer Look” at the remaining domains for the Nebraska Early Childhood Guidebook: Competencies for Professional Practice, as well as additional boosters based on feedback and needs assessment data from coaches. One large goal of this subgroup in 2021 has been to finalize and disseminate the Nebraska Early Childhood Coaching Guidebook: Competencies for Professional Practice. The group spent the last half of 2021 re-evaluating the guidebook to ensure equitable practices were built into the document and partnered with the Coaching for Equity workgroup to review and make edits.

NDE is beginning to implement Pyramid differently. Rather than the cohort system that they have managed for many years, Pyramid supports will be embedded as part of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that is being developed regionally. The Systems Infrastructure Group, a subgroup of the Coach Collaboration Team has met monthly this year to design systems in a way that will align and support all Pyramid practices in communities no matter what setting (child care, school, Head Start). This group partners to schedule trainings related to coaching and Pyramid to collaborate and align systems as much as possible. Additionally, the group has been responsible for recruitment and expansion of the various trainers/training needed to expand Pyramid. This change has affected the current coach system and will build on the Early Learning Connection Coach Consultants (ELCCC) that have now been hired statewide as part of the Preschool Development Grant. Rooted in Relationships staff have continued to partner with the Early Learning Connection Coach Consultants and the Early Childhood NeMTSS Facilitators to ensure alignment with Pyramid supports and resources. The NDE Office of Early Childhood has also hired a Coach Collaboration Specialist. This individual will co-lead the Coach Collaboration Team with Rooted in Relationships staff.

Following the pilot implementation and evaluation of Pyramid in Sixpence Child Care Partnerships (CCP), RiR staff continue to explore with their partners how to sequence early childhood opportunities based on input from providers. Regular meetings are taking place with Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative (NECC), Step Up to Quality, and Sixpence to develop options.

## RiR builds the state capacity for Early Childhood and Pyramid Coaches

### New coaches trained by year:



**Communities for Kids.** Rooted in Relationships is working closely with another Nebraska Children initiative, Communities for Kids (C4K), to maximize early childhood community planning efforts and resources. RiR continues to strategize on how to sequence initiative work in communities to streamline efforts and avoid duplication. A small work group focused on tribal early childhood efforts is working together to determine next steps as early childhood coordination support is offered to tribal communities; this provides an opportunity to strategically plan sequencing of early childhood offerings in communities. The addition of the Early Childhood Community Coordinators (ECCC) through Communities for Kids Plus (C4K+) funded by the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) has also assisted in supporting sustainability efforts and enhanced coordination. Many communities are creating positions for coordinators to support both C4K expansion focus and RiR's social emotional/quality work.

## **NEBRASKA CENTER ON REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

Rooted in Relationships continues to support the Nebraska Center on Reflective Practice (NCRP). The Center is housed within the Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children (NRPVYC), located within the Center on Children Families and the Law (CCFL) at UNL and is funded by RiR with additional supplementary funds from NDE, University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL), and Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). Over the past several years, eight individuals have been trained to provide the FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions) Model training, and three more are in process. One individual employed by the NCRP has been approved by the Erikson Institute to be a Trainer of Trainers and has completed that process. RiR continues to engage in a training process in collaboration with Step Up to Quality and MMI, to get all initiative coaches trained in the Reflective Consultation Model. This is a 6-month training model where participants attend a total of three days of training and engage in ongoing mentoring to achieve Level 2 status with the Erikson Institute in the FAN Model. Rooted in Relationships has 33 coaches who have completed the process and six Rooted coordinators are currently engaged in training. This gives coaches the opportunity to build their capacity in coaching by being able to understand the importance of reflection and to assist child care providers with this practice. CCFL, in collaboration with its partners, has refined the evaluation plan. They continue to gather data from participants being trained and receiving Reflective Practice and report on data annually. Coaches have shared through focus groups, surveys, and personal report that reflective practice training has proven to be an asset during the pandemic. They relied on those skills heavily in their coaching sessions with providers. Rooted continued to support reflective consultation groups for home-based child care providers. 33 providers participated in the groups, with 12 of them participating for six months consecutively. <https://www.nebraskababies.com/annual-reports>

## **CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATIONS**

Cross-agency collaboration is a key component of the RiR systems work. This work has contributed to enhanced workforce and professional development across systems (early childhood, before/after school, and mental health); expansion of the referral base for families needing early childhood mental health services; improved the coaching system in Nebraska, and increased awareness regarding effective practices related to Trauma Informed Practices across systems.

**Early Childhood Groups.** In addition to collaborative groups listed separately in this report, RiR staff participate in many early care and education groups to align work and contribute at the state and community levels. These include:

- Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (RiR Coordinator serves as a Technical Assistant to the Governor appointed Council)
- Early Childhood Partners Group
- Preschool Development Grant: Nebraska Leadership Team, Program Management Team and Race Equity work group
- Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice Steering Committee
- Nebraska Partnership for Mental Healthcare Access in Pediatrics (NEP-MAP) Advisory Group
- Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children Advisory Board
- Nebraska Center for Reflective Practice Stakeholders Group
- Nebraska Department of Education-Office of Early Childhood, Early Learning Connections Coordinators & Early Childhood Partners meeting
- Early Childhood Data Coalition-this group did not meet in 2021
- Childhood Lead Poisoning Advisory Committee-DHHS Division of Public Health
- University of Nebraska-Kearney Early Childhood Committee
- Child Care Referral Network Leadership Team and Advisory Committee
- CARES ACT funding work group - worked with state partners to determine procedures and policies for distribution of funds and continue assisting in distribution through contract with DHHS
- Early Childhood COVID Collaborative Group- In 2020 Nebraska Children and Families Foundation began hosting a meeting of child care stakeholders, initially meeting every morning to assist in responding to needs being relayed from child care providers and parents. This group continues to meet twice a month with 50+ consistent participants.
- Results Driven Accountability Stakeholder Team-NDE Part B and C
- NE Young Child Institute Planning Committee
- Child Welfare Community Collaboration Grant Core Team – Omaha
- Early Childhood Community Response Team – Omaha
- Lincoln Early Childhood Network, which unites the work of RiR, Prosper Lincoln, and Help Me Grow Lincoln/Lancaster

**State Systems Teams.** Staff are members of numerous teams at the state systems level to promote cross-system supports for RiR and other initiatives. For example, Nebraska Children coordinates a Monday morning phone call, referred to as “Connect the Dots.” Participants include administrative representation from DHHS (Public Health, Behavioral Health, Children and Family Services), the Nebraska Supreme Court (Court Improvement Project), Office of Probation, Department of Education, Society of Care (intertribal entity supporting behavioral and social services in NE), and representatives from Nebraska Children initiatives. This weekly one-hour phone call allows participants to stay informed, align, and reinforce cross-

systems work.

The RiR Implementation Team has met quarterly and is comprised of cross-systems stakeholders who advise and collaborate regarding early childhood mental health activities and initiatives statewide. To prevent duplication of efforts, discussions were held in 2021 with the team about the possibility of utilizing time at the Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health meetings for RiR specific updates as well as overall Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) updates from partners. In 2022, meetings with the National Association for Infant Mental Health (NAIMH) Board will take place to determine the most efficient use of stakeholders' time.

Additionally, Rooted in Relationships staff participate in the following:

- System of Care – Children's Impact Collective (CIC)-Nebraska DHHS
- State Health Improvement Plan (DHHS Division of Public Health) Suicide and Depression subgroup – this group will sunset at the end of 2021
- Prenatal Plan of Safe Care – Resources subgroup
- Rural Stress and Family Wellness Workgroup
- Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Nebraska Pregnancy Prevention & Parenting Support – Learning Action Network
- Community Service Array process

**Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health.** Rooted in Relationships staff collaborate to ensure that messaging around infant and early childhood mental health has continuity across organizations. RiR staff support the Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health's (NAIMH) mission to continue offering professional development opportunities and awareness by serving as a co-lead (along with a representative from UNL Extension). Membership continued to grow through 2021, and members came together several times through workgroups and the annual meeting (held via Zoom Technology). New materials promoting the importance of infant and early childhood mental health were developed and distributed with plans for a new website launch in 2022. With the support of Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funding NAIMH was able to join the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. In 2021, a Leadership Cohort was developed, including Rooted staff, and in 2022 Infant Mental Health Endorsement will be rolled out in Nebraska.

**Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice.** In 2019, a new Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice was developed, organized by the University of Nebraska Center on Children, Families and the Law with input from Rooted staff, Options in Psychology, Child Savings Institute, Children's Hospital and Medical Center, Woodhaven Counseling Inc, and the University of Iowa. In 2020, the decision was made to hold the event virtually; approximately 275 professionals from across the state attended. Special sessions were tailored to attendees specializing in Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), and Circle of Security Parenting (COSP). In 2021, the direction of the group turned to focus on supporting the Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health (NAIMH) as they joined the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. In April 2022 Nebraska will have an Endorsement for Infant Mental Health, and this group will transition to supporting the competencies

needed for those who are connected to the work. In addition, they continue to offer more skill-based trainings to support practitioners working in ECMH. The planning group is now interconnected with NAIMH and has shifted to be more diverse, including representing a variety of disciplines and individuals geographically across Nebraska.

## SUPPORT OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

**Child Parent Psychotherapy.** Nebraska has a shortage of mental health providers which is further exacerbated by the lack of professionals trained in early childhood mental health. To increase the availability of early childhood mental health, RiR has supported the effort to train mental health providers in Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP).

Rooted in Relationships initially supported two training cohorts for Child Parent Psychotherapy, an evidence-based counseling modality geared towards children birth-5 and their families that is approved as a Medicaid reimbursed therapeutic practice, in which 70 mental health providers completed training. The training process coordinated by UNL-CCFL's Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children (NRPVYC) is working towards being self-sustaining and continues to provide training annually. Nebraska has three active endorsed Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) trainers who train Nebraska clinicians, with three additional individuals in the process of becoming endorsed trainers. NRPVYC manages CPP training in Nebraska with the support of the national CPP certifying body at the University of California at San Francisco, and it is continuing to build a program to increase and sustain high quality CPP practitioners. The NRPVYC works with model developer Dr. Joy Osofsky to train and support new CPP trainers and trainer candidates. Rooted encourages and, if needed, helps to support community mental health providers to attend training.

RiR collaborates to build **the capacity** of Nebraska **therapists** to serve young children.

There are currently 128 clinicians in Nebraska trained to provide CPP (an increase from 95 therapists on October 1, 2018). The 2021-22 CPP cohort began the 18-month training process in April 2021 with 21 trainees (currently 15 attending) and held its first intensive training in October 2021. Trainings are being held over half days through Zoom due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The website, NebraskaBabies.com, includes a searchable database of trained CPP therapists for purposes of locating practitioners and matching referrals.

**Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT).** In 2019, RiR was tasked with supporting work that has been led/supported by the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board (NCAPF), specifically related to PCIT and PIWI. Staff met with UNL-CCFL's NRPVYC to explore the creation of a similar system of support for training and support around PCIT that has been implemented successfully with CPP. Core to this support structure is a training system within NE so therapists do not have to travel out of state for training, which increases the number of therapists proficient in this therapy modality. The NRPVYC has been working with Dr. Beth Troutman and Iowa-PCIT to build a PCIT training program. The first PCIT training

cohort sponsored by NRPVYC began its 12-month training program with initial training in September 2020. Eight trainees and one trainer candidate participated virtually through Zoom which was an adaptation put in place due to the pandemic. In August 2021 an additional 10 clinicians began the second training cohort. The NRPVYC continues to enhance its resources around PCIT, which includes both a map and a list of PCIT therapists. There are currently 64 PCIT therapists on the NRPVYC list/map, 48 of the clinicians are in Nebraska. The webpage also includes a link to the PCIT International list of certified PCIT therapists. For more information, visit <https://www.nebraskababies.com/ecmh>.

**Circle of Security™ Parenting (COSP).** Rooted in Relationships continues to provide support for COSP facilitators by building a stronger statewide website, developing common evaluation and marketing tools, and supporting additional training of facilitators. Rooted in Relationships staff also leads the Circle of Security Leadership Team in Nebraska. They have continued to build local capacity for reflective consultation to support facilitators and have supported three COSP facilitators and trained reflective consultants to be Level 2 facilitators recognized by Circle of Security International (COSI). In 2021, these Level 2 facilitators conducted 24 sessions of peer reflective consultation that were offered at no cost to any COSP facilitator in Nebraska via Zoom technology. RiR was also able to support two Circle of Security International (COSI) approved fidelity coaching sessions for eight facilitators in 2021.

The Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC) manages the system to reimburse facilitators for court ordered parents to participate in the program through a contract with DHHS. NeAEYC also serves as the fiscal manager for Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Funds that are supporting many COSP classes across the state. A 3-part series was developed in conjunction with Dr. Mark Hald, COSI approved Fidelity Coach to support COSP Facilitators. Designed to be used for small groups, 20 facilitators registered and 17 completed it.

Circle of Security International released an enhancement to traditional COSP, called COSP-Classroom. This enhancement is designed to make the program even more applicable to all early care professionals. So far, Nebraska has 30 facilitators that have completed the Master Course. A new evaluation package, updated materials, and resources for facilitators have been developed. Evaluation results will be included in the next biannual COSP evaluation in early 2023. A full report of the statewide evaluation of COSP can be found at [necosp.org](http://necosp.org).

**TPOT and TPITOS Training.** Evaluation of the Pyramid Initiative requires a cadre of observers trained in the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool – Research Edition (TPOT) and Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale – Revised (TPITOS). Capacity now exists within Nebraska to implement these trainings regularly; previously, observers had to travel to the national training in Florida. TPOT training was held in April 2021 in Omaha with 30 attendees from across the state. Some participants attended to learn the tool to perform observations while others attended to increase their knowledge of the tool to coach more effectively. The Rooted team, PSLT, and MMI evaluators are working together to consider cost-effective options for continuing to train interested participants without requiring two full days in person.

Nebraska continues to ensure fidelity through the reliability measures put in place by MMI. To be considered a TPOT observer for RiR, a yearly reliability check must be completed. Observers score a two-hour video of a preschool classroom using the TPOT protocol. After scoring the video, observers meet with an evaluator from MMI to review the scores. As RiR continues to support the training of TPOT observers, the geographic location of the observers is considered to ensure that TPOT expertise is distributed across the state.

**Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI).** Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) is an evidenced-based set of practices based on beliefs (a “philosophy”) about families, children, and helping relationships. The objectives of PIWI are to increase confidence, competence, and positive relationships for parents and children ages 0-2. It does so by keeping the parent-child relationship at the center and by supporting responsive, respectful parent-child interactions. The primary focus of PIWI is parent-child groups but it may be used in home visitation and other settings. The Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board (NCAPF) had funded communities to support PIWI facilitation for several years. In 2019, Rooted in Relationships was tasked with developing infrastructure to support expansion of PIWI classes more broadly in Nebraska. The four communities that had received three or fewer years of funding from the Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board were provided up to \$4000 from Rooted to continue their infrastructure development around PIWI practices in their communities.

An experienced team of three trainers now lead the process of training PIWI facilitators in Nebraska. One virtual training of facilitators was held in February 2021 for 25 Blue Valley Community Action Head Start employees including family advocates, site leaders, and engagement specialists. A second PIWI training of facilitators was held in November 2021 for 13 interested persons across the state, with the largest group in the Omaha area, including Bethlehem House and Child Saving Institute. Overall, very few sites conducted PIWI classes during the year due to COVID making it unsafe to engage families with small children who cannot be vaccinated.

The team of PIWI trainers are working on completing new video clips to support the training as the current clips needed updating. It was planned initially that the video clips would be completed this year, however the pandemic made it impossible for PIWI classes to continue safely, so the video project has been put on hold until classes can resume.

## **POLICY**

RiR engages in several efforts to support policy development that impacts early childhood mental health. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services initiated strategic planning to develop a System of Care (SOC) framework for designing mental health services for children and youth with a serious emotional disturbance and their families through collaboration across public and private agencies. RiR continues to collaborate with SOC and Society of Care (focus on Tribal SOC) to ensure attention to and integration of ECMH work. RiR also works with First Five Nebraska (FFN) around early childhood legislation and policy issues. RiR, C4K, and FFN meet monthly to discuss early childhood policy work. This group

continues to monitor legislation that might have an impact on ECMH and consider ways to focus on ECMH as an area in need of support. The Rooted in Relationships initiative submitted a letter to members of the Health and Human Services Committee regarding LR143 (maternal depression screening), to emphasize the need for behavioral health service providers across the state who specialize in early childhood mental health.

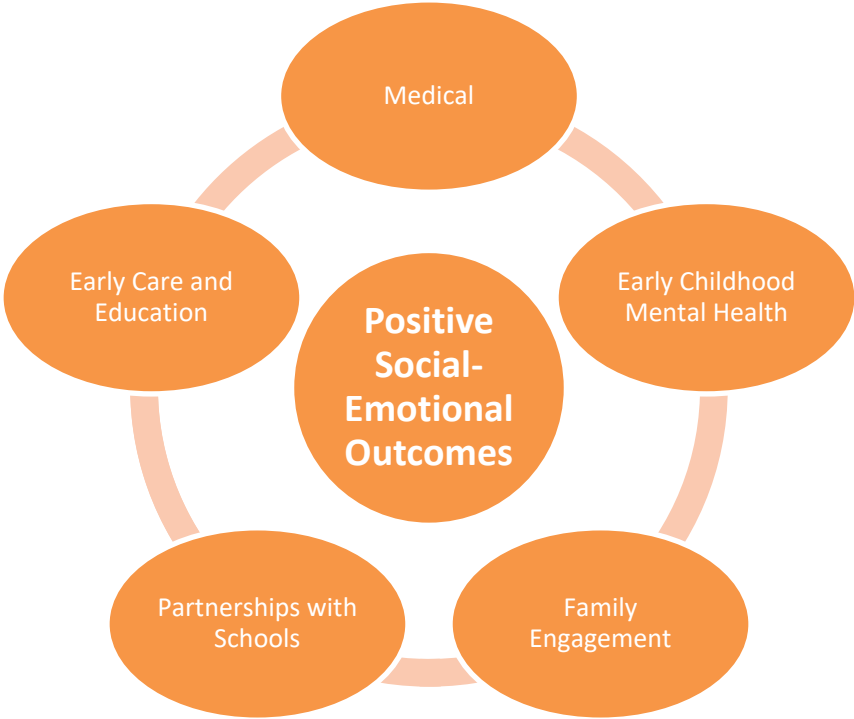
Additionally, the Nebraska Early Childhood Partners group, formed in 2017, enhances early childhood collaboration. The group includes representatives from the Nebraska Department of Education, NE Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Buffet Early Childhood Institute, First Five Nebraska and the Buffet Early Childhood Fund. As part of these groups, RiR has assisted in grant development that includes policy advancement, most recently the Preschool Development and Pritzker Grants as well as advocacy regarding the use of various funds related to pandemic recovery.



# Supporting Community Early Childhood Systems of Care

This section focuses on the system efforts of all communities currently implementing the Rooted in Relationships (RiR) package. In each community, the stakeholder team developed a community plan to strengthen their early childhood systems and supports for social-emotional development and early childhood mental health based on a needs assessment process which included parent input. From this planning process, each team creates a long-range plan to strengthen early childhood systems of care in their community that support children’s social-emotional development by adopting one or more systems level strategies across one of the five common priority areas, illustrated below.

## Common Priority Areas across RiR Community Stakeholder Teams



The evaluation of each community’s implementation plan for systems of care was customized to match the strategy(ies) adopted by that community. This was accomplished through a collaborative effort between the evaluator and community stakeholder team to identify the questions and design of the evaluation plan. For strategies that were shared across communities, a common evaluation was developed. The table below identifies the strategies that were implemented across the RiR

communities based on the five common priority areas, as well as the year RiR communities began implementation of their system strategy(ies). Platte and Douglas Counties completed planning and began implementation in 2021. All other communities are currently engaged in the implementation phase of the initiative.

## Community-Level Implementation of Priority Areas

<i>Community</i>	<i>Year Implementation Began</i>	<i>Early Care and Education</i>	<i>Early Childhood Mental Health</i>	<i>Family Engagement</i>	<i>Medical</i>	<i>Partnerships with Schools</i>
<i>Buffalo</i>	2017	✓		✓		✓
<i>Dakota</i>	2014	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Dawson</i>	2014	✓		✓		
<i>Dodge</i>	2015	✓				
<i>Douglas (S. Omaha)</i>	2021	✓				
<i>Hall</i>	2015	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Keith</i>	2017	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Lancaster</i>	2015	✓		✓		
<i>Madison</i>	2020	✓				✓
<i>Panhandle</i>	2018	✓		✓		✓
<i>Platte</i>	2021	✓			✓	✓
<i>Saline</i>	2014	✓	✓	✓		

The following section defines each priority area and highlights the work that has contributed to building systems of care at the community level around each priority area. While strategies are separated by priority area in the sections below, it is worth mentioning that in systems work many strategies are cross-cutting in nature, addressing more than one priority area (e.g., Mental Health First Aid training and Head Start partnerships in South Sioux City address both the Medical and School Partnerships priority areas).

### EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Strategies that fit into this system impact the affordability, accessibility, reliability, and quality of child care in the community.

**Networking Events.** In addition to provider collaboration meetings that all RiR communities hold as part of their Pyramid implementation, some communities offered additional networking opportunities for providers to increase connections, foster peer learning and provide support. For example, Dodge County RiR held a child care thank you event for 130 area providers and staff.

**Provider Trainings.** Many RiR communities offered additional training opportunities to area child care providers with the aim of improving child care quality. Dawson, Keith, and Saline Counties offered Circle of Security Classroom trainings, serving over 36 early childhood professionals, while Dodge County RiR partnered with their regional Early Learning Coordinator to hold an Early Childhood Conference that included training opportunities that 75 EC professionals attended.

**Community Level Strategies that Support Early Care and Education.** Several communities implemented community-level strategies to support early care and education. In Buffalo County, a lack of adequate technology was identified as a barrier for EC professionals to participate in virtual meetings and trainings. Thus, they partnered with a tech company to refurbish donated laptops that were distributed to 13 EC providers in the community so that providers could attend meetings and trainings and complete licensing requirements. Hall County RiR distributed a newsletter to providers twice and has contracted with a bilingual individual who is recruiting and working with Spanish-speaking providers, while Platte County RiR held an information workshop for eight child care providers on the various events and trainings going on in the community and how to stay informed.

In 2021, the RiR team was funded through the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to work with Douglas County (South Omaha) and several community partners to build a social emotional infrastructure. Community partners chose to implement the Pyramid Model. A cohort of Spanish speaking providers were recruited and voiced the need for training to be provided in their primary language, rather than having an interpreter. RiR used funds from the PDG to translate the Nebraska Pyramid modules so Spanish speaking early childhood providers across the state can access Pyramid training. All modules should be translated by the end 2022. Douglas County (South Omaha) also recruited a bilingual trainer, coordinator, and coaches.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

Strategies that fit into this system impact the knowledge of, availability of, and access to mental health consultation, assessment resources, and therapy services.

**Mental Health First Aid.** Mental Health First Aid is a national public education program to teach the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use. During the evaluation year, 93 participants were trained in Mental Health First Aid in three RiR communities: Buffalo, Keith, and Saline counties. The training provided in Saline County had a particular focus on youth and young people.

**Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT).** Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an empirically supported treatment for children ages two to seven that places emphasis on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and changing parent-child interaction patterns. While the COVID-19 pandemic has limited in-person interaction and thus the ability to offer PCIT since 2019, 2021 saw a slow resurgence of PCIT offerings in the state. Saline county RiR served 10 parents and their 10 children with PCIT during the past evaluation year, and Dakota county RiR offered a PCIT Special Time Class training to 18 attendees.

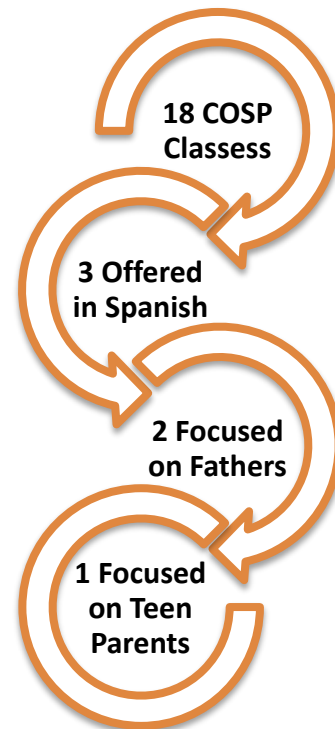
**Community Level Strategies that Support Early Childhood Mental Health.** Hall County RiR offers unique supports to children experiencing domestic violence through their partnerships with Hope Harbor and Crisis Center through their Breathe Like a Bear program. During the 2021 evaluation year, this program provided books and stuffed bears to 50 children in the shelter.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Strategies that fit into this system impact parents understanding of social emotional development and high-quality care. These strategies also encourage parents and caregivers to engage with and build strong relationships with their children.

**Circle of Security Parenting™ (COSP).** Circle of Security Parenting™ (COSP) is an 8-week parenting program focused on building strong attachment relationships between parents and their children. Six RiR communities either offered COSP classes or worked with partners to improve access or implementation of COSP in their communities. For example, Buffalo County RiR worked with their COSP facilitators to increase pay for facilitators who had to manage the challenges of hosting virtual COSP sessions, while Lancaster County RiR worked with the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Community Health Endowment to support the provision of COSP in Lancaster County.

Overall, 18 COSP classes were offered across five communities. Three classes were offered in Spanish, two classes were focused specifically on fathers, and one class was offered to teen parents at the local high school.

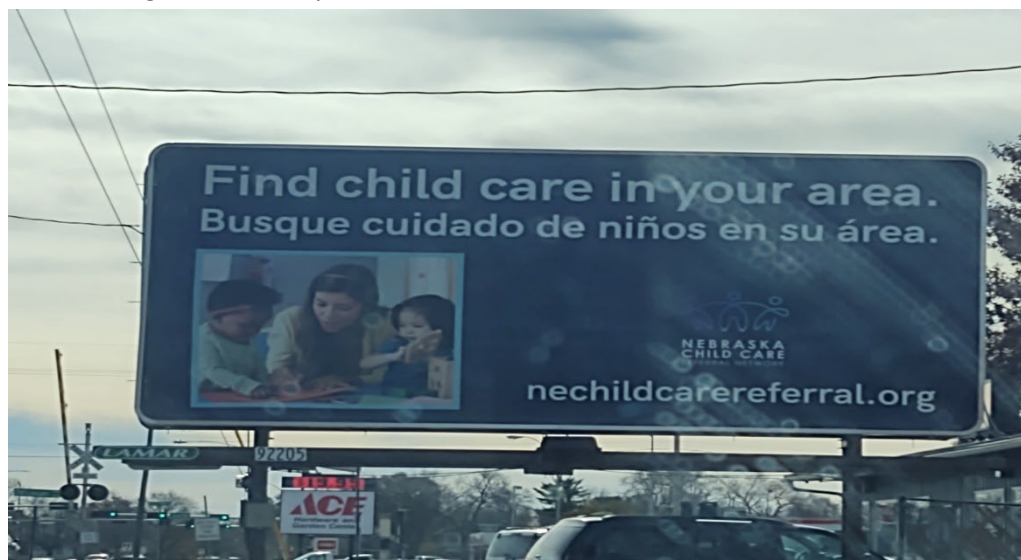


**Parents Interacting With Infants (PIWI).** Parents Interacting With Infants (PIWI) is an evidenced-based set of practices that aims to increase confidence, competence, and positive relationships for parents and children ages 0-2. Typically delivered through in-person group settings, the ability to offer PIWI classes has been hindered due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the pandemic wanes, some communities have been slowly restarting implementation of PIWI. Saline County RiR offered one PIWI class during the past year, and Dakota County RiR reported that their PIWI classes have resumed.

**Parent Pyramid Modules.** Pyramid module trainings are offered to parents in Nebraska to support parents' abilities to promote their children's social emotional development and prevent and address challenging behavior. During the past year, three RiR communities (Buffalo, Dawson, and Keith) offered six parent pyramid module trainings, serving over 49 parents and children. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two of these trainings were offered virtually.

**Media/Information Sharing.** A key component of family engagement is sharing information on social emotional development and engagement opportunities for parents and providers. Buffalo County RiR worked with Bring Up Nebraska to coordinate child abuse prevention month materials, Dakota County RiR updated their website to provide more community engagement information and distributed family engagement materials to pre-kindergarten children, and families in the Panhandle received welcome letters and postcards from Panhandle RiR.

RiR communities employed a variety of methods to share information directly with families, providers, and the larger community, including social media posts, newsletters/e-newsletters, and billboards posted in the community. Through several posts via social media (e.g., Facebook), six RiR communities reached an estimated 12,454 parents and providers. Another 8,646 people were reached in four communities via newsletters/e-newsletters and emails. Finally, Buffalo and Hall counties posted billboards in their communities, reaching all of Kearney and Grand Island.



*Billboard posted in Grand Island, Nebraska in July 2021.*

**Community Level Strategies that Support Family Engagement.**

Several RiR communities implemented strategies that encouraged families to spend quality time together, including family fun/community movie nights, providing materials to encourage parent-child interactions such as social-emotional backpacks, and supporting other family engagement events in the community. Below is a summary of these community strategies.

**1,857** parents and children attended family fun nights, movies, and events across nine communities

Community	Event/Activity	Children and Families Served
<b>Family Fun Nights/ Movies/ Events</b>		
<b>Buffalo</b>	Fun Night at Kearney Area Children’s Museum - 100 books distributed	225
<b>Buffalo</b>	Week of the Young Child Movie Sponsorship	81
<b>Dakota</b>	Family Night Out- Story Walk and Scavenger Hunt, distributed backpacks with engagement activities and books	300
<b>Dakota</b>	Family social-emotional engagement over holiday break	280
<b>Dawson</b>	Week of the Young Child event: free family movies offered in Gothenburg and Lexington	70
<b>Dawson</b>	Week of the Young Child celebrations in Gothenburg, Overton, Eustis, Sumner, Lexington, and Cozad	753
<b>Dawson</b>	Family Movie Nights in Gothenburg, Cozad, and Lexington	118
<b>Saline</b>	Free Kids Summer Movie Series	30
<b>Providing Materials to Support Family Interactions</b>		
<b>Dakota</b>	Toy lending in Dakota City and Emerson libraries	
<b>Dakota</b>	Family Night In Activity Bags	
<b>Dakota</b>	Social-emotional backpacks to area libraries	90 created & distributed
<b>Dawson</b>	Social emotional backpacks distributed to five area libraries	37 used/checked out
<b>Other Community Efforts to Support Family Engagement</b>		
<b>Dakota</b>	Story Walks installed near YMCA soccer fields and low-income housing	
<b>Keith</b>	Hosted booth at Keith County C4K+ Family Block Party	
<b>Saline</b>	Participated in Crete Library Summer Reading Kickoff	

## MEDICAL

Strategies that fit into this system impact the availability and accessibility of quality pre- and postnatal healthcare services, such as screenings for parental mental health/substance use, child development screenings within primary care, and an increase in engagement around early childhood mental health.

**Community Level Efforts to Engage the Medical Field.** Dakota County RiR has an ongoing partnership with the Siouxland Community Health Center in which doctors provide books to children with a prescription encouraging parents to read to their children. Platte County RiR has reached out to local doctors to find out whether they use specific assessments with their patients. Platte County will use this information to determine if providing training on conducting early childhood assessments and resources for medical providers would be helpful.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

Strategies that fit into this system impact the engagement between parents and schools or build partnerships with schools to increase social-emotional learning.

**Engagement with local school systems/Head Start.** Several RiR communities have engaged with local school systems and Head Start centers to build partnerships that support social-emotional learning through expansion of Pyramid, improving access to mental health, participating in/hosting events to build awareness, and even expanding funding. For example, Buffalo County RiR expanded Pyramid to all Head Start locations in Buffalo County, while Hall County RiR partnered with Grand Island Public Schools O'Connor Early Learning Center to provide Pyramid module training to paraprofessionals. Similarly, Keith County RiR partnered with North Platte Public Schools to implement the Pyramid Model in the public preschools and Head Start centers in North Platte.

Mental health and access to mental health services has been one outcome of partnerships between RiR communities and the local school systems and Head Start. Dakota County RiR partners work closely together to provide opportunities in their community that support mental health in all community settings (child care, Head Start and schools). One of the Rooted coaches is supported to provide social emotional classes during summer school.

As the Early Childhood Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Facilitators educate early childhood public school personnel about Pyramid and offer their support to start implementation, Rooted communities are engaging as partners to align and enhance efforts. For instance, in Dakota County, one Rooted coach provided support to the public school as they began their implementation journey. Identifying these alignment and enhancement opportunities within communities to support Pyramid as a community wide strategy are being explored and implemented differently depending on community needs and capacity.

Finally, partnerships with local school systems and Head Start have improved awareness, contributed to the success of local events, and opened new opportunities. For example, Buffalo County RiR partnered with Kearney Public Schools, the local ESU, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney to plan a multitude of events during the Week of the Young Child celebrations, while Madison County RiR gifted every K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, assistant, and paraeducator at one local elementary school with a self-care basket for teacher appreciation week, which included information about social-emotional development. Platte County RiR presented to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade career class on early childhood career avenues.

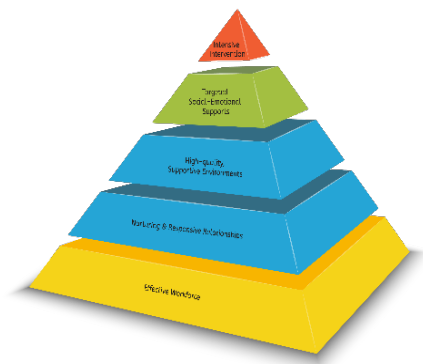


# Pyramid Model Implementation: Program Description and Evaluation Findings

## ABOUT THE PYRAMID MODEL

The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices that promote social-emotional competence in young children and prevent and address challenging behaviors (Fox et al., 2003). The model is a promotion, prevention, and intervention framework built on the foundation of an effective workforce. The foundation for the practices in the Pyramid Model are the systems and policies necessary to ensure the early childhood workforce is able to implement and sustain these practices. The three tiers of the Pyramid Model include:

1. Universal supports for all children through **nurturing and responsive relationships** and **high quality supportive environments**. These practices ensure the promotion of the social development of all children.
2. The intentional teaching of targeted social-emotional strategies to support children at risk of challenging behavior. Strategies include: explicit instruction and support, self regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, developing social relationships, and problem solving.
3. Individualized interventions for a very small number of children who need additional supports, such as a positive behavior support plan.



## ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION

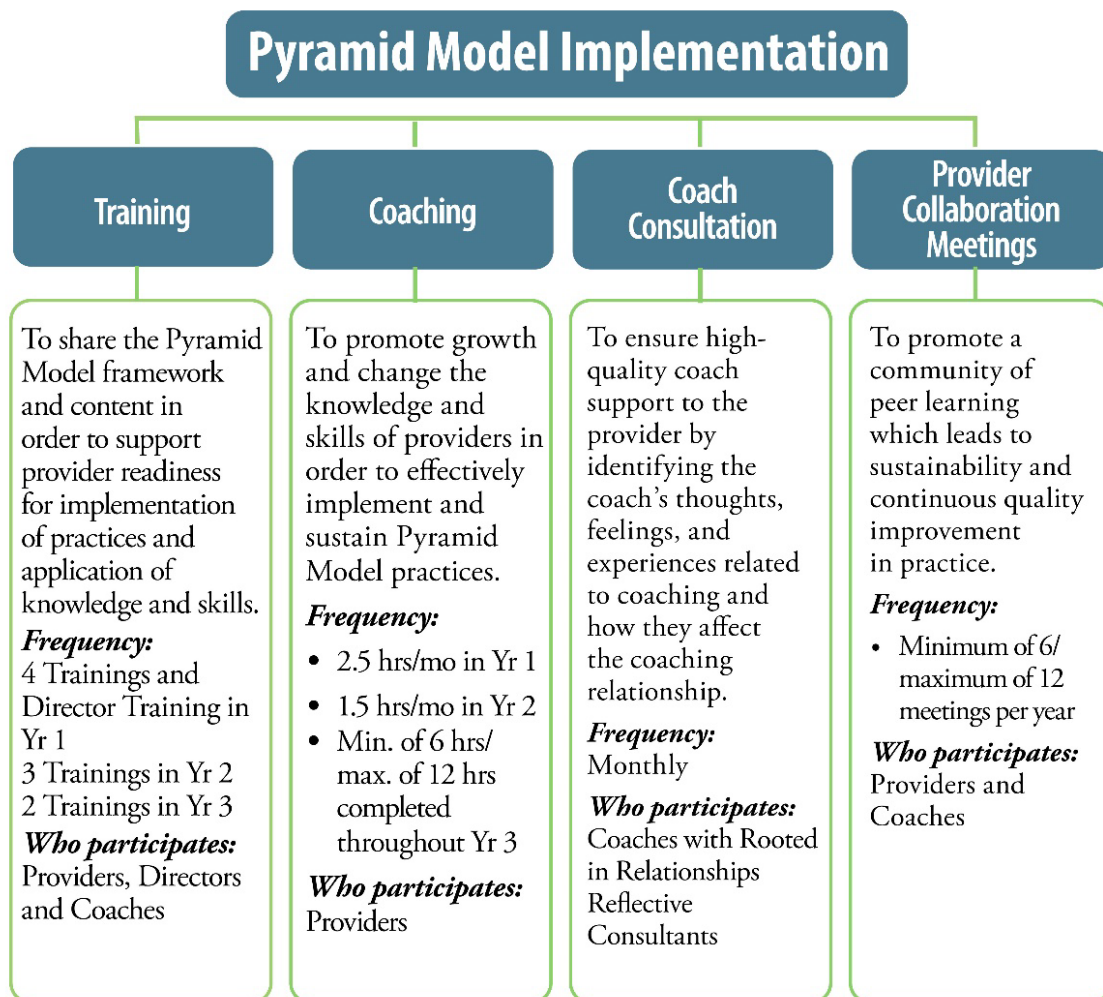
The RIR Pyramid Model Implementation offers center-based and home-based child care providers Pyramid Model training and ongoing coaching support for the implementation of positive strategies to promote young children’s social-emotional development and skills. Providers participate in training, coaching, and collaboration meetings for three years. Across the state, 70 Pyramid Model trainings were offered during the past year. Each community has a coaching team consisting of both early childhood specialists and mental health practitioners that work with providers to implement strategies learned during training. Finally, providers and coaches participate in regular collaboration meetings to encourage peer learning and support.

Since the start of the RIR Pyramid Model Implementation in 2014, 67 coaches have supported 700 center-based and home-based child care providers in 228 programs impacting over 12,500 children. In 2021,

- 49 coaches** supported
- 286 center and home-based providers** in
- 152 programs** impacting over
- 2,700 children**

In addition to training and coaching, providers are eligible to apply for funds to help them reach a specific coaching goal. In 2021, 35 social-emotional enhancement grants were awarded totaling \$19,920.55. Providers used the funds to purchase materials, equipment, curricula and/or attend trainings to help them support the social-emotional development of the children in their care.

The following graphic shows the implementation activities across three years of RiR.



## ABOUT THE PROGRAMS AND PROVIDERS

In 2021, the following regions participated in the RiR Pyramid Model Implementation:

- Buffalo
- Dakota (Dixon and Thurston)
- Dawson (Frontier)
- Dodge
- Douglas (South Omaha)
- Hall
- Keith (Chase, Lincoln, Perkins and Red Willow)
- Lancaster
- Madison
- Panhandle (Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, and Scottsbluff)
- Platte
- Saline (Jefferson and Gage)

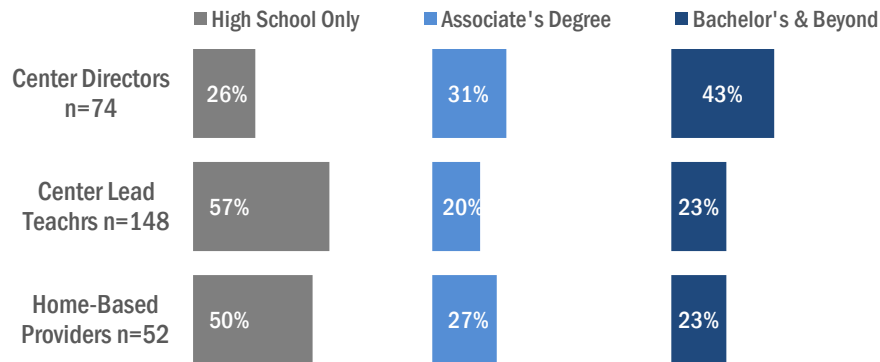
This report includes provider and child demographic data from all regions, including new sites. Outcome data (with the exception of the center-wide fidelity measure) are only reported for those who have participated in the program for at least a year.

During this reporting period, **152 child care programs** participated in Rooted in Relationships. The majority (58%) were child care centers. The rest (42%) were home-based child care programs. The retention rate for programs in RiR for 2021 was 93%.

**286 providers** participated in the RiR program. In this report, “provider” signifies anyone who works directly with children. The majority (76%) of the providers worked in child care centers while the rest (24%) worked in family child care homes. Of the center-based providers, 84% were lead teachers and 16% were assistant teachers. In some child care centers, the director participated in coaching, but it was not as extensive as the coaching providers received. In 2021, 58 directors and assistant directors were part of the Pyramid Model Initiative. The overall retention rate was 84% for center-based lead teachers and 89% for home-based providers.

To better understand the early childhood workforce, information about the participants’ post high school education was collected for 84% of the center directors, 87% of the center-based lead teachers and 76% of the home-based providers.

**The majority of center directors and half of the home based providers have college degrees.**



Most (74%) center directors have a college degree at the associate’s level or beyond. The majority (65%) majored in a field relevant to early childhood or education. Of note, 13% of the directors majored in business. Half (50%) of home-based providers have formal education beyond high school and most (68%) majored in a child- or education-focused field. A small number (8%) majored in business. In contrast, less than half (43%) of center-based providers participating in RiR have an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. Of those who do, the majority (81%) majored in early childhood education, child development or elementary education.

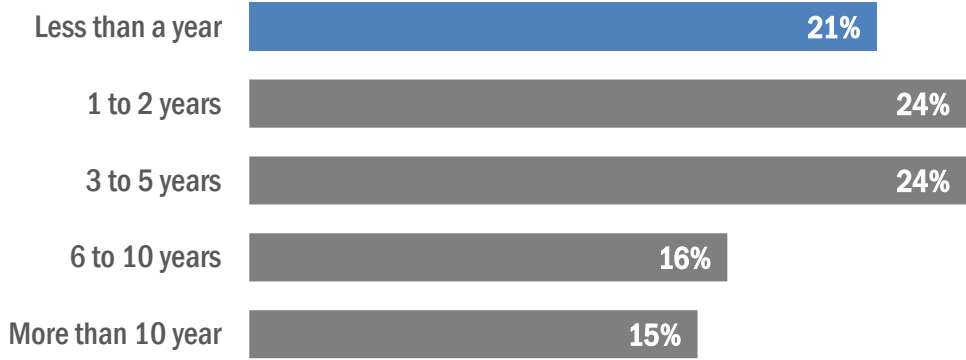
Teacher retention has been a major challenge for child care centers during the pandemic. Center directors have reported high rates of turnover and difficulty finding new staff or substitute teachers. Data were collected about the length of time center-based providers have been employed at their current center.



**RiR has “helped me learn new strategies to help my children with their social emotional needs, and it has been a good reminder of things I need to work on to improve as a teacher.”**

*A provider reflects on her learning*

The majority (55%) of the staff have been at their center for at least three years. n=148  
 But 21% were new.



## ABOUT THE CHILDREN

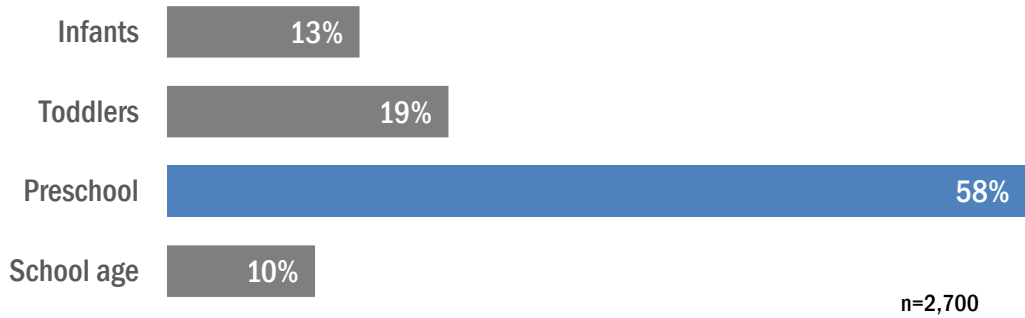
In 2021, RiR Pyramid Model programs served over **2,700** children.

- 81%** were in center-based programs and **19%** were in home-based programs.
- 15%** qualified for a state child care subsidy, based on an annual income up to \$40,188 for a family of 3 (Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, 2021).
- 10%** spoke a primary language other than English.
- 53%** were male and **47%** were female.

The largest group of children served were **White**, followed by **Hispanic**.



Most of the children were **preschool** age.



## ABOUT THE COACHES

Across the state, 49 coaches worked closely with early childhood providers to implement the Pyramid Model. Each county had coaching teams that consisted of two to seven coaches inclusive of a lead coach who provided additional support and technical assistance to the team. Coaches had expertise in early childhood development and early childhood education. Some of the coaches were mental health providers; other coaches were early childhood specialists who typically had experience as classroom teachers, trainers, supervisors, or administrators.

**The Impact of COVID-19.** While the disruptions were less severe in 2021 than when COVID-19 first arrived in Nebraska, the pandemic continued to create challenges for child care sites and providers. Across the state, child and staff exposures to COVID-19 led to temporary classroom closures. In addition, staff illness, absences and high turnover made it difficult to find coverage for classrooms. One coach explained, “Providers are really struggling. It is difficult for centers to keep quality employees right now.”

Over a third (37%) of coaches reported that they have adjusted their coaching due to COVID. These accommodations included conducting coaching sessions outside of the center and outside of center hours, helping directors develop COVID policies and procedures, and assisting providers to recruit and retain new employees. In addition, some coaches have helped providers access information about applying for state and federal COVID-relief funding.

Providers have needed more emotional support because of pandemic-related stress. One coach noted, “I think COVID has brought people closer to each other and deepened relationships. We are there for each other and being supportive!”



## Measures of Pyramid Model Fidelity

The fidelity measures are reported as a percentage of items meeting fidelity. Quality is considered a score greater than or equal to 75%.

**Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ), v. 2** Fox, Hemmeter, Jack & Perez-Binder, 2017. A center-based self-assessment tool that the leadership team completes:

- 41 items
- 7 subscales plus 1 overall score

**Family Child Care Homes Program-wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (FCCH BOQ)** Lentini, 2014. A self-assessment tool that the home-based provider completes:

- 42 items
- 8 subscales plus 1 overall score

**A Note about BOQ data:** The BOQ graphs report every time programs completed the assessment. Each program will have up to three assessments depending on how many years they have been in RiR. As a result, the “n” for baseline is largest because all programs implementing the Pyramid program-wide, have completed the BOQ at least once.

## FIDELITY TO THE PYRAMID MODEL FOR PROGRAM-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION

The Pyramid Model provides evidence-based practices that promote young children’s social-emotional learning and development. Program-wide implementation includes a systematic approach to positive behavior supports to ensure consistency and predictability across the entire child care center. Parents, caregivers, and administrators align to promote these model practices to support young children’s social-emotional development.

### Center-based Program-wide Implementation.

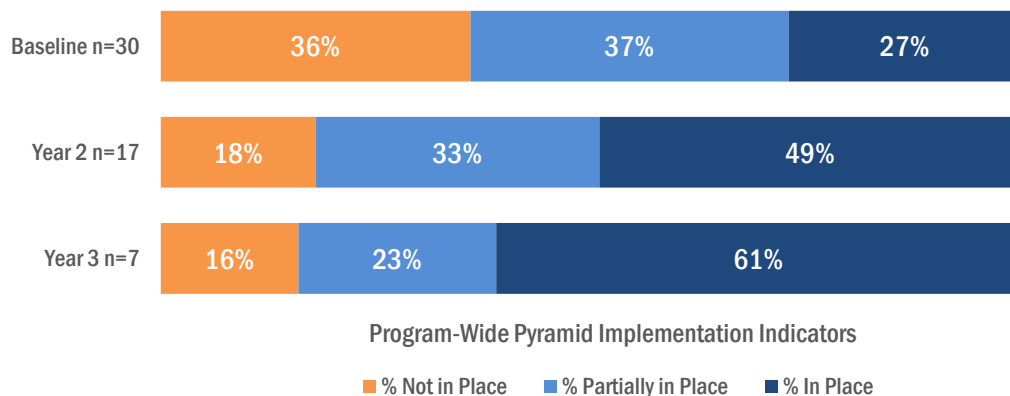
For centers, program-wide implementation means that all classrooms adopt Pyramid Model strategies. This includes setting common behavior expectations, involving families in the Pyramid Model, implementing consistent procedures to respond to challenging behavior, and monitoring the implementation of Pyramid practices. RiR does not require center-based programs to implement the Pyramid Model program-wide.

During the 2021 program year, 30 child care centers participated in program-wide implementation. To measure the fidelity of the implementation, the programs completed the **Benchmarks of Quality, version 2 (BOQ v.2)**. The BOQ v.2 results report the percentage of Pyramid practices that are “in place,” “partially in place” and “not in place.” The goal is to have 75% of practices in place.

The following graph shows the fidelity of program-wide implementation across time. The color bands report the average of the overall percentage of practices in place, partially in place, and not at all in place across all programs implementing the model program-wide. The orange band indicates the percentage of practices that are not in place. The dark blue band indicates the percentage of practices that are in place to fidelity. Over time, the percentage of practices not in place should decrease and the percentage of practices fully in place

should increase. In the graph, this is illustrated by the orange band shrinking and the dark blue band expanding in Years 2 and 3.

### By Year 3, centers implementing the Pyramid Model program-wide had a majority of practices in place.



The results indicate that programs increased fidelity over time. At baseline, just over a quarter (27%) of Pyramid indicators were in place. Over a third of indicators were partially in place and an additional third were not in place at all. By Year 3, the majority (61%) of indicators were fully in place. While programs on average did not yet reach the goal of having 75% of practices in place, they demonstrated strong improvement over time, making meaningful progress towards fidelity.

In addition to an overall score, the BOQ v.2 is reported across seven subscales. Each subscale has multiple indicators that guide goal setting for program improvement. The following highlights the key elements of each subscale.

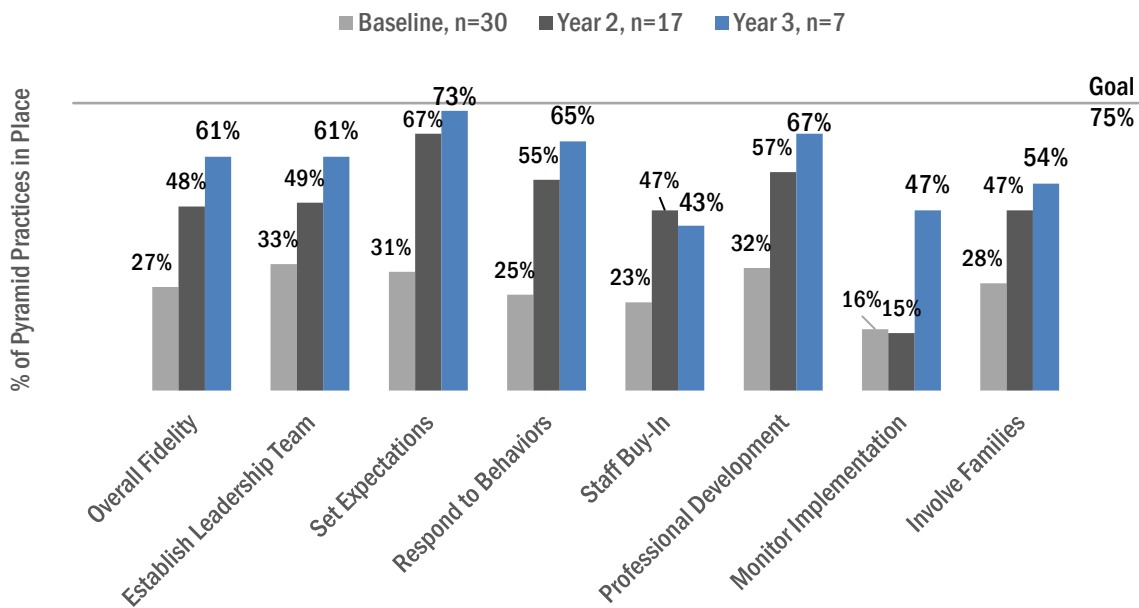
- **Establish Leadership Team:** The team, which includes a teacher, an administrator, a coach, a behavior support expert, and a family representative, meets at least once a month and develops a Pyramid Model program-wide implementation plan.
- **Staff Buy-In:** To measure staff buy-in, they are surveyed about their support for the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and a system to address implicit bias. Centers also establish a process to share outcome data with staff on a regular basis.
- **Family Engagement:** Fidelity includes soliciting input from families and promoting family involvement in the Pyramid Model Implementation.
- **Program-wide Expectations:** The program must have two to five positively stated program-wide expectations that are displayed across the center.
- **Professional Development and Staff Support Plan:** Indicators include practice-based coaching, a plan for ongoing training in the Pyramid Model, and a professional development plan for each teacher.
- **Procedures to Respond to Challenging Behavior:** Responses to challenging behavior use

evidence-based approaches that are positive and sensitive to family values, culture, and home. Staff are trained about potential bias in responding to children with challenging behaviors.

- **Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes:** The leadership team reviews data, monitors the implementation, and uses data for decision making and goal setting.

The following graph shows the percentage of Pyramid practices that were **fully in place** on average across time for each subscale and overall. Results are reported for 30 centers at baseline, 17 centers at Year 2 and seven centers at Year 3. To meet fidelity to the Pyramid Model, 75% of the practices must be in place.

**Centers increased fidelity to the Pyramid Model over time.  
They almost met the program goal in setting expectations.**



Programs nearly met the goal of 75% of indicators in place in setting expectations and approached the goal in providing professional development around the Pyramid Model. The areas that showed the least fidelity are Staff Buy-in to the Pyramid Model and Monitoring the Implementation where less than half the practices were in place (43% and 47% respectively) by Year 3.

It is important to note that the disruptions caused by the pandemic may have impacted progress towards fidelity. For example, when centers were closed to outside visitors, they could not “involve families” in the Pyramid Model. They could not do in-person training with families or demonstrate Pyramid Model strategies they were using in the classroom that could also be used at home. In addition, with high staff turnover, it would be difficult to get all staff to buy-in to the model.

Results of a paired t-test analysis indicate that centers made significant improvements in fidelity from Baseline to Year 2: Baseline (M=27%; SD=21.86) to Year 2 (M=48%; SD=23.61),  $t_{(16)}=-3.743$ ,  $p<001$ ,

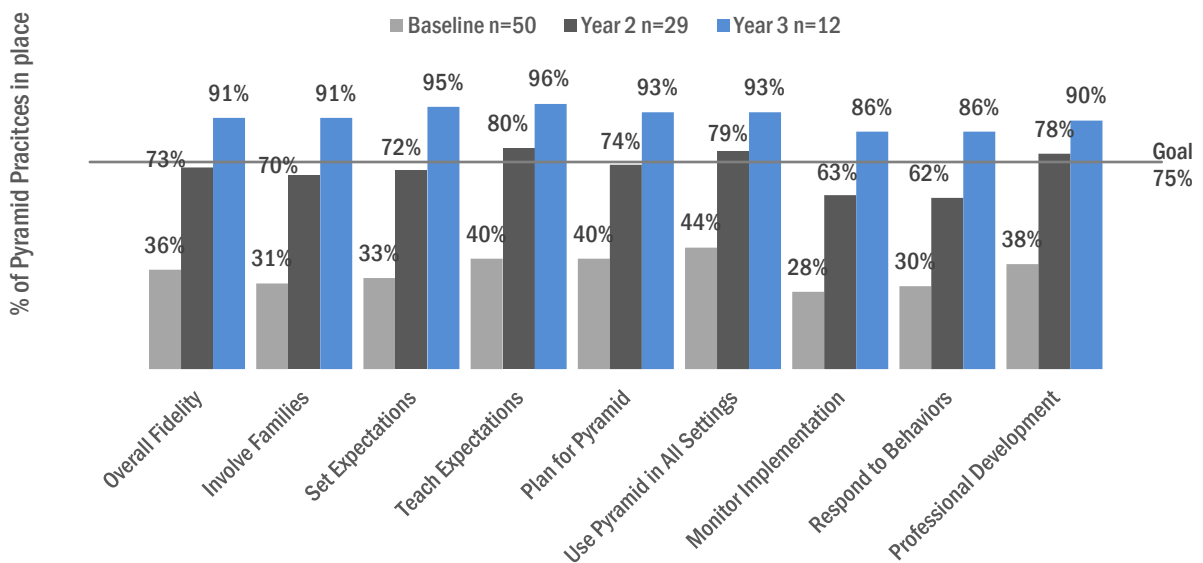
$d=.908$ . This result suggests a large effect size within the zone of desired effects. The sample size for Year 3 was too small to conduct the analysis.

**Fidelity for Family Child Care Homes.** Home providers use a fidelity tool that is similar to the BOQ v.2 called the Family Child Care Homes Program-wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (FCCH BOQ). The FCCH BOQ has eight subscales, five of which align with the center-based BOQ. The FCCH BOQ does not have: Establish Leadership Team or Staff Buy-In. Instead, it has: Establish and maintain a plan for implementation, strategies for teaching and acknowledging the program-wide expectations, and implementation of the Pyramid Model is demonstrated in all environments.

The following graph shows the percentage of Pyramid practices that were **fully in place** on average across time for each subscale and overall. Results are reported for 50 family child care homes at baseline, 29 at Year 2 and 12 at Year 3. To meet fidelity to the Pyramid Model, 75% of the practices must be in place.

**By Year 3, home-based providers implemented the Pyramid Model to fidelity across all areas.**

Overall fidelity showed 91% of practices in place.



Home-based providers made great strides in implementing the Pyramid Model. Before coaching and training, only 28% to 44% of Pyramid Model practices were in place across the subscales. By the end of Year 3, providers, on average, achieved fidelity well above the program goal in all areas.

Results of a paired t-test analysis indicate that home-based providers made significant improvements each year of the program: Baseline (M=39%; SD=23.18) to Year 2 (M=72%; SD=21.81),  $t_{(28)}=-7.900$ ,  $p<001$ ,  $d=1.467$ ; Year 2 (M=68%; SD=24.786) to Year 3 (M=91%; SD=9.255),  $t_{(11)}=-3.998$ ,  $p=001$ ,  $d=1.154$ . These results suggest large effect sizes within the zone of desired effects.



## Measures of Center-Based Classroom Practices

Classroom assessments are completed by an external evaluator. Scores are reported on two scales:

**Key Practices** examine Pyramid Model strategies. The score is reported as a percentage of indicators met. **Red Flags** signify problem practices in need of immediate attention.

Quality for both tools was defined as meeting 80% of the Key Practices and having NO Red Flags.

**Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool, Research Edition (TPOT)** Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014.

- **Key Practices** - 14 areas
- **Red Flags** - 17 items

**Teaching Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale, Revised (TPITOS)** Carta, 2015

- **Key Practices** - 13 areas
- **Red Flags** - 11 items

## OUTCOMES FOR CENTER-BASED CLASSROOMS

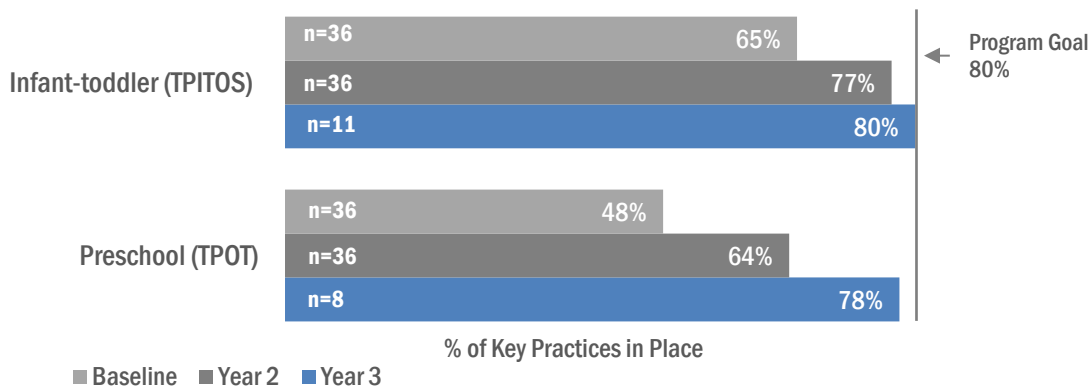
To measure center-based classroom outcomes, external evaluators completed observations using the **Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool Research Edition (TPOT)** for preschool rooms and the **Teaching Pyramid Infant/toddler Observation Scale Revised (TPITOS)** for infant and toddler rooms. The tools were not used to collect data in family child care homes, as they were not designed for this environment. The tools measure the implementation of Pyramid Model strategies across four areas of teacher practices: nurturing responsive relationships, creating supportive environments, providing targeted social-emotional supports, and utilizing individualized interventions. Practices measured in the **Key Practices** scale include building warm relationships with children, utilizing preventative strategies such as posting a picture schedule and structuring transitions, teaching social-emotional skills, and individualizing strategies for children with behavior challenges. The Key Practice score is reported as a percentage of Pyramid Model practices in place. The program goal is a score of 80%. **Red Flags** measure negative practices such as chaotic transitions and harsh voice tone. The goal is for classrooms to have zero Red Flags.

To analyze the impact of Pyramid Model Implementation, center-based providers are observed three times: at baseline, in Year 2, and at the end of Year 3, their final year in RiR.

The following results include all classrooms that had an observation at least twice. Results for classrooms that

had three observations are reported as well. The analyses measure changes over time, the percentage of classrooms meeting the program goal, and the incidence of negative classroom practices.

**On average, classrooms increased fidelity to the Pyramid Model over time. Infant-toddler providers met the program goal in Year 3. Preschool classrooms came close.**



Average Key Practice scores increased each year of RiR. Infant-toddler classrooms started with an average of 65% of Pyramid Model practices in place. Scores ranged from 35% to 92%. By Year 2, the average was 77%, with a range of 38% to 92%. By Year 3, the average score was 80%, which met the program goal. Year 3 scores ranged from 52% to 98%.

Preschool classrooms had a baseline average of 48% of Pyramid Model practices in place, with a range of 8% to 85%. By Year 2, the average score was 64%, with a range of 22% to 90%. By Year 3 the average almost met the program goal with 78% of practices in place. The scores ranged from 42% to 93%. The steady improvement over time shows the merits of a three-year implementation, giving providers time to master the model.

An analysis of results by classroom indicates that most classrooms improved: 83% increased fidelity to the Pyramid Model from Baseline to Year 2. Moreover, by Year 2, more classrooms met the program goal of having 80% of Key Practices in place. At the baseline observation, 21% of infant/toddler and 3% of preschool classrooms met the program goal. In Year 2, 50% of infant-toddler classrooms and 22% of preschool classrooms met the goal. By the end of Year 3, 36% of infant-toddler and 63% of preschool classrooms met the goal.

Results of a paired t-test analysis indicate that classrooms made significant improvements from Baseline to Year 2. The results suggest large effect sizes.

**Infant/toddler classroom gains:** Baseline (M=65%; SD 15.15) to Year 2 (M=77%; SD 11.19),  $t_{(35)} = -5.759, p < .001, d = 0.960$ .

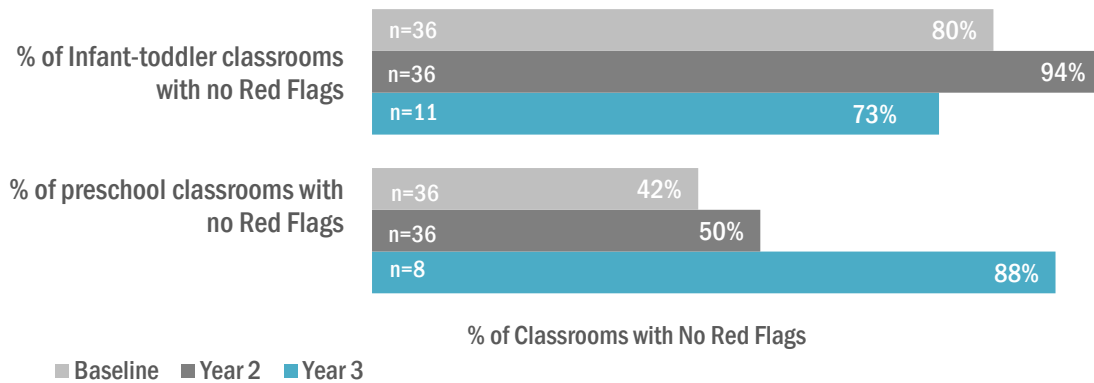
**Preschool classroom gains:** Baseline (M=48%; SD 16.65) to Year 2 (M=64%; SD 16.95),  $t_{(35)} = -6.199, p < .001, d = 1.033$ .

Infant-toddler classrooms did not show significant improvement from Year 2 to Year 3. The

sample size for Year 3 preschool classrooms was too small to do a statistical analysis.

The following chart presents the incidence of Red Flags over time. Red Flags measure negative classroom practices such as threatening negative consequences, reprimanding children for expressing emotions, and discouraging children from playing together. The program goal is for classrooms to have no Red Flags.

**The number of preschool classrooms with NO Red Flags increased over time. By Year 3, most classrooms met the program goal.**



In preschool classrooms, negative practices declined over time. At baseline, 80% of infant-toddler classrooms and 42% of preschool rooms had no Red Flags. In Year 2, all but one (94%) infant-toddler room and half of the preschool rooms had no Red Flags. By the end of Year 3, 73% of infant-toddler rooms and 88% of preschool rooms had no Red Flags.

Although Red Flag practices were not completely eliminated, the number of Red Flags decreased over time. At baseline, infant-toddler classrooms had 0 to 3 Red Flag practices. By Year 3, the range was 0 to 1. For preschool classrooms, the Red Flag practices at baseline ranged from 0 to 12. By Year 3, the range was 0 to 2.

## OUTCOMES FOR PROVIDERS

The RiR evaluation collects qualitative and quantitative data from providers at three points in time to determine their satisfaction with the program, to measure their self-assessment of their Pyramid skills, and to gather their feedback on how to improve the program. First year providers participate in focus groups about program implementation. Second year providers take a satisfaction survey reflecting on how their skills have changed over time. In addition, a sample of providers participate in one-on-one interviews. Third year providers complete an exit survey about their students’ social-emotional competencies and their own confidence in using Pyramid strategies.

**Focus Group and Interview Results – Year 1 and Year 2 providers.** In 2021, 14 Year 1 providers participated in focus groups and 16 Year 2 providers participated in one-on-one phone interviews. The top takeaways from these sessions are reported below. A complete analysis of the focus groups and interviews is available in a separate report.

### Key Findings: Year 1 providers

- The experience of working with their coach was meaningful and positive.
- Providers reported strong satisfaction about the relationship they had with their coach.
- Coaches supported providers by providing information, ideas, and encouragement, answering questions, and troubleshooting with providers.
- Providers learned a new way to approach problems and appreciated the many specific strategies they learned and implemented.
- Some providers have changed their practices regarding time-outs and expelling children.
- Participation in the program has strengthened providers' relationships with families.
- RiR trainings were beneficial, despite the challenges of doing them online, due to the pandemic.
- All providers would recommend RiR to others.



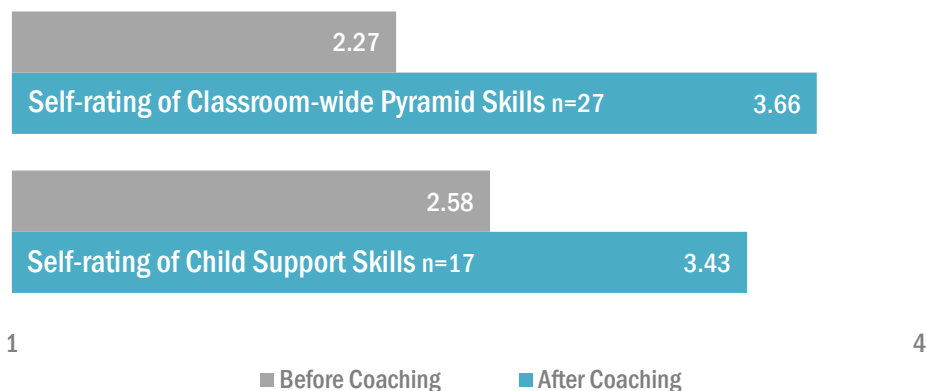
### Key Findings: Year 2 providers

- Providers reported an increased awareness of social-emotional development in children.
- Providers feel confident in managing challenging behaviors.
- Providers who have consistent communication with their coaches reported a high level of satisfaction with the support they have received.
- Pyramid Implementation has offered continued support and reinforcement for positive relationships between providers and parents.
- Providers recognize many advantages of participating in RiR and using the Pyramid Model.

**Satisfaction Survey Results – Year 2 providers.** Providers in their second year of RiR evaluated how their ability to support the social-emotional development of young children had changed over time. The 28-question pre-post survey is a self-assessment of skills to support the social-emotional competence of all the children in their classroom (e.g., *I use a variety of strategies to help children learn social skills, such as sharing and initiating play*) and to support an individual child with more persistent behavioral challenges (e.g., *I can help this child learn to use positive skills to replace his or her challenging behaviors*). The survey uses a 4-point Likert

scale with 1 = almost never and 4 = almost always. This year, 27 providers completed the survey in Year 2 of RiR. All respondents rated their classroom-level skills and a subset of respondents (17) rated their ability to support an individual child who struggled with social-emotional competencies. Some providers skip this section of the survey because they have not needed to individualize Pyramid Model supports for a specific child.

**Providers reported a significant increase in their skills as a result of participation in Rooted in Relationships.**



Providers reported significant increases in Pyramid related skills, such as creating a positive environment and following a daily routine. Results of a paired t-test analysis indicate significant positive differences between classroom skills at pre (M=2.27; SD=0.516) and at post (M=3.66; SD=0.327),  $t_{(26)}=-7.982$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $d=1.536$ , two-tailed test. The results suggest a large effect size within the zone of desired effects.

Providers who implemented specific strategies to support individual children struggling with social-emotional skills also noted strong improvement in their abilities. Thanks to RiR coaching and training, providers felt more capable of implementing strategies to build children’s social-emotional skills and to manage challenging behavior. Results of a paired t-test analysis indicate significant increases from pre (M=2.58; SD=0.638) to post (M=3.43; SD=.396),  $t_{(16)}=-5.617$ ,  $p<.000$ ,  $d=1.362$ , two-tailed test. The results show large effect sizes within the zone of desired effects.

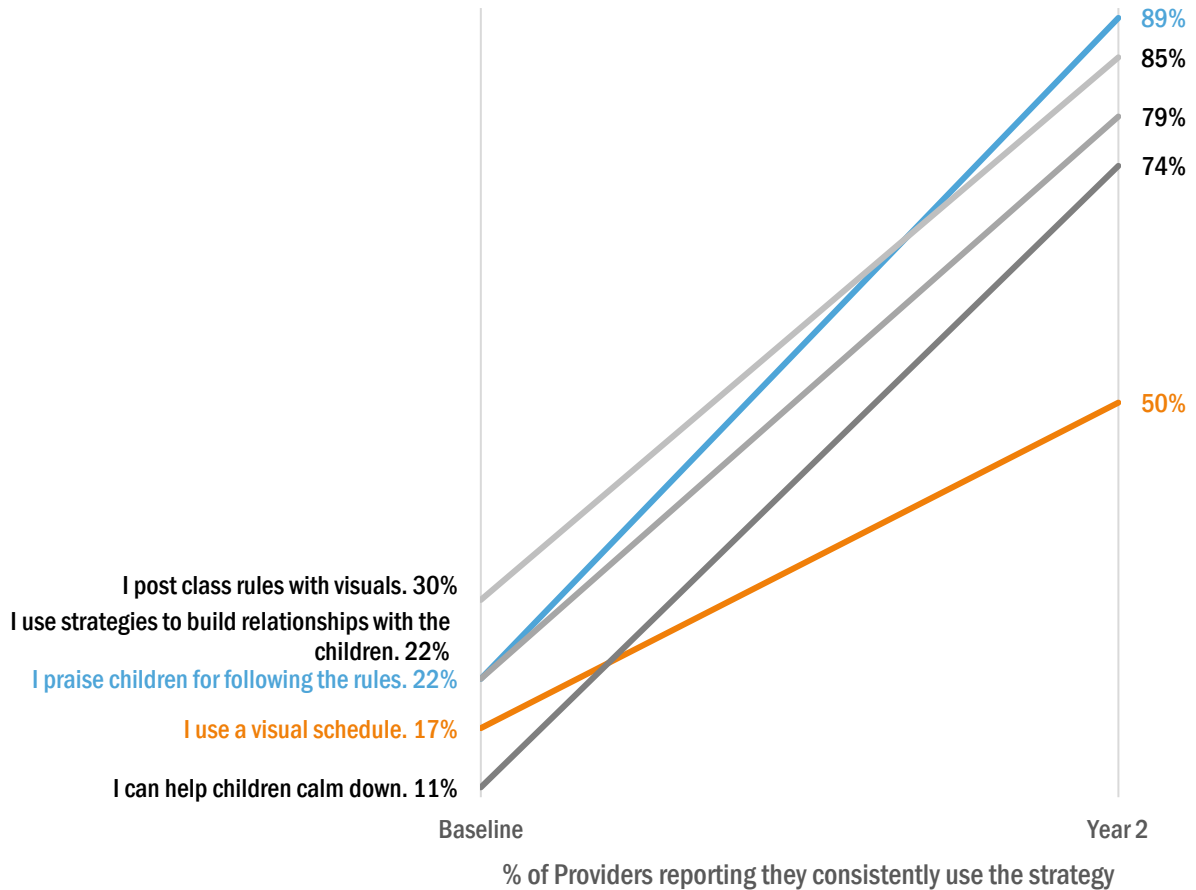
**96%** of the providers were satisfied or very satisfied with their RiR coach and **78%** reported that they made some or many changes to their classroom and child care practices through their participation in Pyramid Model training and coaching.

The following graph reports how respondents rated their use of selected Pyramid classroom practices. Prior to coaching, less than a third of providers consistently posted visual rules, praised children for following the rules, used strategies to build relationships with children, effectively helped children calm down, or used a visual schedule. By Year 2, 70% or more of the providers

felt they “almost always” implemented these key Pyramid practices, except for using a visual schedule where half frequently utilized the strategy.

**89% of providers report that they consistently praise children for following class rules by Year 2.** n=27

Half of the providers report using a **visual schedule**.



Year 2 results for other skill areas include: **74%** almost always use a variety of strategies to help children learn social skills, **70%** help the children use problem solving skills when they have a conflict with another child, and **67%** use creative strategies to meet the diverse needs of children in their care.

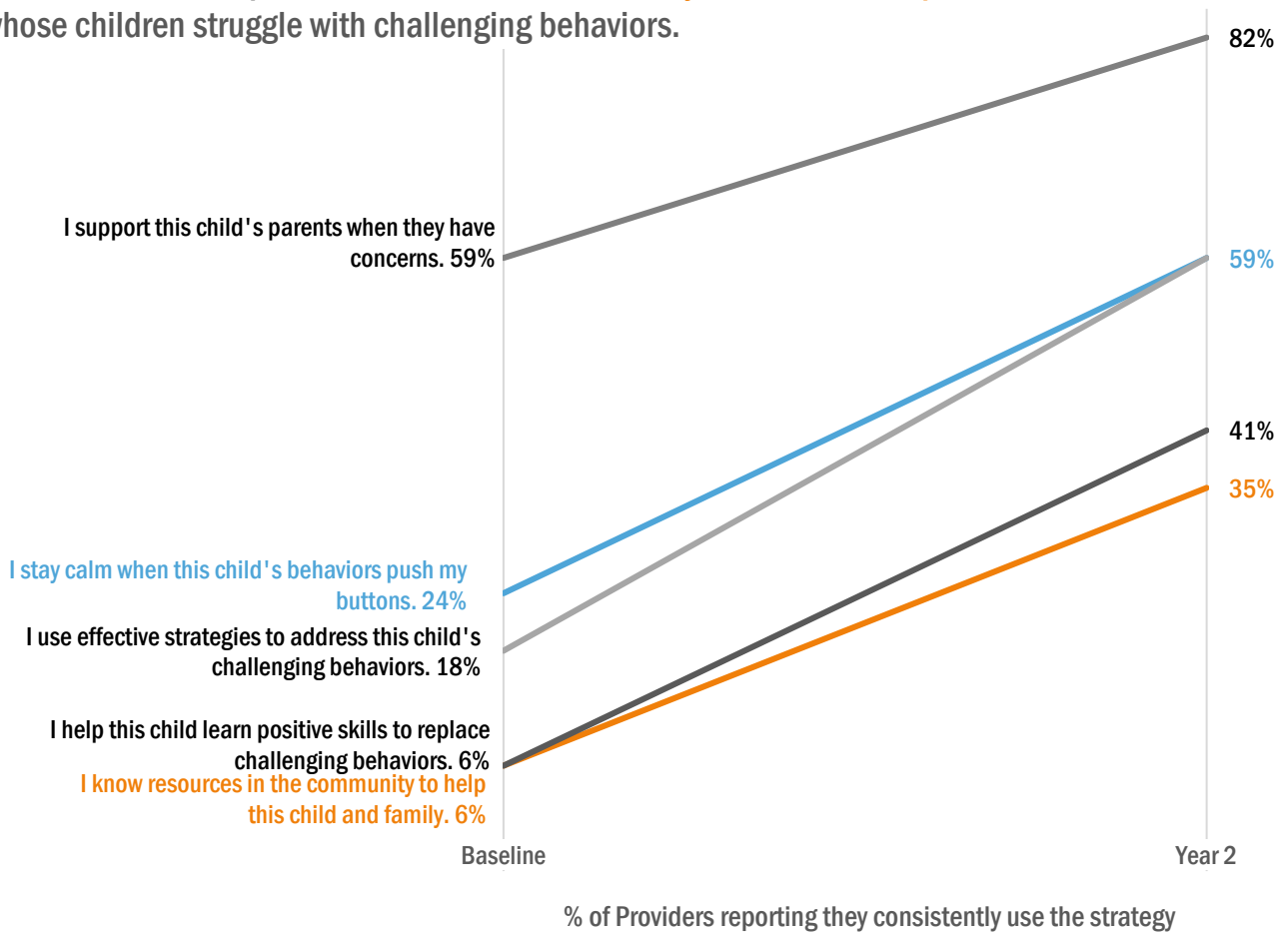
Respondents reported less growth in sharing information about ways to support children’s social-emotional development with families. At baseline, only **11%** almost always used this practice. By Year 2, **41%** reported frequently connecting with families about supporting their children.

Respondents reported on their frequency of using timeout to respond to challenging behavior. At baseline, **70%** used timeout. By Year 2, only **30%** reported using this punitive practice.

A total of 17 respondents indicated that they have worked on child specific Pyramid Model strategies to support individual children who struggle with challenging behaviors. They rated their skills at baseline (before RiR coaching and training) and at Year 2. Providers showed growth across all areas.

**By Year 2, the majority (59%) of providers stay calm when behaviors push their buttons.** n=17

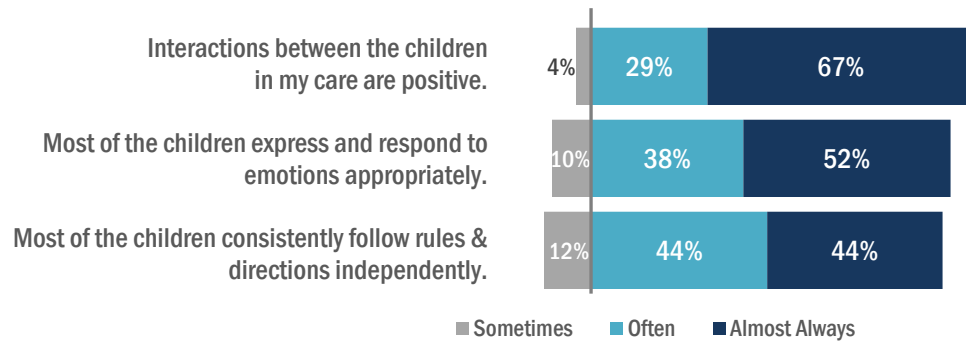
About a third of the providers know about **community resources to help families** whose children struggle with challenging behaviors.



The majority of providers indicated they have strong confidence in their skills to support parents, to stay calm when child behaviors push their buttons, and to use effective strategies to address challenging behaviors. They are less confident in their ability to help the child learn positive skills to replace challenging behaviors or help families access resources in their community to help their child.

**Exit Survey Results – Year 3 providers.** At the end of Year 3, 42 providers completed a 14-item exit survey that included their assessment of their children’s social-emotional skills, reflections on their mastery of Pyramid Model practices, and feedback about their experience in RiR.

**Year 3 providers reported that the children in their care have strong social-emotional skills. n=42**



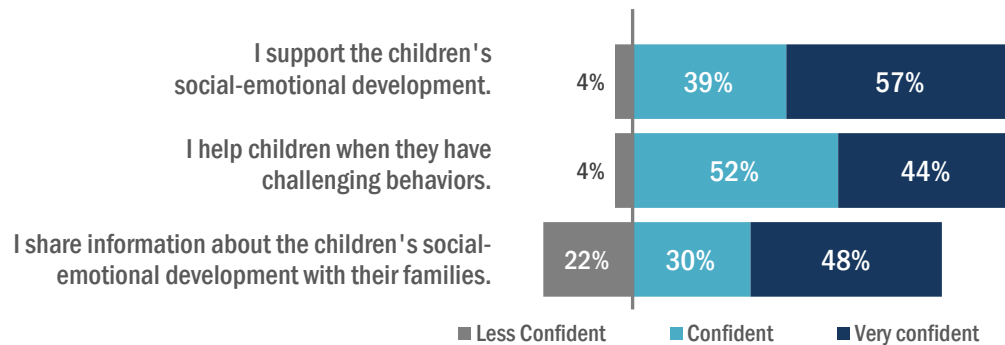
Results show that Year 3 providers felt that the children in their care consistently met behavior expectations and demonstrated positive social-emotional skills. Nearly all (91%) of the infant-toddler providers feel that they can “almost always” soothe the infants in their care. Through this survey, providers have given strong testimony that the three years they have spent in RiR have had strong positive impacts on their classrooms and the children they serve. All but one provider found the Pyramid Model training to be useful and relevant to their work. Over 80% rated the coaching experience and collaboration meetings as valuable or highly valuable.

**“I am more patient than I was before. I have so many tools to use with any child, not just major behaviors. I’m also so much more confident in my abilities which then makes caring for the children and knowing their needs so much easier.”**

**A provider reflects on what she has learned**



**Most providers are confident in their Pyramid Model Skills, including working with families to support children's social-emotional development. n=42**



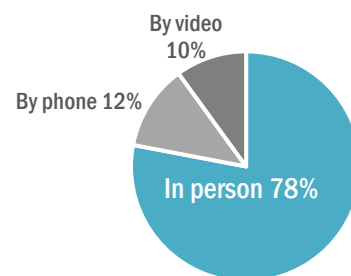
Overall, providers express strong levels of confidence in their Pyramid Model skills to support children’s social-emotional development. The majority are comfortable reaching out to families to support their children. **98%** of the respondents would recommend Pyramid Model training, coaching and collaboration to another child care provider. **98%** reported that they have a plan to continue using Pyramid Model strategies when they no longer receive coaching. This finding is important for the sustainability of the RiR Pyramid Model initiative after providers exit the program.

**COACHING**

**Frequency and Intensity of Coaching.** Coaches were expected to meet with providers 2.5 hours each month in Year 1 and 1.5 hours each month in Year 2. In Year 3, in preparation for the phasing out of all coaching by the end of the implementation, coaching was less frequent, with a minimum of 6 hours and a maximum of 12 hours for the year, and was customized to the needs and preferences of each provider. Approximately 44% of RiR participants were in the first year, 13% were in their second year, 28% will complete Year 3 in spring of 2022 and 15% completed Year 3 in the spring of 2021.

In 2021, coaches logged 2,750 in-person visits, phone consultations and teleconferencing sessions. This is a 10% increase from 2020. The average coaching session was an hour and most of them were in person. The following presents some of the highlights from the coaching survey including coaching topics, most common coaching strategies, and how coaches supported teachers around individual children’s challenging behaviors.

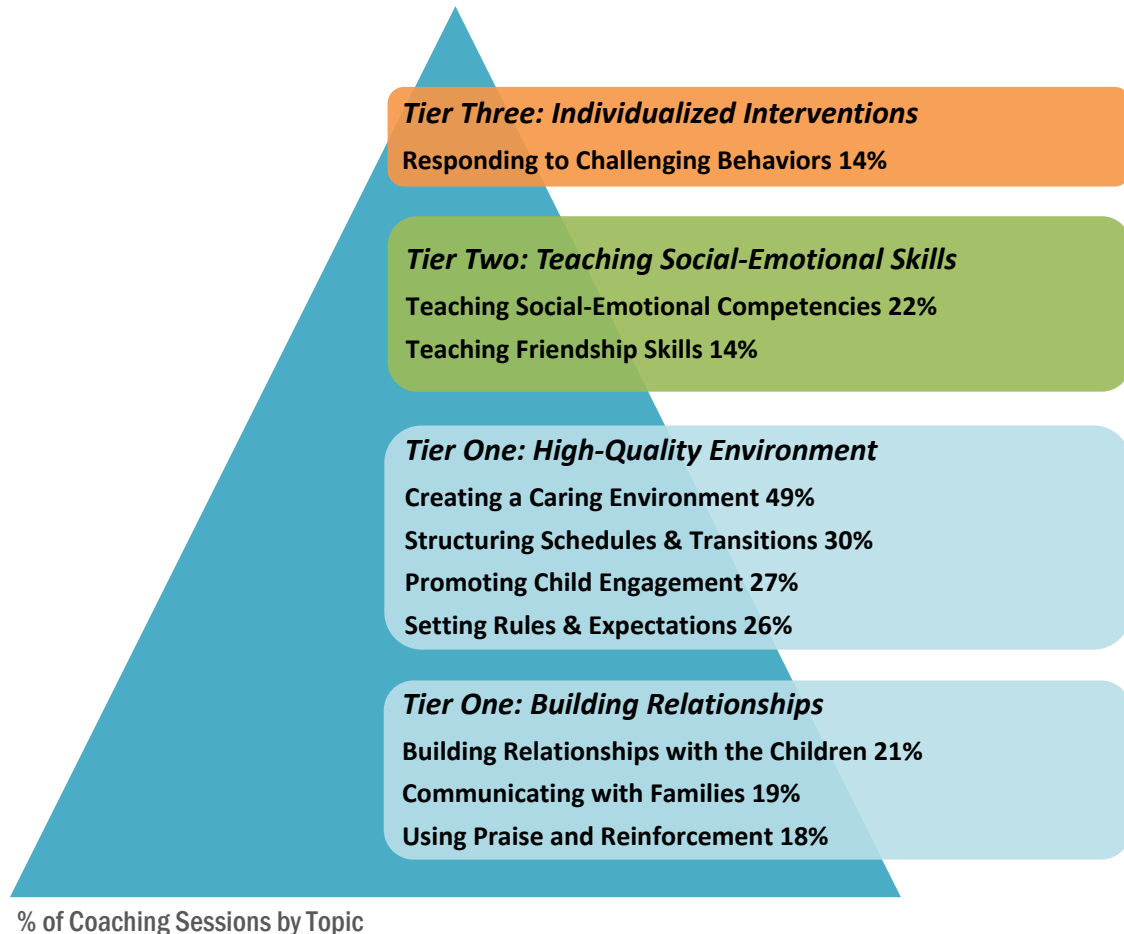
**Most coaching sessions were in person. n=2,750**



**Content of Coaching Sessions.** The content of the coaching sessions can be mapped onto the tiers of the Pyramid Model. The percentage indicated after each item in the graphic below indicates the frequency that the topic was addressed during the coaching sessions.

**Nearly half (49%) the coaching sessions focused on creating a supportive classroom environment.** N=2,750

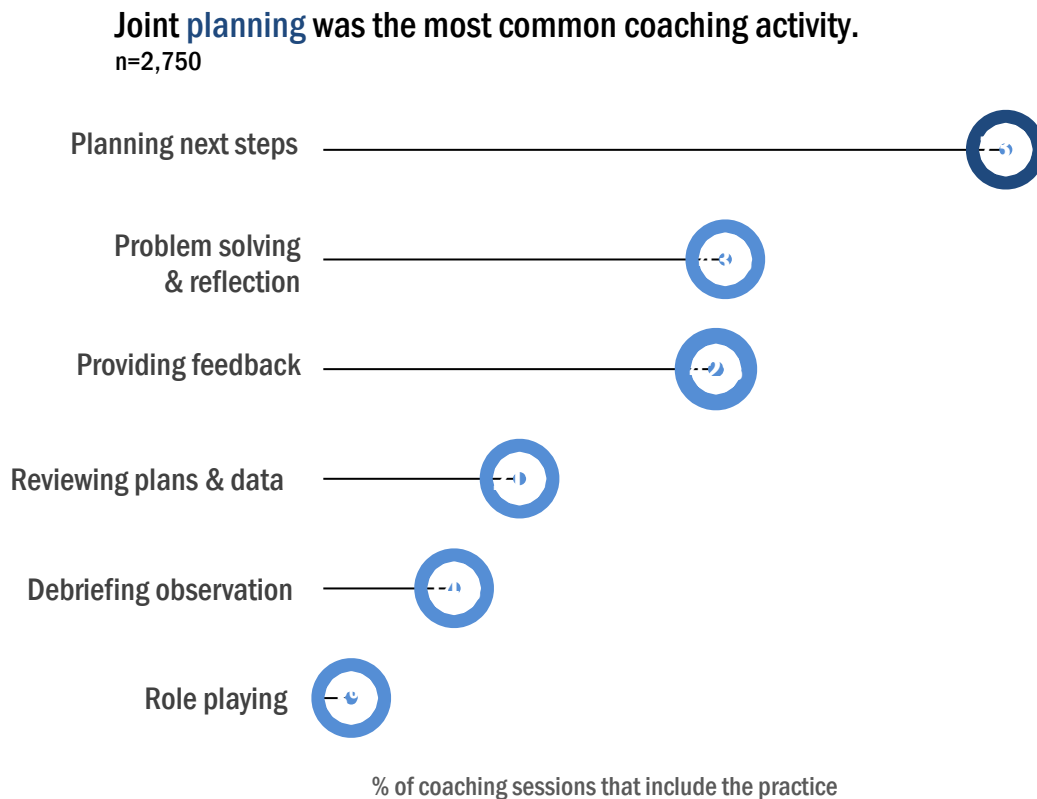
**Fewer coaching sessions (14%) focused on responding to challenging behavior.**



Most coaching sessions focused on Tier One strategies that include building strong relationships with the children and creating a predictable and developmentally appropriate classroom environment. Coaches used data to inform practices in 17% of coaching sessions. They brought providers materials and resources to over a quarter (28%) of the sessions.

Coaches focused on strategies to respond to challenging behaviors in 14% of the sessions. This is not a surprising finding because when the Pyramid Model is in place, challenging behaviors should decrease, and fewer children should need individualized support.

**Characteristics of Coaching Conversations.** A typical coaching conversation uses a cyclical process: the coach begins with the previous joint plan set with the provider, moves into some combination of the other characteristics, and ends with a new joint plan. The data is indicative of this process.



**Coaching Supports.** RiR provided monthly Reflective Consultation (RC) to the coaching team in each community. A trained consultant who is either a licensed therapist or an early childhood professional with coaching experience led the group sessions. The sessions provided a supportive space for coaches to discuss their work, to learn from each other, and to find strength from empathetic listeners and an expert consultant. In December, 30 coaches completed a survey about their experiences with Reflective Consultation.

**83%** reported that the reflective consultant helped them identify where they felt good about their decisions or feelings.

**80%** of coaches felt the reflective consultant consistently helped them process their “in the moment experiences” during RC sessions.

**70%** felt the reflective consultant helped them identify where they struggled with their decisions or feelings and helped them when they felt overwhelmed.

**68%** felt that RC sessions contributed positively to their coaching.

Most (80%) coaches noted that they see an increased need for mental health support for their providers. 93% of respondents have recommended that their providers utilize self-care resources such as mindfulness strategies to manage their stress. 20% have referred providers to mental health services.

Most (80%) of the survey respondents have attended FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions) training, which is the basis for RC. FAN has enhanced the coaches' listening, framing and responding skills. Coaches reported using FAN techniques to support providers who have often felt overwhelmed with the professional and personal uncertainties created by the pandemic. They appreciate that FAN has helped them validate feelings more and plan more supportive coaching sessions.

When new RiR coaches begin, they have an onboarding meeting with an RiR staff member, as well as with the evaluation team at MMI. They receive ongoing coaching support through an RiR staff member in addition to the standard technical assistance that is provided. Additionally, after RiR coaches attend the Nebraska Early Childhood Coach Training and the Nebraska Pyramid Coach Training, they are connected with their regional Early Learning Connection-Coach Consultant for additional ongoing generalized coaching support. Coaches can join coach cadres, where they interact with coaches across initiatives, as well as receive one-on-one or group coaching support.

*"I just want to express a large thank you for supporting us through reflective consultation, because I do believe that without it, my mental health would have been much worse. Also, because of being supported, I was able to help support others in reaching out and holding their feelings so they could in turn hold feelings of their parents and children they serve."*

A coach



**"I use something from the FAN model in almost every coaching session. It has been life changing and I live by it every day in relationships outside of work as well. Since completing the training, I feel I have the knowledge to think and ask the right questions in the moment."**

**"The FAN training definitely helps me plan my coaching session, keeps me on track, and, during coaching sessions, keeps the process moving."**

**Coaches reflect on the value of FAN**



### Social-Emotional Measure

**Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Social-Emotional 2<sup>nd</sup> edition** (ASQ-SE2; Squires, Bricker & Twombly, 2015). The **ASQ-SE2** is a parent-completed 30 item social-emotional screener assessing self-regulation, compliance, affect and interactions.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN PYRAMID

A premise of the Pyramid Model is that as providers build caring relationships with the children, create positive and supportive environments, and directly teach children social-emotional skills, children's challenging behaviors will decrease. However, it is expected that a small number of children (<5%) may still need more individualized, targeted support. The model includes training and individualized interventions that providers can use in working with children who struggle. Additional resources are available through RiR to fund more intensive interventions should no other funding source be available.

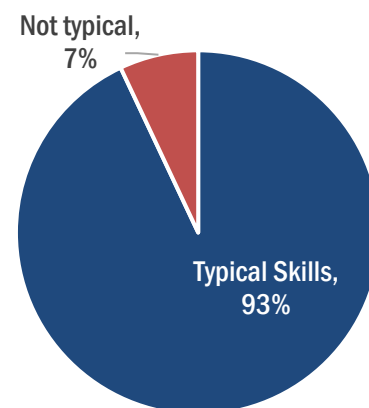
To assess the social-emotional development of individual children, providers asked parents to complete a screener, the **Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Social-Emotional 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (ASQ- SE2)**. The ASQ-SE2 has an age anchored

cutoff score. Scores at or above the cutoff are flagged, indicating that the child's skills are outside the typical range and the child may be at risk for delays in social-emotional development.

Coaches and child care staff work diligently with parents to complete the assessment; they find it to be an effective way to engage parents to reflect on their children's social-emotional development. In the fall of 2021, 125 programs collected ASQ-SE2 screeners for 1,763 children. This is a strong rate of return with 82% of programs collecting the screeners. 65% of children enrolled in RiR child cares had an ASQ-SE2. This year was the highest rate of return since RiR started collecting this data.

Results indicated that 93% of the children had typical social-emotional skills. They demonstrated the ability to engage in positive interactions with peers and adults and were able to regulate their emotions appropriately for their age. However, 7% did not demonstrate typical skills. The tool indicates that children who do not score in the typical range may have developmental

### Most children assessed had typical social-emotional skills. n=1,763



delays and further assessment may be warranted.

Note: given the tremendous impacts that COVID-19 has had on families since March of 2020, it is worth investigating if the ASQ-SE screener showed more children scoring outside of the typical range in comparison to previous years. Interestingly, a review of the results over the past three years does not appear to show a linkage between the pandemic and children's social-emotional skills. The ASQ-SE is collected for RiR in the fall. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, 90% of the children had typical skills. In 2020, approximately six months into the pandemic, 97% had typical skills and in 2021, with the pandemic still impacting child cares and families, 93% had typical skills.

Coaches assisted providers in interpreting the ASQ-SE results and determining next steps. Sometimes, when a child was flagged by the ASQ-SE, their behavior was not concerning, and no further action was required. For others, the child's challenging behavior or lack of social-emotional competencies were readily apparent. Coaches worked closely with providers to support children with persistent challenging behaviors or delays in social-emotional development. In some cases, the coach did a focused observation to collect data on child behaviors and note situations or transitions that are particularly challenging. The coach helped providers select the best classroom strategies to support the child.

In 2021, approximately 14% of coaching sessions focused on strategies to address children's challenging behaviors. Coaches documented 21 instances of referring a child to EDN or school district special education services, 13 instances of making referrals to a mental health provider, and one referral to a child's pediatrician. These referrals resulted in seven children being verified for special education services, which offers additional support to children that greatly benefits not only the children, but also their families and their child care providers.

**Expulsion from Child Care.** The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights data show that expulsion and suspension are widely used in early childhood programs and that there are gender and racial disparities (United States Department of Education, 2014). Nationally, the rate of expulsion for young children from state-funded pre-K programs has been found to be three times the expulsion rate for children in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade (Gillam, 2005). It is estimated that the expulsion rate from private preschool programs is even higher.

Expulsion is a risk factor for young children. Experiencing a disruption in care can be bewildering for a child and adjusting to a new caregiver can take time. Expulsion is also a tremendous challenge for parents. When children are removed from a child care, parents may have difficulty finding a new caregiver on short notice, which adds stress for the family.

The RiR staff recognizes the importance of addressing the issue of suspension and expulsion of children in early care settings. They provide training to coaches to increase their awareness of the equity issues related to suspension and expulsion of young children. They have also created and distributed information

cards for parents about the effects of suspension/expulsion, definitions of different kinds of suspension, discussion prompts and questions for parents to use if their child has been expelled or suspended, and the number for the Nebraska Family Helpline where a parent can get help working through their child's challenging behavior. A companion resource has been developed for child care providers.

RiR coaches track the number of expulsions in the child cares they support. In 2021, **18** children were expelled from 13 sites. **83%** were male. The expulsion rate across all RiR sites is less than **.01%**.

*“The inability to hire and keep staff is severely impacting the early childhood field. Good providers that have even gone to school for this line of work are leaving the field due to stressful environments. Even though some of the companies are raising wages for childcare employees it is not enough to make them stay in this high stress work and so coaching has been very difficult. Everyone seems to be in ‘survival mode’ and while all my coachees seem to have buy-in to what the Pyramid Model has to offer, few are making progress toward their goals at the moment because staffing and burnout are such issues.”*

A coach reflects on the challenges child cares face



# Conclusions

## BUILDING STATEWIDE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS OF CARE

- Through cross agency collaboration, RiR has helped to align activities across statewide initiatives. These established partnerships have proven to be essential opportunities for connection as the ongoing nature of the pandemic stresses systems and individuals at all levels.
- RiR and partners continue to standardize processes for coach training, methods of communication, strategies for reducing coaching overload, as well as alignment of coaching processes and practices across initiatives. A regional coach system is now in place to enhance these efforts.
- Continued support of the development and expansion of the Nebraska Center on Reflective Practice (NCRP).
  - Coaches from RiR and Step Up to Quality complete the training process and RiR is now offering training to child care directors and home-based providers, thus supporting workforce development.
- Collaborate to build and support systems that enhance early childhood mental health in Nebraska such as Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Parents Interacting with Infants, Circle of Security Parenting Circle of Security Classroom and the newly added Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health endorsement.

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS OF CARE

- Despite ongoing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, RiR communities continued to implement and diversify their systems work. There was an increase in parent and provider trainings offered, as well as community and family events geared towards increasing family engagement.
- Across the board, RiR communities demonstrated strong systems level implementation in the priority areas of early care and education, family engagement, and partnerships with schools. Early childhood mental health and engaging with the medical field are two priority areas in which RiR collaboratives have opportunities for growth.
- Notably, RiR communities have increased their efforts around media and information sharing around early childhood social emotional development and resources available in the community. Several communities have begun to harness the power of social media to share information with parents and providers, which led to a marked increase in the number of people with whom valuable information has been shared.

## PYRAMID MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

- Pyramid Model coaches have supported center and home-based child care providers to implement high quality social-emotional practices.
- As the pandemic continued to impact early childhood providers, coaches have provided emotional support and helped providers manage unprecedented stressors.
- Programs implementing the Pyramid Model program-wide demonstrated increased fidelity over time. By Year 3, centers had 61% of Pyramid practices fully in place. Home-based providers had 91% of practices fully in place.
- By Year 3, 36% the infant/toddler rooms and 63% of preschool classrooms met the quality benchmarks for classroom practices.
- Providers have demonstrated significant improvements in their ability to use Pyramid practices to support children’s social-emotional development.
- 65% of the children enrolled in the RiR programs had a social- emotional screener. A small percentage of the children (7%) were flagged for additional evaluation.

“The Pyramid has shown me how to help kids transition between activities. A schedule keeps anxiety down and helping kids with their emotions is a great way to keep them from acting out when something is not going their way.”

“I am focusing on the positive behaviors in my classroom. I have tools to help the children handle big emotions. Many children no longer need help using these tools and can handle their own emotions. Often, I can find a reason for negative behaviors and help find a solution to the problem.”

Providers reflects on the impact of RiR



## References

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- Gillam, W. (2005). Pre-kindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state kindergarten systems. New Haven, CT: Yale University Child Study Center.
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- Sarver, S.L., Huddleston-Casas, C., Charlet, C., & Wessels, R. (2020). *Elevating Nebraska's Early Childhood Workforce: Report and Recommendations of the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission*. Omaha, NE: Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska.
- U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) *Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot (Early Childhood)*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-early-learning-snapshot.pdf>



“My coach checked in frequently and listened to me even just to vent about the new challenges I was facing at school. She was very supportive and offered to help the best she could.”

“My coach has great ideas and strategies that help with each individual child I am struggling with!”

Providers reflect on coaching



**“The Pyramid Model definitely helped me to learn more about how to support the preschoolers in my classroom with their social-emotional development. It helped to provide me with ideas and tools that could be implemented immediately. I have been teaching for 9 years. The more I teach, the more it seems that children need support in dealing with social-emotional issues. The Pyramid Model helped me know how to help each individual child, whether it is sharing or helping to navigate challenging behaviors. I feel so much more capable as a preschool teacher after going through the Pyramid Model!”**

**A Year 3 provider reflects on RiR**

Evaluation Report prepared by  
Amanda Prokasky, Ph.D., Rosie Zweiback, M.A., & Amy Encinger, Ph.D.  
The University of Nebraska Medical Center’s  
Munroe-Meyer Institute: A University Center of Excellence for  
Developmental Disabilities





## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 18, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve a continuation grant to the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC) to operate the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nebraska® Scholarship program

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nebraska® is a scholarship program for low-income professionals working in early childhood education and care programs who want to continue their education. T.E.A.C.H. is an acronym that stands for Teacher Education and Compensation Helps. T.E.A.C.H. programs operate in twenty-one states. Nebraska TEACH scholars work to complete associate degrees in early childhood education and eventually may complete a bachelor's degree and obtain a Nebraska teaching certificate with an Early Childhood Inclusive endorsement. T.E.A.C.H. pays tuition, books, and release time for students who work at least 30 hours per week in an early childhood program. The Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children is the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nebraska® license holder for Nebraska.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$360,000

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal fiscal year 2022, Child Care Development Funds (CCDF)
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: The NDE first contracted with NeAEYC in 2002

# T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nebraska

## FY21 Results

Before first grade, a child may spend more than 10,000 hours in child care. Research tells us that children enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs in the first five years of life are more likely to be in a highly skilled job or college at age 21. Ensuring quality early care and education for children today creates a viable workforce for the future and a strong American economy in the long run.

The quality of early care and education a child receives is directly linked to the education and compensation of early educators. In **Nebraska**, many early educators do not have higher education degrees and many earn less than \$15 an hour. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program awards educational scholarships to early education professionals to address the key issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover in the workforce. All T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships link increased education with higher compensation and retention. Scholarship recipients and their sponsoring early care and education programs share the cost.

In **Nebraska**, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® is administered by **Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children**. In FY21, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® **Nebraska** helped **131** early education professionals increase their education.

### Education

- Recipients on associate degree scholarships completed an average of **17.7** credits per contract.
- Recipients on bachelor's degree scholarships completed an average of **20.4** credits per contract.
- T.E.A.C.H. recipients in **Nebraska** completed more than **1,703** credit hours.
- The average grade point average (GPA) for a T.E.A.C.H. recipient on an associate degree scholarship was **3.35**.
- The average GPA for a T.E.A.C.H. recipient on a bachelor's degree scholarship was **3.63**.

### Compensation

- The average hourly wage of a teacher on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship was **\$13.03**.
- The average increase in earnings for a T.E.A.C.H. recipient on an associate degree scholarship was **8%**.
- The average increase in earnings for a T.E.A.C.H. recipient on a bachelor's degree scholarship was **9%**.

### Retention (removing turnover caused by COVID-19)

- For associate degree scholarship recipients, the average retention rate was **95%**.
- For bachelor's degree scholarship recipients, the average retention rate was **98%**.

### Demographics

- **78%** of recipients worked with 3-5-year-old children.
- **56%** of recipients worked with children less than 3 years old.
- **33%** of recipients were people of color and/or Latinx.
- T.E.A.C.H. recipients attended one of **8** community colleges or **5** universities offering early childhood degree programs in **Nebraska**.

### Personal Impact

- In a survey of T.E.A.C.H. recipients, **100%** said they would recommend T.E.A.C.H. to their peers, and **95%** of their employers would recommend T.E.A.C.H.

T.E.A.C.H. recipients show dramatic dedication to remaining in their professions with turnover rates far less than the national turnover rates of 30-40%. This year alone, **11,717** of **Nebraska's** children benefitted from consistent early education and care provided by better prepared early childhood educators.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Initiative is heralded by experts in the field as a national leader in creating solutions for early childhood education workforce challenges. National outcomes can be found in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® 2020-2021 [Annual Program Report](#).





## T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nebraska FY21 Voices From the Field



Zeneya (Coleman) Bunn was first awarded a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship in the Fall 2015 term for an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education from Southeast Community College (SCC) in Lincoln. She completed 107.5 credits at SCC. After graduating from SCC at the end of the Winter 2018 term, Zeneya began work on her bachelor's degree at University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). She was awarded a new T.E.A.C.H. scholarship in spring 2020 at UNK. She completed 31 credits while working full time as a teacher in a child care program in Lincoln, NE. Zeneya graduated from UNK at the end of the Fall 2020 term with her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Zeneya says, "I have been with the T.E.A.C.H program since 2015! I started T.E.A.C.H. at the first child care center I worked at while attending Southeast Community College-Lincoln majoring in Early Childhood Education-Inclusive. Unfortunately, only a few months into the program, the child care center I was at got shut down. I immediately transferred to another child care center where I was able to get right back on the T.E.A.C.H. program with no issues! T.E.A.C.H allowed me to pursue the degree I wanted with so much extra help and support. I was able to go through my associate degree without having to worry about tuition, books, and having enough time to do homework or complete my practicums with those four hours of homework time.

"After completing my associate degree, I was told by my center that they would not allow me to complete my bachelor's degree through T.E.A.C.H. This devastated me, as I wanted to continue my education but could not do it without a little extra support from the T.E.A.C.H. program. I did end up applying at the University of Nebraska-Kearney and started to work on my Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education-Inclusive until my contract was up, and I was able to find another sponsoring center that would support my education. I ended up finding a center that would allow me to start back on T.E.A.C.H and even filled out the paperwork with me the day I was hired! I started working toward my bachelor's degree and with the help of the T.E.A.C.H program, I was able to make it through student teaching during the pandemic with the living stipend they offer to those who are student teaching.

"I do not think I would have reached these educational goals without the T.E.A.C.H. program and I am always telling others who are in school to look into it because of how much it helped me through college! I am now working toward my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Curriculum and Instruction at Peru State College! I want to give a huge thank you to everyone involved in T.E.A.C.H. for making my goals possible and a big thank you to Julie Warford for being with me every step of the way! Best of luck to everyone on the T.E.A.C.H. program. Stay safe and stay educated!"

**Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children  
650 J Street, Suite 23  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-858-5143**

[nebraskaaec.org/teach-early-childhoodreg.html](https://nebraskaaec.org/teach-early-childhoodreg.html)



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve awards for continuation of the Early Childhood Education Program grants to the identified public school districts.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Districts are eligible for continuation funds based on the amount of state aid calculation for 4-year-olds in the program subtracted from the original grant amount.

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education Grant Program is to improve equity of access to early childhood education/prekindergarten programs. Children of diverse characteristics will be served in inclusive environments and will be better prepared to enter school and be successful. Early Childhood programs are required to operate in compliance with *Rule 11 – Regulations for Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants.*

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$2,373,141

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: State General Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: Varies by district

**Districts eligible for continuation grants**

Arnold Public Schools	\$50,000
Ashland Greenwood	\$19,019
Auburn Public Schools	\$31,870
Bayard Public Schools	\$30,618
Beatrice Public Schools	\$33,362
Blair Community Schools	\$63,560
Broken Bow Public Schools	\$322
Centennial Public Schools	\$1,580
Clarkson Public Schools	\$31,059
Columbus Public Schools	\$150,940
Cozad Community Schools	\$12,524
Deshler Public Schools	\$48,587
Franklin Public Schools	\$9,386
Grand Island Public Schools	\$412,911
Kearney Public Schools	\$69,036
Kenesaw Public Schools	\$51,942
Lakeview Community Schools	\$100,000
Lyons Decatur Northeast	\$32,138
Malcolm Public Schools	\$24,611
Nebraska City Public Schools	\$76,276
Northwest Public Schools	\$16,186
Oakland-Craig Public Schools	\$37,506
Palmyra District OR 1	\$34,904
Papillion-LaVista Community Schools	\$97,615
Ralston Public Schools	\$24,666
Scottsbluff Public Schools	\$174,736
Sidney Public School	\$44,791
Stanton Community School	\$49,898
Stapleton Public Schools	\$76,922
Thayer Central Community	\$71,302
Tri-County Public Schools	\$25,646
Valentine Community Schools	\$46,757
Wallace Public School District 65	\$86,756
Waverly District 145	\$5,912
Wayne Community Schools	\$49,967
Westside Community Schools	\$46,571
York Public Schools	\$171,494



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 21, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve a renewal grant to the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children for the WAGE\$ program.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Child Care WAGE\$® NEBRASKA is a program that provides education-based salary stipends to low-wage early care and education providers working with children ages birth-five in licensed family child care settings in Nebraska. This program is designed to increase retention, education, and compensation of the early childhood workforce. The program pays periodic stipends to family child care providers on a graduated scale that is based on post high school educational attainment. At the first level participating providers receive \$300 annually for attaining nine college credit hours. The highest level, level 10, provides a \$3,500 annual supplement for a participating provider with at least a bachelor's degree with a current Nebraska teaching certificate.

The Nebraska Department of Education grants \$50,000 of federal child care development funds to the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$50,000

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal Child Care Development Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 21, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve awards for continuation of the Early Childhood Education Program grants to the identified public school districts.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Districts are eligible for continuation funds based on the amount of state aid calculation for 4-year-olds in the program subtracted from the original grant amount.

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education Grant Program is to improve equity of access to early childhood education/prekindergarten programs. Children of diverse characteristics will be served in inclusive environments and will be better prepared to enter school and be successful. Early Childhood programs are required to operate in compliance with *Rule 11 – Regulations for Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants.*

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$2,373,141

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: State General Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: Varies by district

### **Districts eligible for continuation grants**

Adams Central Public Schools  
Arnold Public Schools  
Ashland Greenwood  
Auburn Public Schools  
Bayard Public Schools  
Beatrice Public Schools  
Blair Community Schools  
Broken Bow Public Schools  
Centennial Public Schools  
Clarkson Public Schools  
Columbus Public Schools  
Cozad Community Schools  
Deshler Public Schools  
Franklin Public Schools  
Grand Island Public Schools  
Kearney Public Schools  
Kenesaw Public Schools  
Lakeview Community Schools  
Lyons Decatur Northeast  
Malcolm Public Schools  
Nebraska City Public Schools  
Northwest Public Schools  
Oakland-Craig Public Schools  
Palmyra District OR 1  
Papillion-LaVista Community Schools  
Ralston Public Schools  
Scottsbluff Public Schools  
Sidney Public Schools  
Stanton Community School  
Stapleton Public Schools  
Thayer Central Community  
Tri-County Public Schools  
Valentine Community Schools  
Wallace Public School District 65  
Waverly District 145  
Wayne Community Schools  
Westside Community Schools  
York Public Schools



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 18, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve awards for continuation of the Early Learning Connection Partnership Grants

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The professional development system for early childhood education and care providers in Nebraska is based on dissemination of training through seven Early Learning Connection (ELCs) Partnerships. These ELCs are located in selected Educational Service Units across Nebraska. Early Learning Connection Coordinators lead partnership efforts at local levels to form networks of early childhood education and care providers, private and public agencies, planning region teams, representatives from Nebraska Extension, school districts and institutions of higher education to provide professional development opportunities for adults working with young children across Nebraska. The funding for these grants comes from quality “set aside” dollars from the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant for which the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the lead agency. The Nebraska Department of Education enters into an agreement annually with DHHS for the use of a portion of the federal grant money.

The NDE monitors the ELC grants in multiple ways.

1. NDE staff visit each ELC Coordinator and the Coordinator’s supervisor each year. In 2021 the visits were done virtually.
2. At least 3 meetings are held with all ELC Coordinators. Again, in 2021 these were held virtually.
3. Additional virtual meetings or conference calls are held as needed.
4. Quarterly reports are submitted by the ELCs.
5. Financial reimbursement requests are scrutinized.

The grants to the seven ESUs are non-competitive, however each year the grantees are required to complete a continuation grant application. In this application, the ESU reports:

1. The number, variety, and engagement of local partners and the value of partner contributions (leveraged funds).
2. The regional training needs, based on an annual assessment, and the strategies to meet those needs.
3. The plan for meeting the requirements of the NDE and the US department of Health and Human services (the originator of the Child Care and Development Fund)

Grants are reviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services childcare licensing and childcare subsidy, NDE grants management, Step Up to Quality, and the Early Childhood Training Center. Strengths are noted. Areas for additional information are recorded, and all feedback is sent to the ESU.

Proposed Grantees:

ESU #1	\$170,364
ESU #3	\$319,291
ESU #6	\$304,564
ESU #7	\$170,364
ESU#10	\$290,927
ESU#13	\$168,727
ESU#16	\$168,727

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$1,592,964.00

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal Child Care Development Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: Approximately 2007

**State Board of Education Annual Orientation and Business Meeting.**

Thursday-Friday April 7-8, 2022

Embassy Suites by Hilton Lincoln, Regents Ballroom A, 1040 P 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 WORK SESSION, Thursday, April 7, 2022, 9:00 a.m.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

President Koch Johns called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Maureen Nickels  
Deborah Neary

Robin Stevens  
Kirk Penner

Patsy Koch Johns  
Patti Gubbels

Commissioner Blomstedt was also in attendance.

Absent: Lisa Fricke and Jacquelyn Morrison

1.2. President Koch Johns led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Koch Johns announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

1.4. Meeting Protocol

Commissioner Blomstedt asked members of the public to be considerate of the proceedings of the meeting.

**2. BOARD TRAINING**

The State Board engaged in a work session with Linda Richards, Blane McCann and Jason Richards from PRISM Advisors to discuss Collaborative Leadership.

Maureen Nickels left the meeting at 10:09 a.m., returned 10:11 a.m.

The Board took a recess at 10:50 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:01 a.m.

Kirk Penner left the meeting at 10:50 a.m., returned at 11:11 a.m.

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

President Koch Johns adjourned the meeting at 12:42 p.m.

The State Board of Education will reconvene Friday, April 8, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at Embassy Suites by Hilton Lincoln, Regents Ballroom A, 1040 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING, Friday, April 8, 2022, 9:00 a.m.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER** – President Patsy Koch Johns called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Maureen Nickels  
Deborah Neary

Robin Stevens  
Kirk Penner

Patsy Koch Johns  
Patti Gubbels

Commissioner Blomstedt was also in attendance.

Absent: Lisa Fricke and Jacquelyn Morrison

1.2. President Koch Johns led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Koch Johns announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

1.4. Meeting Protocol

Commissioner Blomstedt asked members of the public to be considerate of the proceedings of the meeting.

**2. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

2.1. Proclaim April 2022 as the Month of the Military Child and April 15, 2022, as “Purple Up! For Military Kids Day”

Lane Carr, NDE Representative, introduced Liane Yanikov, School Liaison Program Manager, Offutt AFB; Lt. Col. John Loken, 155<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Group Commander, Nebraska Air National Guard; Cara Loken, wife of Lt. Col. John Loken; Col. Jasin Cooley 55<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Group Commander, Offutt AFB; CMSgt Scott Tontegode, 155<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing Command Chief, Nebraska Air National Guard; SSG Jonathan Musilek, Army National Guard; and SGT Trey Rinkol, who spoke about the importance of the resources being provided to schools to better serve military-connected students.

Motion by Patti Gubbels, second by Deborah Neary to proclaim April 2022 as the Month of the Military Child and April 15, 2022, as “Purple Up! For Military Kids Day” and to adopt the resolution

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

The motion passed.

2.2. Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) District Scholar Equity Cadre

President Koch Johns introduced Keely Moore, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at Lefler Middle School; Peter Ferguson, Coordinator, Youth Development, Lincoln Public Schools; Zain Saleh, Senior at Lincoln North Star High School; and Alaa Ismail, Junior at Lincoln High School who shared their work with the Lincoln Public School District Scholar Equity Cadre.

2.3. Impact Story of ESSER Fund Investments

Cory Epler, NDE Representative, presented to the Board on impacts of ESSER funds: Zearn Math, leveraging ESSER II funds to support K-8 mathematics acceleration. Epler shared a recorded message from Shalinee Sharma, CEO Zearn Math and Sheri Ehler, Director of Curriculum, Sidney Public Schools.

2.4. 2022 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, Lee Perez, Alice Buffett Magnet Middle School, Omaha, Nebraska Quarterly Report

2022 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, Lee Perez, English as a Second Language teacher in grades 5-8th at Alice Buffett Magnet Middle School in Omaha, provided an update on the activities he has been involved with as Teacher of the Year.

3. **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

3.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process

3.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process

Commissioner Blomstedt provided an overview of the Consent Agenda process

3.1.A. No Consent Agenda Items were requested to be removed.

3.2. Board Operations Information

No report.

4. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Patsy Koch Johns mentioned the opportunity to meet with Linda Richards from Prism Advisors for one-on-one leadership sessions.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Maureen Nickels, second by Patti Gubbels to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

The motion passed.

6. **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

6.1. **Executive Committee** – Robin Stevens, Vice Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.

The Committee reported that Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner, provided an overview of the 2022 Proposed Legislative bills and those bills that the Committee supports or opposes.

Leslie Donley, Legal Counsel, answered Committee questions on the process and protocols of the Commissioner's Appraisal process. Joel Scherling, NDE Representative, will review the process. The

Board will receive the appraisal by email on April 8, 2022, and have two weeks to complete the appraisal instrument.

Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) was contacted for more information to support a Board survey for the Commissioner's Appraisal process.

The Committee discussed the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and that there are three areas that the Committee was asked to provide leadership in this process.

6.1.A. Review 2022 Proposed State Legislation

Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner, provided an update on the current Legislative Session. There was no Board action on this item.

6.1.B. Discuss State Board Bylaw B20, *Board Membership in Associations*

There was no additional discussion.

6.1.C. Presentation on Proposed Board Policy Structure Revisions

Patti Gubbels provided a presentation to the Board proposed revisions to the Board Policy Structure.

Board Members discussed reaching out to National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) for their research assistance with the reorganization of policies.

Kirk Penner left the meeting at 11:08 a.m., returned 11:11 a.m.

Robin Stevens left the meeting at 11:16 a.m. returned 11:20 a.m.

6.2. **Budget and Finance Committee** – Maureen Nickels, Chair, reported on the Committee Meeting.

The Committee discussed the plan for the remaining use of ESSER set aside funds and project next steps for USDOE compliance. NDE staff reviewed the plan for the remaining use of ESSER funds.

The Committee discussed the funding recommendations for the federally funded expanded learning collaborative sites. The locations were selected based on designations Comprehensive Support and Improvement, Targeted Support and Improvement and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement schools, achievement data and Covid19 impacts.

The Committee discussed the plan to accept funds from DHHS and the concerns about spending money on a data system and if the NDE or DHHS made decision on how these funds were allocated.

The Committee discussed the obligation of the funds for the Nebraska Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) and DHHS's desire to work with the NDE to create a data system that collects data to benefit both agencies.

The Committee discussed new and expanded Early Childhood Education Program grants, reviewed the source of the funds and how these funds are used.

The Committee reviewed the Monthly Board Travel Expense Report and noted total expenditures are still very low compared to years prior to the pandemic. There were no concerns on the report by Committee Members.

The Committee reviewed in-state travel authorizations with no issues or concerns.

The Committee will review its description and report back to the Board with any further recommended revisions by the June 2022 Board Meeting. The Committee discussed potentially working on a portion of the Strategic Plan and being more involved in strategic investments.

The Committee discussed a mental health program and the possibility of ESU#5 present to the Committee on a comprehensive mental health program in the future.

6.2.A. Monthly Board Travel Expense Report

There was no further discussion on this item

6.2.B. Review In-State Travel Authorization Reports

There was no further discussion on this item.

6.2.C Action Item: Discuss plan for remaining use of ESSER set aside funds, and project next steps for USDOE compliance

Motion by Maureen Nickels, second by Patti Gubbels to affirm the revised plan for the remaining use of ESSER set aside funds.

Lisa Fricke:	Absent
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Abstain
Maureen Nickels:	Yea
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Absent
Kirk Penner	Yea

The motion passed.

6.2.D. Action Item: Approve funding recommendations for the federally funded expanded learning collaborative sites

Motion by Maureen Nickels, second by Kirk Penner to approve funding recommendation for the federal funded expanded learning collaborative sites.

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

The motion passed.

6.2.E. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to sign an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to accept funds to support early childhood infrastructure related activities

Motion by Maureen Nickels, second by Patti Gubbels to sign an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to accept funds to support early childhood infrastructure related activities.

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

The motion passed.

- 6.2.F. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to obligate resources from the agreement with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for the Nebraska Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

Motion by Maureen Nickels, second by Deborah Neary to obligate resources from the agreement with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for the Nebraska Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

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

The motion passed.

- 6.2.G. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to approve awards for new and expanded Early Childhood Education Program grants to the identified public-school districts

Motion by Maureen Nickels, second by Kirk Penner to approve awards for new and expanded Early Childhood Education Program grants to the identified public-school districts.

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

The motion passed.

- 6.3. **Planning and Evaluation Committee** – Patti Gubbels, Chair, reported on the Committee.

Brad Dirksen and Micki Charf, NDE Representatives, presented an overview of Rule 14 and recommended approval of the nonpublic schools appearing on an accompanying list to operate for the 2022-2023 school year under Rule 14 (92 NAC 14), *Regulations and Procedures for the Legal Operation of Approved Nonpublic schools*.

Shirley Vargas and Lane Carr, NDE Representatives, provided feedback received from stakeholders about an addendum to the state's ESSA plan that is being pursued to allow for a one-year accountability transition year. The Committee requested that Shirley Vargas and Lane Carr provide the Board a brief explanation for the submission of the addendum.

The Committee reported on the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and accepting the responsibility of guiding development, monitoring progress, and affirming revision of the NDE staff-managed Content Area Standards Development Process.

6.3.A. Action Item: Approve the nonpublic schools appearing on the accompanying list to operate for the 2022-2023 school year under Rule 14 (92 NAC 14), *Regulations and Procedures for the Legal Operation of Approved Nonpublic Schools*.

Motion by Deborah Neary, second by Maureen Nickels to approve the nonpublic schools appearing on the accompanying list to operate for the 2022-2023 school year under Rule 14 (92 NAC 14), *Regulations and Procedures for the Legal Operation of Approved Nonpublic Schools*

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

The motion passed.

6.3.B. Discussion Item: Provide an update to the Board on fall 2022 accountability requirements and federal flexibilities being sought

Shirley Vargas and Lane Carr, NDE Representatives, provide an update to the Board on the Fall 2022 accountability requirements.

6.4. **Rules and Regulations Committee** – Maureen Nickels, reported on the Committee

The Committee did not have any action items on the agenda.

The Committee discussed Policy B13 revisions and Patsy Koch Johns provided her assent for revising.

The Committee reviewed the Rule Revision Calendar and discussed the current practice and what the practice now will be with the Committee.

Brad Dirksen, NDE Representative, provided the Committee an update on the proposed technical amendments to Rule 10 (Accreditation) and Rule 14 (Approval) due to the revised Nebraska Statutes related to civics, character education, and financial literacy.

Brad Dirksen, NDE Representative, provided the Committee an update on revisions to Rule 21 (Educator Certification) due to legislative changes and progress toward State Board regulatory priorities.

6.4.A. Report on Rules

Commissioner Blomstedt reported on the rules.

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

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51 is with the Governor awaiting approval.

President Koch Johns called for a recess at 12:24 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:17 p.m.

Kirk Penner left the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

## **7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

No items for additional business.

## **8. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

8.1. The following individuals from the public spoke against the Health Standards: Amanda Ripley, Amber Parker, Brenda McGill, Cheryl Perkins, Jeanne Greisen, Lee Todd, Julie Sheldon, Katie McClemens, Kelli Brady, Liz Davids, and Teresa Roeloffs.

The following individuals from the public spoke for the Health Standards: Garren Hostettler and Amy Hostettler.

Nicholas Norton spoke about the costs of a records request and transparency.

8.2. Written Public Comment

Submitted written public comments are linked through SPARQ in Board Agenda item number 8.2., SBOE Written Public Comment April 2022 Final.

## **9. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS**

9.1. President Koch Johns referred Board Members to review information items and reports.

## **10. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Maureen Nickels reported out on the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Legislative Conference.

Robin Stevens reported on the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association (NRCSA) listening session attended by Kirk Penner, Patti Gubbels, Maureen Nickels and Robin Stevens.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

President Koch Johns adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, May 5, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in North Platte, Nebraska.



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 11, 2022

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

**FROM:** Bryce Wilson, Administrator, Office of Financial & Administrative Services

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Approve the attached Special Grant Fund List for 2022/23 School District Budgeting.

### **RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Section 79-1003(40) requires the State Board of Education to identify special grant funds that are excluded from the definition of general fund budget of expenditures for purposes of calculating budget limitations of local school districts. Such funds would be treated as exclusions from school districts' general fund budget of expenditures for purposes of calculating budget limitations in accordance with state law.

For each school budget year, the list is revised, and State Board approval is requested. This request is applicable to the 2022/23 school district budget.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** None.

Nebraska Department of Education  
School Finance & Organization Services

**\*\*Proposed\*\***

**2022/23 SPECIAL GRANT FUND LIST**

1. ACE/Cultural Connections
2. Adult Education & Family Literacy Act Grants
3. Adult Education - English Literacy/Civics Grants
4. Adult Education Volunteer Coordination Program
5. Annenberg Foundation Grants (Rural Challenge)
6. ARP-HCY I & II
7. Artist-in-Schools/Communities Grants
8. Beyond School Bells Grant
9. Building Safe and Responsive Schools Grants
10. Career Pathway Advancement Project (CPAP)
11. Career and Technical Education Grants (Carl Perkins)
12. Century Link/NETA Grants
13. Child Care & Development Fund
14. Clean School Bus FY22-26
15. Community 4 Kids Grant
16. Community Incentive Grants
17. Department of Justice STOP Violence Grant
18. Distance Learning Grants (Federal)
19. Early Childhood Education Endowment Program Ages Birth-3 (Sixpence) Grants
20. Early Childhood Education Program Ages 3-5 Grants
21. Early Intervention Act and IDEA Part C (Infants/Toddlers with Disabilities) Grants
22. Education Improvement Fund Grants (includes Distance Education Incentive, Expanded Learning Opportunity, and Innovation Grants)
23. EducationQuest Foundation Community Grants
24. ESEA Title I Grants (includes Accountability, Support for Improvement, Disadvantaged, Migrant Education, and Neglected or Delinquent)
25. ESEA Title II Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction (Principal and Teacher Training and Recruiting/Class Size Reduction)
26. ESEA Title III Grants - Immigrant Education Grants
27. ESEA Title III Grants – Language Instruction for English Learners
28. ESEA Title IV Part A – Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grants
29. ESEA Title IV Part B - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grants
30. ESEA Title VI Grants - Rural and Low-Income (Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) Grants)
31. ESEA Title VII Grants - Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education
32. ESEA Title IX – McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Grants
33. ESSERS I/II/III - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (CARES, CRRSA, ARP)
34. Forest Service Grants (Conservation Education)
35. Great Plains Communications Grants (Commitment to the Schools)
36. GEERS – Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (CARES, CRRSA)
37. Head Start Grants
38. High Ability Learner Incentive Grants (Gifted)
39. High School Equivalency Assistance Act Grants
40. IDEA Part B, C & Sec 619 Flow-Through Grants (includes Base, Enrollment/Poverty, CEIS, and Non-public)
41. IDEA Special Education Discretionary Grants/Cooperative Agreements (including State Improvement Grants (SpDG/PBIS), Deaf-Blind Grants, Part B Sec 611 & Sec 619 State Set-Aside Grants/Cooperative Agreements, and other Office of Special Education Program (OSEP)

Nebraska Department of Education  
School Finance & Organization Services

**\*\*Proposed\*\***

**2022/23 SPECIAL GRANT FUND LIST**


- Grants/Cooperative Agreements)
42. Immigrant Impact Education Grants
  43. Improving Health & Education Outcomes for Young People
  44. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act/American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP)
  45. Indian Education Grants
  46. Innovation in Education Program Grants (includes funds from USDE)
  47. Johnson-O'Malley Grants
  48. JROTC
  49. Kiewit Foundation Grants
  50. Magnet School Grants
  51. Medicaid Administrative Activities in Public Schools (MAAPS)
  52. Medicaid in Public Schools (MIPS)
  53. Mentoring for Success Grants
  54. Microsoft Settlement Agreement
  55. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
  56. National Science Foundation Grants
  57. NDEQ
  58. NE Improving Student Health (CARES Act)
  59. NE Improving Student Health
  60. NE Emerging Technologies Initiative-Pathways to STEM grant
  61. Nebraska Grant for School Emergency Management
  62. Nebraska STOP School Violence Prevention Training Program
  63. Nebraska STOP School Violence Threat Assessment Program
  64. NE Youth Suicide Prevention 21
  65. Nebraska Arts Council Grants
  66. Nebraska Community Foundation/TeamMates Grants
  67. Nebraska Environmental Trust Grants
  68. Nebraska Game & Parks Commission Grants (Conservation Education, Outdoor Classroom)
  69. Nebraska Humanities Grants
  70. Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Grants
  71. Preschool Development Grant (PDG)
  72. Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness & Resiliency in Education)
  73. Ritonya-Buscher-Poehling Foundation Grants
  74. Refugee School Impact Grant
  75. reVISION Action Grant
  76. Safe Routes to Schools Grant
  77. Save the Children Grant
  78. School Climate Transformation Grant
  79. School Health Program Grants
  80. Smaller Learning Communities Program Grants
  81. SPED Planning Region Team
  82. Stackable, instructionally embedded, Portable Science (SIPS) Assessments.
  83. Statewide Longitudinal Data System
  84. Summer Food Service Program
  85. Supplemental Nutrition (CRRSA & ARP?)
  86. Teaching American History (TAH) Grants
  87. Technology Information Infrastructure Assistance Program Grants (U.S. Department of Commerce)

Nebraska Department of Education  
School Finance & Organization Services

**\*\*Proposed\*\***

**2022/23 SPECIAL GRANT FUND LIST**

- 88. Textbook Loan Grants (Rule 4)
- 89. USDA Nutrition Service Grants
- 90. Vocational Rehabilitation Grants
- 91. Young Adult Tobacco Prevention

 <p>Nebraska Department of Education Policy and Reference Manual</p>	<p>Bylaw Number B20 <del>(formerly B16)</del></p>	<p>Page Number 1 of 1</p>
<p>State Board Bylaw B20 <del>(formerly B16)</del>  School Boards Associations</p>	<p>Created: 1976 Last Revised: 2006 Reviewed: 1984, 1995, 2006, 2013, <u>2022</u> Approved: 09/07/2006 <u>Reaffirmed:</u></p>	

### Membership in Associations

The State Board shall maintain a membership in the National Association of State Boards of Education and may maintain memberships in such other organizations from time to time as the State Board deems appropriate. Such membership shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

### Board Action History

- 12/10/76 – Prior BGA  
(NEW)
- 12/7/84 – Prior 9340 BOP  
(Renumbered)
- 12/8/95 – Prior B16  
(Renumbered)
- 9/7/06 – B16  
(Added other organizations reference)
- 3/03/2017 – B16(B20)  
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. B16 is now B20)
- 05/06/2022 – B20  
(Reaffirmed by the State Board.)

### Cross-References



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
(Enter name of Committee) COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: May 5 2022

“The Committee on (enter committee name) reports that...

2.1.A. Consent Item: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Three Pillars Media Inc to create eight new virtual tours of Nebraska career opportunities

**Speaker(s):** Katie Graham

Discussion:

This work has been going on for several years and is due for an update since the current videos were created in 2015. The videos will be updated to include current data. NDE has worked collaboratively with department of economic development on this project.

<https://www.nebraskacareerclusters.com/>

2.2.A. Action Item: Accept the 2021 Single Audit

**Speaker(s):** Bryce Wilson

Discussion:

NDE reviewed the 2021 Single Audit with the Committee. Per NDE all findings were related to record keeping or operational procedures that have been addressed. There were no asset misappropriation or fraud concerns.

The Committee supported moving this item for action to the full board

2.2.B. Action Item: Approve the use of up to \$1,560,000 to fund grants to selected educational service units for preschool through grade two support

**Speaker(s):** Melody Hobson

Discussion:

NDE staff reviewed the need for the additional early childhood support. These grants will be directed to ESU's who will have different options for activities so that they can select what is most helpful to them in their area. ESU's will submit applications that explain the need for these grant funds. Some of the areas that may be considered are coaching, support, age-appropriate assessment strategies, transition practices. Since these programs will be administered by ESU's both public and non-public schools may benefit.

The Committee supported moving this item forward.

2.2.C. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to sign an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

**Speaker(s):** Melody Hobson and Kristen Yates

Discussion:

This agreement is to accept funds from DHHS which is being funded with Federal ARP dollars to support data systems related to early childhood. The data being collected is required by law. The funds will be used to pay for a professional record system to be developed by two programmers for four months initially to develop this system. The Committee supported moving this item forward to the full board for action.

2.2.D. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to enter into a new contract with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) for staff augmentation services in support of the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System (NECPRS)

**Speaker(s):** Melody Hobson and Kristen Yates

Discussion:

This item is to authorize the contract to spend the funds from DHHS for the purposes noted during the previous action item. The Committee supported moving this item to the full board for action.

2.2.E. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to design, implement, support, and evaluate a full-service community schools program focused on rural schools

**Speaker(s):** Zainab Rida and Lane Carr

Discussion:

NDE covered the work to be done with these funds. The purpose of this project is to provide wrap around services for families and districts in rural Nebraska. NCFE will be providing supports as a central navigator for students with additional needs in the areas of Childcare, Mental Health, Food Services, Translation, Connectivity to name a few. This work is to help bridge gaps in knowing where to find services for students within a community or area that currently lacks the full service supports sometimes needed. This work will be evaluated through a partnership with UNMC. These funds will be allocated based on areas of highest need. The Committee supports moving this forward to the full board for action.

2.2.F. Action Item: Accept the Community Living, Traumatic Brain Injury State Demonstration Grant

**Speaker(s):** Keri Bennett and Lindy Foley

Discussion:

This item is to allow the Commissioner to accept the grant funds. These funds will be used to assist adults that are recovering from traumatic brain injuries, helping them navigate the VR applications. A portion of the funds will also be used to evaluate data related to individuals with TBI. The Committee supported moving this item forward to the board for action.

2.2.G. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE), the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE), and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

**Speaker(s):** Keri Bennett and Lindy Foley

Discussion:

No further discussion as the item was covered during the previous action item. The Committee supported moving this item forward to the full board for action.

### **2.3. Discussion Items**

2.3.A Monthly Board Travel Expense Report

**Speaker(s):**

Discussion:

No discussion

2.3.B. In-State Travel Authorization Reports

Discussion:

No discussion

2.3.C. School Finance Training

**Speaker(s):** Chair Maureen Nickels

Discussion:

The Committee discussed the need to improve their understanding of school finance since it impacts so much of their work. The Committee discussed the desire to complete this training in smaller segments with a focus on upcoming financial deadlines or topics that are more in the moment. Topics discussed included: TEEOSA, Budgeting, AFR, Cycles of the Year, Communications to districts

### **2.4. Committee Update**

Other items discussed as follows:

Mental Health supports were discussed including a report provided by NDE for the Committee's review before the June meeting. Jen McNally of ESU #5 will be presenting to the Committee during the June Committee meeting on their mental health work and overall success of the program. Additional information will be presented to the full board in August.

Any additional roles for the Committee?

This concludes the (enter committee name) report.”

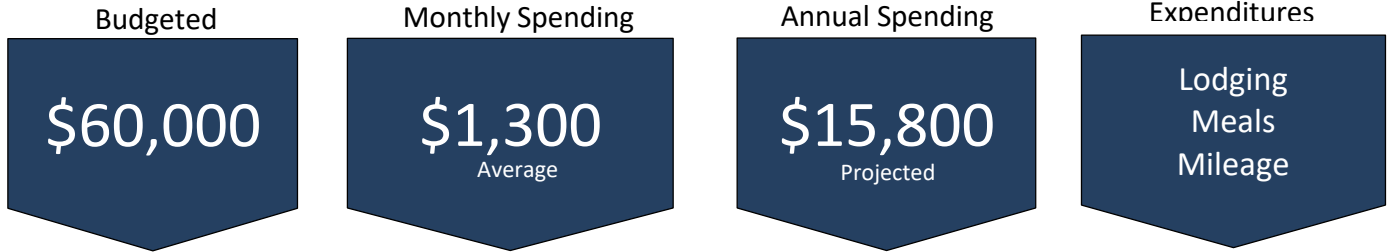
Maureen Nickels, Chair

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

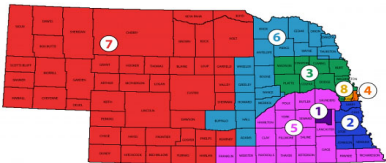


2021-2022 Board Travel

*At-A-Glance*



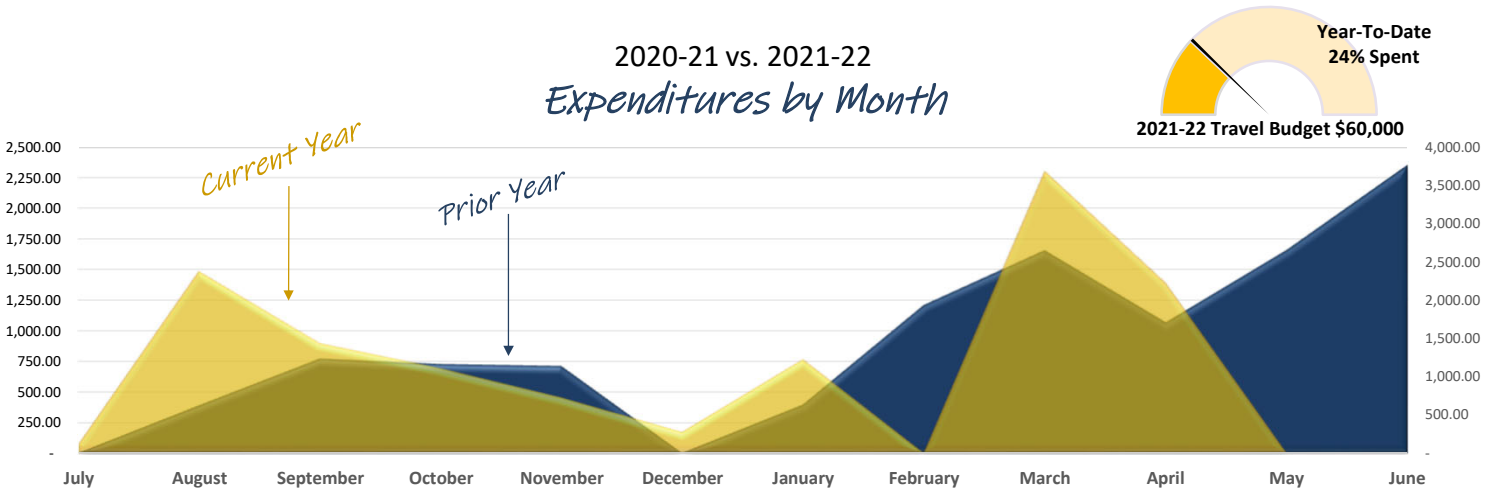
Even under pandemic conditions, the Nebraska Board of Education has retained the ability to attend meetings, conferences and conventions, sustain meaningful and dynamic work in addition to engaging in new opportunities provided through innovation and virtual technology during unexpected circumstances.



*Board Member Activity*

District	Board Member	Current Year July 2021-June 2022		Prior Year July 2020-June 2021		Variance			
		April	Year-To-Date	April	Year-To-Date	April	Year-To-Date		
1	Patsy Koch Johns, President	\$111	\$411	\$0	\$96	\$111	\$315		
2	Lisa Fricke	\$344	\$2,145	\$0	\$1,127	\$344	\$1,018		
3	Patti Gubbels <i>Appointed Jan. 2021</i>	\$344	\$3,466	\$0	\$1,228	\$344	\$2,237		
3	Rachel Wise <i>Outgoing Dec. 2020</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,179	\$0	-\$1,179		
4	Jacquelyn Morrison <i>Appointed Jan. 2021</i>	\$254	\$1,614	\$0	\$137	\$254	\$1,477		
4	John Witzel <i>Outgoing Dec. 2020</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$379	\$0	-\$379		
5	Kirk Penner <i>Appointed Dec. 2021</i>	\$75	\$75	\$0	\$0	\$75	\$75		
5	Patricia Timm <i>Outgoing Nov. 2021</i>	\$0	\$239	\$0	\$616	\$0	-\$378		
6	Maureen Nickels	\$358	\$2,060	\$348	\$1,794	\$9	\$266		
7	Robin Stevens, Vice President	\$394	\$2,965	\$304	\$1,845	\$90	\$1,120		
8	Deborah Neary	\$344	\$1,605	\$0	\$616	\$344	\$990		
		<b>\$2222</b>	<b>\$14,580</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>\$653</b>	<b>\$9,017</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>\$1,569</b>	<b>\$5,563</b>
Annual Budget			\$60,000		\$60,000				
Over/(Under) Budget			<b>(\$45,420)</b>	<b>76%</b>		<b>(\$50,983)</b>	<b>85%</b>		

2020-21 vs. 2021-22  
*Expenditures by Month*



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

**In-State Travel Authorization Reports - May**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Board Bylaw B16 Code A-F</b>
Lisa Fricke	(NONE)			
Jacquelyn Morrison	(NONE)			
Deborah Neary	(NONE)			
Kirk Penner	(NONE)			

**In-State Travel Authorization Reports - May**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Board Bylaw B16 Code A-F</b>
Patsy Koch Johns	(NONE)			
Patti Gubbels	All School Assembly	April 28	Lyons, NE	E
	ESU#2 Superintendents' Meeting-SBOE Board Member Presentation	May 18	Fremont, NE	E
Maureen Nickels	All School Assembly	April 27	Kearney, NE	E
Robin Stevens	All School Assembly	April 27	Kearney, NE	E



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 13, 2022

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

**FROM:** Bryce Wilson, Finance Officer

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Accept the 2021 Single Audit Report

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** A single audit is an organization-wide financial statement and federal awards' audit of a non-federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more in federal funds in one year as required by OMB Uniform Guidance. It is intended to provide assurance to the Federal Government that a non-federal entity has adequate internal controls in place and is generally in compliance with program requirements. Non-federal entities typically include states, local governments, Indian tribes, universities, and non-profit organizations.

The attached Single Audit Management Letter notes the findings related to the Department of Education for the fiscal year ended June 2021.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$0

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:** N/A

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



## NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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Charlie Janssen  
State Auditor

Charlie.Janssen@nebraska.gov  
PO Box 98917  
State Capitol, Suite 2303  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509  
402-471-2111, FAX 402-471-3301  
auditors.nebraska.gov

April 8, 2022

Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner  
Nebraska Department of Education  
500 S. 84<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68510

Dear Commissioner Blomstedt:

Attached are the draft Single Audit Report findings for the Nebraska Department of Education for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021. These findings have been discussed with Agency staff and corrective action plans are included.

We would like you to respond to this draft to advise us whether the findings contain any errors of any kind or if there are any responses or corrective action plans you would like to revise for the published version. If you choose to respond, we would appreciate it if you provide the response to us by **April 13, 2022**.

If we do not receive your response by April 13, 2022, the findings and corrective action plans will be issued in the Single Audit Report as written. Please send your response to the draft in Microsoft Word format (via email or on CD), to facilitate our typing process. You have the option of not responding.

Sincerely,

Charlie Janssen  
Auditor of Public Accounts

Enclosure

cc: Bryce Wilson, Finance Officer  
Phil Olsen, State Accounting Administrator, DAS – Accounting

**1. Program:** AL 84.287 – Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers – Allowability & Subrecipient Monitoring

**Grant Number & Year:** S287C180027, FFY 2019; S287C190027, FFY 2020

**Federal Grantor Agency:** U.S. Department of Education

**Criteria:** Per 2 CFR § 200.403 (January 1, 2021), allowable costs must be necessary, reasonable, and adequately documented.

2 CFR § 200.430(i)(1) (January 1, 2021) states, in relevant part, the following:

*Charges to Federal awards for salaries and wages must be based on records that accurately reflect the work performed. These records must:*

*(i) Be supported by a system of internal control which provides reasonable assurance that the charges are accurate, allowable, and properly allocated;*

*(ii) Be incorporated into the official records of the non-Federal entity*

*(iii) Reasonably reflect the total activity for which the employee is compensated by the non-Federal entity, not exceeding 100% of compensated activities . . . . ;*

*(iv) Encompass federally-assisted and all other activities compensated by the non-Federal entity on an integrated basis, but may include the use of subsidiary records as defined in the non-Federal entity's written policy;*

*(v) Comply with the established accounting policies and practices of the non-Federal entity . . . . ; and*

*\* \* \* \**

*(vii) Support the distribution of the employee's salary or wages among specific activities or cost objectives if the employee works on more than one Federal award; a Federal award and non-Federal award; an indirect cost activity and a direct cost activity; two or more indirect activities which are allocated using different allocation bases; or an unallowable activity and a direct or indirect cost activity.*

2 CFR § 200.332 (January 1, 2021) states, in relevant part, the following:

*All pass-through entities must:*

*\* \* \* \**

*(d) Monitor the activities of the subrecipient as necessary to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes, in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward; and that subaward performance goals are achieved.*

A good internal control plan requires that adequate documentation be maintained to support amounts claimed by and paid to subrecipients. Good internal control also requires procedures to ensure subrecipients are utilizing Federal pass-through funds for authorized purposes and in compliance with applicable regulations.

**Condition:** The Agency lacked adequate procedures to ensure that subrecipients: 1) used Federal awards for authorized purposes; 2) complied with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts and agreements; and 3) achieved performance goals.

**Repeat Finding:** 2020-030

**Questioned Costs:** \$50,722 known (S287C180027, \$35,819; S287C190027, \$14,903)

**Statistical Sample:** No

**Context:** We randomly selected 19 subrecipient payments and also chose the largest subrecipient payment for testing. We noted the following:

- The Agency did not perform adequate subrecipient monitoring during the fiscal year for seven subrecipients tested, as the Agency did not review salaries and benefits claimed by the subrecipients. The Agency obtained general ledger summary information from the subrecipient but did not obtain and review payroll records such as timesheets, paystubs, or salary and fringe benefit support.
- Of the 19 randomly selected payments, we noted that \$50,722 did not have adequate documentation to support that those expenditures were allowable and in accordance with Federal cost principles. Several employees' salaries and benefits were included in the reimbursement requests; however, the Agency did not require the subrecipients to submit documentation for these expenditures, other than reports from its accounting systems. We provided the Agency with an opportunity to request documentation from its subrecipients to support that its salaries and benefits expenses were allowable and in accordance with Federal cost principles; however, three of the subrecipients did not provide adequate support to show that its salaries and benefits were allocable to the grant.

Subrecipient aid payments for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021, totaled \$7,140,154. The sample population was \$5,356,233 (total population \$7,140,154 less \$1,783,921 to largest subrecipient that was separately determined to be allowable). The random sample tested totaled \$857,155. Based on the sample tested, the case error rate was 15.79% (3/19). The dollar error rate for the sample was 5.92% (\$50,722/\$857,155), which estimated potential dollars at risk for fiscal year 2021 to be \$317,089.

**Cause:** Inadequate procedures

**Effect:** Without adequate supporting documentation and monitoring procedures, there is an increased risk that Federal awards could be used for unallowable costs.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Agency improve procedures to monitor subrecipients, including reviewing both detailed supporting documentation for expenditures and payroll documentation for each subrecipient. We further recommend adequate documentation be maintained to support expenditures are allowable and in accordance with Federal cost principles.

**Management Response:** The Budget Management Specialist under the Office of Budget & Grants Management and the 21st CCLC Director under the Office of ESEA Programs conduct a desk review of each reimbursement request, which includes the grantee general ledger, to assure expenditures are allowable, reasonable and within the budget and performance period. If there are any unusual or questionable expenditures, sub-grantees are contacted to provide additional documentation or justification. Virtual visits and programmatic desk monitoring under the Office of ESEA Programs are additional strategies utilized to mitigate risk. All programs receive a programmatic monitoring visit in year 3 of the 5-year grant where the 21st CCLC director reviews selected financial documentation and employee time and effort information. The Nebraska 21st CCLC program utilizes a risk-assessment instrument to identify programs that may require interim programmatic monitoring or additional technical assistance.

On behalf the Nebraska's FFY 2018 and FFY2019 Single State Audit Resolution's the Nebraska Department of Education engaged in Federal corrective action plans commencing in April 2019 through December 2020. Per the USDE, a reasonableness check of reimbursement requests (or primary documentation) did not identify questioned costs or meet the Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government (Green Book) or under the 2 CFR Part 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. The Nebraska Department of Education diligently over this timeframe and under the guidance of USDE Federal Compliance Specialists and to recognize

Federally approved practices worked with other State Department of Education SEAs to establish the Grant Compliance Section under the Office of Budget & Grants Management. This section is a dedicated unit to Federal internal controls and Federal award fiscal activities. On July 1, 2020, the Department deployed a standardized practice of sub-recipient internal controls: fiscal monitoring policy and procedures for LEAs subrecipients under 2 CFR § 200.332, control environment, risk assessment, technical assistance through the lifecycle of a grant, non-compliance measures, single audit practices, and sub-recipient fiscal monitoring. Fiscal monitoring reviews financial primary documentation (including 2 CFR § 200.430(1)(i) noted) and establishes that a sub-recipient has internal controls in place for these Federal awards supported by policies, procedures, and engages in established practices. Fiscal monitoring also provides one-on-one technical assistance where and when it is needed as well as through scheduled events through the year. Sequential sampling monitoring ensures that the NDE monitors all subrecipients effort at any given point in time on a 1-to-3-year cycle based on level of risk (23 data-driven evidenced based indicators), level of award and if under a corrective action from prior monitoring cycles. The Nebraska FFY20 Single State Audit encompassed review of reimbursement request primary documentation and programmatic monitoring outside of the Grant Compliance Section's internal control standards for sub-recipient fiscal monitoring, questioned costs, and non-compliance systematic activities performed each year.

**Corrective Action Plan:** The Nebraska 21st CCLC programmatic monitoring checklist was revised for the 2020-21 school year and an item requesting supporting documentation for a prior reimbursement request (randomly selected by the fiscal analyst and 21st CCLC director) is now required. The 21st CCLC director will continue providing fiscal technical assistance to sub-grantees and the 21st CCLC Grantee Assistance Guide (to be revised July 2022) will include more specificity, including screenshots of adequate salary supporting documentation.

**Contact:** Jan Handa

**Anticipated Completion Date:** July 2022

**2. Program:** AL 84.367 – Supporting Effective Instruction – Special Tests

**Grant Number & Year:** S367A200026, FFY 2021

**Federal Grantor Agency:** U.S. Department of Education

**Criteria:** 34 CFR § 299.7(a)(1) (July 1, 2020) states the following:

*Expenditures of funds made by an agency, consortium, or entity under a program listed in §299.6 (b) for services for eligible private school children and their teachers and other educational personnel must be equal on a per-pupil basis to the amount of funds expended for participating public school children and their teachers and other educational personnel, taking into account the number and educational needs of those children and their teachers and other educational personnel.*

Good internal control requires procedures to ensure that non-public schools receive an equitable proportion of funds.

2 CFR § 200.511(b) (January 1, 2021) states, in relevant part, the following:

*The summary schedule of prior audit findings must report the status of all audit findings included in the prior audit's schedule of findings and questioned costs. . . .*

\* \* \* \*

*(2) When audit findings were not corrected or were only partially corrected, the summary schedule must describe the reasons for the finding's recurrence and planned corrective action, and any partial corrective action taken. When corrective action taken is significantly different from corrective action previously reported in a corrective action plan or in the Federal agency's or pass-through entity's management decision, the summary schedule must provide an explanation.*

**Condition:** One of four public school districts tested with non-public schools had an incorrect calculation of the per-pupil rate. A similar finding was noted in the prior audit. The Summary Schedule of Prior Audit Findings lists the status as completed.

**Repeat Finding:** 2020-032

**Questioned Costs:** None

**Statistical Sample:** No

**Context:** For one public school district tested, \$735 of administrative costs were included in the Agency's per pupil rate calculation; however, this amount was not included in the Agency's approved budget, which lowered the per-pupil rate to \$40.85 instead of \$41.98. The result is that the amount available to the public school and the non-public school was incorrect. The amount available to the public school was overcalculated by \$111.

**Cause:** Inadequate review by the Agency.

**Effect:** Without an adequate review of the per-pupil rate calculations, there is an increased risk that public schools and non-public schools will be paid incorrectly.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Agency implement procedures to ensure the per-pupil rate calculations are adequately reviewed for accuracy.

**Management Response:** NDE agrees with finding. NDE worked with the public school to get the \$111 added to the non-public budget to correct the issue. NDE reviewed the rest of the districts and found no other issues.

**Corrective Action Plan:** An additional question has been added on the review checklist to check that the administrative/indirect costs on the Nonpublic School Participation Page matches the amount listed on the budget. Training was done with the reviewers on what to check and why.

**Contact:** Beth Wooster

**Anticipated Completion Date:** Completed

**3. Program:** AL 84.425C – COVID-19 Education Stabilization Fund – Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) – Allowability & Cash Management

**Grant Number & Year:** S425C200038, grant period ending 9/30/2021

**Federal Grantor Agency:** U.S. Department of Education

**Criteria:** 2 CFR § 200.403 (January 1, 2021) states, in relevant part, the following:

*Except where otherwise authorized by statute, costs must meet the following general criteria in order to be allowable under Federal awards:*

*(a) Be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Federal award and be allocable thereto under these principles.*

\* \* \* \*

*(c) Be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally-financed and other activities of the non-Federal entity.*

\* \* \* \*

(g) *Be adequately documented.*

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) State Accounting Manual, Policies – Section AM-005-4, Prepayments (3/2021), states, in relevant part, the following:

*Occasionally, there are situations that arise when prepayment is necessitated due to federal requirements, State Statutes, contracts or, normal business practices. Though prepayments are not illegal, per se, they are in conflict with the normal claims process since the State will give an asset in anticipation of goods or services being rendered at a later date. (There is not an enforceable claim against the State until goods or services are received.) Since the potential for loss to the State is greater under prepayment situations, extreme care should be exercised and a conscious effort should be undertaken to minimize prepayments. State Accounting reserves the right to review all prepayment requests.*

Per 2 CFR § 200.53 (January 1, 2021), the definition of an improper payment includes “any payment for a good or service not received (except for such payments authorized by law).”

Per 2 CFR § 200.84 (January 1, 2021), the definition of a questioned cost includes the following:

*Questioned cost means a cost that is questioned by the auditor because of an audit finding:*

*(a) Which resulted from a violation or possible violation of a statute, regulation, or the terms and conditions of a Federal award, including for funds used to match Federal funds;*

*(b) Where the costs, at the time of the audit, are not supported by adequate documentation[.]*

31 CFR § 205.11(a) (July 1, 2020) provides the following:

*A State and a Federal Program Agency must minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the United States Treasury and the State’s payout of funds for Federal assistance program purposes, whether the transfer occurs before or after the payout of funds.*

A good internal control plan requires procedures to ensure that goods or services are provided to the State prior to payment or as close as administratively possible to the payment.

**Condition:** The Agency did not have adequate procedures to ensure that its contractor was utilizing Federal funds for allowable costs. In addition, the State advanced millions of dollars in Federal funds to the contractor without procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the receipt of funds from the Agency and the subsequent contractor disbursement to its vendors/schools.

**Repeat Finding:** No

**Questioned Costs:** \$633,780 known

**Statistical Sample:** No

**Context:** The Agency contracted with another entity to provide student devices for schools. For one payment tested, the Agency paid the contractor to purchase student devices for schools in the amount of \$8,000,440 on November 30, 2020. Per the contractor’s records, the contractor received the payment on December 4, 2020. However, the first disbursement by the contractor for student devices was not made until January 21, 2021, 48 days after the receipt. The full \$8,000,440 was not spent by the contractor until April 8, 2021, 125 days after the receipt. Additionally, the contractor received a second receipt from the Agency in the amount of \$1,654,617 on February 10, 2021, when the contractor still had a balance of \$4,768,413 from the first receipt. As of June 30, 2021, the contractor had a balance of \$1,030,284 to be used to purchase student devices.

As of January 25, 2022, the Agency had paid the contractor \$11,606,653 for the purchase of student devices, and the contractor still had a balance of \$633,780. As these funds have not been spent by the contractor for student devices, it is unknown if they were used for an allowable purpose, so these are considered questioned costs.

**Cause:** Inadequate procedures.

**Effect:** When goods or services are not provided prior to payment by the State, there is an increased risk of the loss of Federal funds and noncompliance with the DAS State Accounting Manual and Federal regulations.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Agency implement procedures to minimize or eliminate advance payments to contractors. We further recommend the Agency implement procedures to ensure compliance with Federal regulations.

**Management Response:** For risk management and internal controls in avoidance of questioned costs per 2 CFR § 200.84 (January 1, 2021):

*•Which results from a violation or possible violation of statute, regulation, or the terms and conditions of a federal award:*

- o The NDE applied guidance per 2 CFR § 200.53 (January 1, 2021), whereas the law providing exception for allowability being under Part B: Programmatic, Fiscal, and Reporting Assurances of the GEER Fund Certification and Agreement (C&A), whereas the Governor assured and that the NDE to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its contractors during the period of any disruptions related to COVID-19 in compliance with Section 18006 of Division B of the CARES Act., and

*•Where the costs, at the time of the audit, are not supported by adequate documentation[.]*

- o The contractor maintains a shared electronic records, cost documentation, and administration environment for the NDE to review as required by 2 CFR § 200.302 (financial management), 2 CFR § 200.430(i) (standards for documenting personnel expenses), and 2 CFR § 200.333 (retention requirements for records) and for the NDE to substantiate the charging of any reasonable and necessary costs related to the administration and financial performance of the program.

The Nebraska Department of Education is prudent in its stewardship of financial resources and relied upon the DAS State Accounting Manual, Policies – Section AM-005-4. Prepayments (3/2021) states, in relevant part, as stated in the Criteria section of this finding.

- Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic being the unexpected and unprecedented qualifying emergency that arose and necessitated prepayment due to the federal requirement under Part B: Programmatic, Fiscal, and Reporting Assurances of the GEER Fund Certification and Agreement (C&A), whereas the Governor assured and that the NDE to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its contractors during the period of any disruptions related to COVID-19 in compliance with Section 18006 of Division B of the CARES Act and that the GEER fund was an emergency appropriation to address the harm to students and the ongoing functionality of education and for States to deploy GEER funds quickly to prevent, prepare for, or respond to COVID-19 under the same section of the CARES Act.

The NDE exercised extreme care and a conscious effort to minimize payments and the time elapsing looking to 2 CFR 200.305(b) Federal Payment, in support for advance payment as reimbursement was not feasible due to the educational contracting entity's lack of sufficient working capital and demonstrated the willingness to maintain processes that minimize the time elapsing between transfer of funds and disbursements, and maintains financial managements systems that provide for fund control and accountability to meet timely cash disbursements.

All parties involved acted in good faith, however, operational impacts unknown at that time included but were not limited to the contractor's operational capacity, increased and changing costs due to the COVID-19 crisis, lack of device supply to meet national education demands, priority of the schools to support the process, and schools change in requests.

**Corrective Action Plan:** The NDE approaches its final financial review and awaits invoicing of the contractor's encumbered invoices totaling \$9,465.93 ensuring adequate documentation exists for allowable costs provided. Both the NDE and the contractor maintain reconciliations and comparison to each other. This scope of work under this contract is complete and fulfilled, remaining work identified has a 90% reduction in transactions, service based supports, and lower fiscal risk-based activity, such as, the prior work of providing devices to all Nebraska schools. As the NDE administers the remaining work under this contract, it will continue to review allowable costs through the NDE/ESUCC Committee meetings prior to commencement of work, support through reimbursement, provided the costs are reasonable and necessary in order to carry out an allowable activity under the CARES GEER award and Uniform Guidance.

**Contact:** Jen Utemark, Budget & Grants Management

**Anticipated Completion Date:** 12/30/2022

**APA Response:** Paying millions of dollars in advance is not sound business practice and is not in compliance with Federal requirements. The Agency could have reimbursed the contractor after the devices were received, as the contractor would not be paying the vendors in advance.

- 4. Program:** AL 84.425D – COVID-19 Education Stabilization Fund – Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) – Reporting

**Grant Number & Year:** S425D200048, grant period ending 9/30/2021

**Federal Grantor Agency:** U.S. Department of Education

**Criteria:** Per 2 CFR § 200.302(a) (January 1, 2021):

*[T]he state's and other non-Federal entity's financial management systems, including records documenting compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award, must be sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by general and program-specific terms and conditions; and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have been used according to the Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.*

A good internal control plan requires procedures to ensure reported data elements are complete and accurate.

**Condition:** While testing the ESSER Annual Report for the reporting period, March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2020, we noted the following:

- Reported data did not agree to the supporting records.
- Data elements were not included on the report.
- Data was not accumulated and summarized in accordance with the stated criteria and methodology.
- Fifty-nine out of 132 Local Educational Agencies (LEA) did not respond to the Agency's questionnaire used to accumulate the reporting data.

**Repeat Finding:** No

**Questioned Costs:** None

**Statistical Sample:** No

**Context:** The ESSER Annual Report was submitted to report data for the reporting period, March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2020. Four LEAs that were awarded a subgrant prior to September 30, 2020, were not included on the ESSER Annual Report. The award information is summarized in the table below.

LEA	Award Amount	Date of Award
LEA 1	\$ 6,097	9/24/2020
LEA 2	\$ 14,162	7/16/2020
LEA 3	\$ 18,683	7/30/2020
LEA 4	\$ 20,323	8/6/2020

The report included 132 LEAs. We selected 15 of the schools to trace the reported data to support and noted the following:

- Each LEA was to complete a questionnaire used to accumulate the data required to be reported. Nine of the 15 LEAs did not respond to the questionnaire issued by the Agency. Upon further review, 59 out of 132 LEAs did not complete the questionnaire, which is over 44% of the LEAs. The Agency did not perform adequate follow-up to ensure that all LEAs completed the questionnaire, resulting in unreported data.
- On the questionnaire, the question “Among students enrolled September 30, 2020, what proportion of students had a dedicated LEA-provided device for the following grade bands?” was only asked if the LEA answered “Yes” to the question “Did the LEA use ESSER funds to provide home internet access for any students.” Per the Data Collection Form Instructions, these two questions are independent of each other and, therefore, both questions should be asked regardless of the answer to the other question. As a result, 4 of the 15 LEAs tested did not have the option to answer the question.
- For Section 4 – Student Participation and Engagement, the Data Collection Form Instructions asks the following question, “If the LEA used ESSER Act funds to develop, initiate and/or implement remote learning, please mark all methods used to document student participation and engagement during remote learning; (mark yes for methods used for 50% of more of the students within the grade level in the LEA).” On the questionnaire, the Agency worded the question as follows, “Did the LEA use 50% or more of the ESSER funds to develop, initiate and/or implement remote learning?” If the LEA marked “Yes,” then the LEA would then mark the methods that applied. The way the question was written on the questionnaire could result in the LEA reporting different data than what the Data Collection Form was asking for.
- For Section 4 – one of the methods an LEA can choose per the Data Collection Form Instructions is “Participation in help lines or hot lines for help with remote learning.” However, this method was not included on the questionnaire sent by the Agency to the LEAs. Even though this method was not included on the questionnaire, the report still noted that 4 of the 15 LEAs tested used this method to document student participation and engagement during remote learning.
- For one of the 15 LEAs, the ESSER Annual Report stated that the LEA paid for the cost of home internet subscriptions for students. However, the LEA did not state this on its questionnaire.

**Cause:** The Agency did not adequately set up its questionnaire for LEAs to ensure that the data provided to the Agency was complete and accurate. Additionally, the Agency did not have adequate procedures to ensure all LEAs responded to the questionnaire and were included on the report.

**Effect:** Without adequate reporting procedures, there is an increased risk for errors in reporting and noncompliance with Federal requirements.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Agency implement procedures to ensure that all LEAs provide the required data for the report.

**Management Response:** The following identifies the process the Department engaged for the CARES ESSER and GEER Year 1 Annual Performance Report (APR) and changes to the process which occurred during the data submission timeframe. The U.S. Department of Education provided a reporting window from January 5, 2021 – February 1, 2021.

- The initial reporting tool provided on January 5, 2021, allowed for the State Educational Agencies to enter in information for each subrecipient awarded funds manually.
- On Jan 15, 2021, the NDE received notification of the cumbersome and administrative process for States to manually enter such substantial amounts of data and provided a template to populate and upload. States transitioned to this process and all data previously enter was wiped out by the upload ability.
- On January 25, the NDE received notification that previous templates provided for upload would be replace with template populated with basic awarding information to utilize for upload. Again, deleting any prior information entered into the reporting system and not containing recipient awards below \$25,000.
- A second collection period was provided from March 1, 2021, through March 12, 2021.

Being the inaugural launch for all federal financial assistance program reporting, the NDE is aware is issues and barriers incurred during the first attempt at this new process and the Department waited for the window for final data corrections to address aspects needing correction.

**Corrective Action Plan:** The NDE has deployed a new data collection to all subrecipients of the CARES ESSER awards through September 30, 2020. All recipients awarded a subgrant during this timeframe must respond and acknowledge even if expenses incurred are equal to zero. Expanded processes have been implemented for data review. Currently, the NDE is submitting the data compiled through the correction window provided from March 21, 2022, through April 1, 2022, into the Public Transparency Portal.

**Contact:** Jen Utemark, Budget & Grants Management

**Anticipated Completion Date:** April 1, 2022, unless the U.S. Department of Education identifies an area where data is needing a formatting correction or correction identified by the ESSER.GEER.EANS.AnnualReport@ed.gov team.



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 20, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Approve the use of up to \$1,560,000 to fund grants to selected educational service units for preschool through grade two support.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** In 2021, a workgroup consisting of staff from the NDE and ESUs worked together to create an early childhood needs assessment survey. The survey was disseminated statewide to school districts and ESUs and was designed to determine what needs teachers of preschoolers and primary grades need. Results of the survey indicated teacher support is needed in using research informed practices including teaching and assessment strategies appropriate for the age and development of the student.

This agenda item is to authorize the NDE use up to \$1,560,000 (\$780,000 per year for two years) to award up to six grants to ESUs, or consortia of ESUs. These grants will fund early childhood professional development specialists who will work directly with early childhood staff (teaching in preschool through second grade) to improve early childhood growth and learning, transition practices, and/or to implement appropriate whole child assessment.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING:** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$1,560,000

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal ESSERS III
- New or Renewal: New

## ESU regional Early Childhood Grants

Plan is to award up to 6 grants. Majority of the grant is to be used for salary and benefits for an early childhood specialist. Either an ESU or a collaboration of ESUs can apply. Applications will identify the service area.

**Expectations:** ESUs or consortia of ESUs are to provide support to area teachers of young children age 3 through second grade through professional development and coaching in one or more of the following areas based on regional needs:

1. Appropriate teaching practice
2. Curricular support,
3. Formative assessment and observational assessment
4. Pyramid Model practices,
5. Prekindergarten to kindergarten to first grade transitional practices

ESUs will be required to match the grant dollars at 20%

Decisions to fund will be based on need, scope of work, partnerships, and budget (see below)

Description of needs are to include:

- Demographic data of service area including poverty rates,
- Percent of population who speak a primary language other than English,
- Number of schools classified as “needs improvement”,
- Number and location of early childhood education programs in local districts in service area.
- Number of Head Start classrooms in service area.
- Narrative explaining regional needs

Scope of work will describe the services to be provided (information based on the needs) in one or more of the areas identified under the Expectations of the grant (listed above)

Each grant amount will be approximately \$130,000 in the first-year renewable for a second year based on performance.

**This is seed grant to establish a system that fills a need that school districts have and is intended to pilot services to be offered by ESUs through their own funding.**



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson and Kristin Yates

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Authorize the Commissioner to sign an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to provide the Nebraska Department of Education with up to \$100,000 in funding.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Per the Step up to Quality Child Care Act (71-1952 to 71-1964 R.S.S), the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services administer the Step Up to Quality: Quality Rating and Improvement System jointly. Part of the implementation of the Step Up to Quality Act includes a professional records system to contain records of education and training of early childhood professionals. The Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System (NECPRS) is that system. Other functions, required by law of the system include documentation of quality improvement activities of individual participating Step Up to Quality programs, and maintenance of the quality support infrastructure needed for early childhood professional development in the state.

The NDHHS is making \$100,000 available to the NDE to begin programming necessary to revise NECPRS as needed for the upcoming Step Up to Quality Revisions. This \$100,000 will be used to contract with two computer programmers through Covendis: the state of Nebraska's Information and Technology Time and Materials Procurement system. The intent of this contract is to begin the revisions process which will be continued with resources built into the next annual agreement for the use of federal Child Care Development Grant funds (to come before the Nebraska State Board of Education in August or September 2022).

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$100,000 coming to the NDE

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal ARPA funds
- New or Renewal: New





## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson and Kristen Yates

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to enter into new contracts with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) for staff augmentation services in support of the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Per the Step up to Quality Child Care Act (71-1952 to 71-1964 R.S.S), the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services administer the Step Up to Quality: Quality Rating and Improvement System jointly. Part of the implementation of the Step Up to Quality Act includes a professional records system to contain records of education and training of early childhood professionals. The Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System (NECPRS) is that system. Other functions of the system include documentation of quality improvement activities of individual participating Step Up to Quality programs, and maintenance of the quality support infrastructure needed for early childhood professional development in the state.

The State of Nebraska operates an Information Technology (IT) Time and Materials Procurement system entitled "Covendis" that provides access to pre-approved quality IT services suppliers. The process of requisition, interview and contracting occurs through the system. This system is managed through the OCIO.

The NDE will use money provided by the NDHHS to enter into contracts with the OCIO for two Information Technology staff to modify the NECPRS system to accommodate the revisions in Step Up to Quality that are necessary.

The DHHS will provide an additional \$300,000 within the annual agreement (beginning in October 2022) between the NDE and DHHS for use of Child Care and Development and other funds to support these contracts through October 2023.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$100,000

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal ARPA funding from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.
- New or Renewal: New



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 20, 2022

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

**FROM:** Dr. Zainab Rida  
Office of Coordinated Student Support Services

Lane Carr  
Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Authorize the Commissioner to contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation through December 2024 to design, implement, support, and evaluate a full-service community schools program focused on rural schools.

### **RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Beginning in May 2021, the State Board authorized the commissioner to contract with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) to coordinate and create a community schools pilot program. Since then, four sites have been established. Additionally, the NDE worked with the Heartland Center for Leadership Development to conduct a statewide needs assessment focused on rural schools.

This contract would leverage NCFE's established community well-being model to create full-service community schools tailored to individual community needs. The NCFE will work collaboratively with the Heartland Center to target sites, and either deepen existing community collaboratives or create new programs focused on rural communities.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** Not to exceed \$1,000,000 (Through December 2024)

### **FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: ARP ESSER III Statewide Set-Aside
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval:



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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

**FROM:** Keri Bennett, VR Program Director for Acquired Brain Injury  
Lindy Foley, Nebraska VR Administrator

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Accept the Community Living, Traumatic Brain Injury State Demonstration Grant

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Nebraska VR was officially notified of this supplemental funding opportunity on January 26, 2022, along with all other Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) grantees. The application was submitted on February 22, 2022. Upon request from the Administration for Community Living (ACL), a revised budget narrative was submitted on March 11, 2022. Nebraska VR received notice of the award on March 31, 2022. The project period is 04/01/2022 – 09/30/2024.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** Total amount of Federal Award is \$86,400.00

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Statutory Authority: 42 USC 15081-15083 CFDA No. 93.234, Administration for Community Living, Traumatic Brain Injury State Demonstration Grant Program, Grant #90TBPH0013-01-00.
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval:



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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

**FROM:** Keri Bennett, VR Program Director for Acquired Brain Injury  
Lindy Foley, Nebraska VR Administrator

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE), the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE), and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Nebraska VR will enhance and expand two existing TBI grant-funded projects which will positively impact people with TBI. Contracts with DHHS for pre- and post-pandemic TBI data analysis and with PIE for professional evaluation services will help Nebraska VR and TBI stakeholders identify actionable strategies to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nebraskans with TBI, their families and caregivers. The contract with BIA-NE will provide funding for Resource Facilitation services to proactively help individuals with TBI navigate Nebraska VR's application, eligibility and planning process to support and facilitate their enrollment in a TBI grant-funded pilot. The addition of Resource Facilitation and surveillance services for pilot participants is expected to improve employment success and retention rates for clients with TBI.

The contract with PIE is for professional services to 1) identify, collect, and evaluate data to understand the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nebraskans with brain injury and 2) facilitate discussions with key stakeholders to identify strategies to incorporate into Nebraska's Living with Brain Injury State Plan for mitigating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nebraskans with TBI, their families and caregivers. Contract amount is \$58,803.00.

The contract with the BIA-NE is to provide services to support implementation of Nebraska VR's Brain Injury Resource Facilitation Surveillance pilot. Resource Facilitation Services are defined as: providing brain injury-specific education to individuals with brain injury and their families and caregivers, proactively helping the individual identify, obtain, and navigate needed services and supports, promoting brain injury-informed care with other providers, and ensuring collaboration, integration and coordination between providers and community-based resources. The BIA-NE will provide such services to 30 or more persons with a history of TBI who are being considered for inclusion in the Brain Injury Resource Facilitation Surveillance pilot. The scope of work for this contract pertains strictly to services provided up to the point of pilot intake and enrollment. Contract amount is \$6,480.00.

The contract with DHHS is for epidemiology and data analysis services to compare TBI Registry and other public data on individuals with TBI before and after onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data analysis services support stakeholder discussions and identification of strategies to incorporate into Nebraska's Living with Brain Injury State Plan for mitigating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nebraskans with TBI, their families and caregivers. Contract amount is \$11,381.00.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$58,803.00 + \$6,480.00 + \$11,381.00 = \$76,664.00 total

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Statutory Authority: 42 USC 15081-15083 CFDA No. 93.234, Administration for Community Living, Traumatic Brain Injury State Demonstration Grant Program, Grant #90TBPH0013-01-00.
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval:



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: May 5, 2022

Sandhills Convention Center, Caboose, 2102 S Jeffers St, North Platte, NE 69101

**Board Members Present:**

Deborah Neary (Zoom)  
Patti Gubbels  
Kirk Penner  
Robin Stevens

**NDE Staff Members Present:**

Cory Epler  
Commissioner Blomstedt  
Shirley Vargas  
Deborah Frison  
Lora Sypal  
Marissa Payzant (Zoom)  
Deb Romanek (Zoom)  
Jeremy Heneger (Zoom)  
Micki Charf (Zoom)  
Brad Dirksen (Zoom) (late arrival)

“The Committee on Planning and Evaluation reports that...

1.0 The Planning and Evaluation Committee meeting was called to order at 11:50a.m. by Chair Patti Gubbels.

1.1 Chairperson Gubbels indicated that notes from the previous committee meeting are available and posted.

**2.0 ACTION**

**2.1A Approve the waiver request from the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF) to waive the requirements found in Rule 10, Section 007.04A in accordance with the waiver provisions in Rule 10, Section 013.01.**

Staff member Micki Charf presented the committee with information related to the waiver request process, provided information about NCYF compliance monitoring actions taken from 2018-2022, noting that the NCYF is scheduled for an on-site continuous improvement visit May 16, 2022. The recommendation for action is the approval of a waiver of requirement for a certified Librarian/Media Specialist. If approved, the waiver will be for one year. NDE will work with NCYF to help identify strategies for recruiting a certified Librarian/Media Specialist.

The committee engaged in a dialogue about the supply and demand of certified school librarians, the waivers or modification accommodations made for other schools, how minimum FTE for school

librarians be considered in Rule 10/Rule 14 revisions, and how innovative thinking will influence certification requirements for librarians and libraries of the future.

The committee agreed to move the item forward for board action.

**2.1.B. Action Item: Approve Interim-Program Schools to operate for the 2022-2023 school year under Rule 18 (92 NAC 18), Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Interim-Program Schools in County Detention Homes, Institutions and Juvenile Emergency Shelters**

Micki Charf reviewed the Rule 18 Regulatory Authority, identified monitoring procedures and explained compliance visits for Rule 18 Interim-program schools, identified elements monitored such as teachers and required instruction. A list of Rule 18 schools to be approved for 2022-2023 school year was shared with the committee. The approval period is July 1- June 30.

The committee recommends that the board confirm approval of Interim-program schools for the 2022-2023 school year.

**2.1.C. Action Item: Approve accreditation for the Educational Service Units appearing on the accompanying list for the 2022-2023 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 84 (92 NAC 84), Regulations for Educational Service Units**

A review of the statutory authority and ESU accreditation requirements were provided by staff member Micki Charf. It was noted that there are 17 Educational Service Units in Nebraska. Schools provide information to ESUs about the services they need. NDE staff meet with ESU administrators several times a year and have continuous conversations about what educational entities can do to best serve schools.

The committee recommends the board accredit Nebraska ESUs for the 2022-2023 school year.

**2.2. Discussion**

**2.2.A. Discussion Item: Report on Mathematics Content Area Standards**

Chairperson Gubbels asked each committee member to share something they liked about the reviewed draft of the Nebraska College and Career Ready Mathematics Standards Revision. Comments included appreciation of having the mathematical processes displayed at the top of each grade level and the inclusion of comprehensive data standards and indicators across grade levels.

Cory Epler stated that the embargoed draft was sent to superintendents on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Feedback received thus far from superintendents/curriculum directors includes a desire to have a crosswalk of how this revision is different than the 2015 standards. Cory indicated that crosswalk will be provided

once the standards are approved. Deb Romanek reported that she received positive feedback about the standards from one school district.

Chairperson Gubbels thanked Cory, Deb, Marissa, and the writing team for their efforts in revising the math standards.

Cory Epler handed out hard copies of Mathematics Standards Revision documents for committee review. He went over the timeline for actions taken since the April board meeting. It was noted that NO changes to the standards were made during that time. He explained the revisions made related to instructional information at the front of the standards document.

It was suggested that the department think about how/if instructional information is included with the standards document and determine how to distinguish policy decisions (standards approval) from guidance documents that are not approved by the board.

A timeline of next steps in the standards revision and approval process was explained. Steps will include input from business and industry leaders and meetings with post-secondary math leaders.

Draft#1 of the standards will be released on May 9, 2022, for public input with a survey close date of May 27, 2022. The committee will receive a summary of public input data at the June meeting. It is anticipated that the approval draft will be ready early fall with request for board approval in September.

Cory Epler reviewed the talking points and the comparison table that highlighted how the 2022 draft differs from the 2015 Mathematics standards. Cory will add several requested board-member talking points.

Chairperson Gubbels suggested that the comparison table would be helpful for future standards revisions, if it could be provided to board members with the first draft of the standards as it would guide reading and review.

The committee acknowledged that social emotional learning is an integral part of student learning, not only as it relates directly to specific content areas, such as addressing math anxiety, persevering in math problem solving, etc. but also to developing and maintaining mental and emotional well-being. Committee members dialogued about the importance structuring an intentional opportunity for NDE to define Social Emotional Learning and to identify what it is and is not.

Committee members who served on the ad-hoc committee on Standards Development Processes noted that improvements have been made and continue improving with each content area standards development and revision. Robin Stevens thanked the department for listening to ad hoc committee recommendations.

## **2.3 Committee Update**

### **2.3.A. Update Item: Review the 2022-2023 contracts for NWEA and DRC for the delivery of assessment services**

Following an introduction of the agenda item by Cory Epler, Jeremy Heneger gave a quick report on the administration of the Spring NSCAS Growth assessment. May 9<sup>th</sup> is the last day of the NSCAS Growth administration window. Over 300,000 students have taken the assessment. Although there were a few small issues, they were discovered early and corrected. Feedback from schools has been positive, especially about assessment results being available in a timely manner.

Jeremy and his staff were thanked for their tireless work as the department transitioned to NSCAS Growth.

Jeremy presented details of the proposed Assessment contracts for NWEA and DRC for 2022-2023. The contracts include development and administration of NSCAS Growth, the development of the alternative assessment as well as professional development and formative assessment information. It is important to note that NSCAS Growth includes items that are aligned with Nebraska standards and that Nebraska teachers write and review test items.

Commissioner Blomstedt explained that the purpose for developing and implementing NSCAS Growth is to make testing more efficient, to provide growth data throughout the year, and to have a testing program where assessment results are available to schools in a timely manner.

It is anticipated that next spring 86% of students will have less testing that they did this year.

### **2.3.B. Update Item: Provide an update on the Priority School designation**

Staff member Shirley Vargas provided a review of the statutory requirements for the designation of priority schools. Former and current priority schools were identified, and a status report was provided for each school. Priority school designation process, including identification of team members as well as criteria considered in the selection process of priority schools were presented. Selection of support intervention teams was also explained. The department provides for current and as well as former priority schools.

Next steps will include progress reports from current priority schools with accompanying committee recommendations. Contracts for priority school support will be presented for board approval.

Chairperson Gubbels adjourned the meeting at 2:04p.m.

That concludes the Planning and Evaluation Committee Report.

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



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** May 6, 2022

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of Education

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Approve the waiver request from the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF) to waive the requirements found in Rule 10, Section 007.04A in accordance with the waiver provisions in Rule 10, Section 013.01.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF) operates the NCYF Community High School under a current Special Purpose Agreement adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education and approved on June 3, 2016. NCYF Community High School works with a unique population in that students are all currently incarcerated in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS adult correctional setting). Given their unique population and small number of concurrent students being served, there are barriers that negatively impact functioning as a Rule 10 School and result in the need for the Rule 10 Special Purpose Agreement to facilitate and accommodate their specific setting. (013.01A.) NCYF Community High School has been identified as being deficit of Rule 10 requirements in the area(s) of:

007.04A Media Specialist

Due to the inability to hire a properly endorsed school librarian or meet regulatory requirements through flexibilities in Rule 10, the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF) is requesting approval for a waiver of the Library/Media Specialist certification which shall remain in effect for no more than three years while they continue to search for a school librarian and implement a plan to ensure the quality of education provided to students is not diminished.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** None

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

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



## NCYF Community High School Request of Waiver for Regulation 007.04A

NCYF Community High School works with a unique population in that our students are all currently incarcerated in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS adult correctional setting). Our students come from a wide range of past academic programs and are at varying stages with academic skills and abilities. We are currently working with a student population of twenty-five (25) students on site at the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility through the NCYF Community High School and assigned five teaching positions. Given our unique population and small number of concurrent students being served, we have barriers that negatively impact our functioning as a Rule 10 School and result in the need for the Rule 10 Special Purpose Agreement to facilitate and accommodate our specific setting.

Annually, as part of our continuous improvement plan, we look specifically at goals to:

- 1) Improve math skills / skill levels for all students
- 2) Increase staff and student access to technology in education
- 3) Identify educational status and communicate specific needs to students in a timely fashion.

Programmatically, we have additional goals specific to the high school:

- 1) Meet with all potential high school students within 5 days of arrival in the facility
- 2) Ensure assessment within 30 days of admission
- 3) Ensuring all students enrolling complete career readiness assessments/career interest inventories
- 4) Increase high school completions each year by 10%

Each of the above goals are designed with the intent of meeting the definition of our school mission statement:

The Mission of the NCYF Community High School and the NDCS Education Department is to provide learning opportunities to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed upon return to their communities. In addition to this overarching goal, NDCS Education has adopted a goal of including multicultural education and creating an atmosphere based on dignity and inclusiveness, focused on academic growth with respect to cultural dignity.

Staffing has been a concern while ensuring compliance with the NCYF Community High School Rule 10 Special Purpose Agreement. We have repeatedly been unable to find and employ a Library Media Specialist for our school library. Our library is compliant with rules governing the number of publications required and the number of new books purchased each year, but we have been unable to locate a properly endorsed staff member to fulfill the role. At one time, I, Principal Harder, had a provisional endorsement for Library Media but was unable to complete the requirements as there was no higher-ranking educator within NDCS to supervise my practicum and my provisional endorsement expired leaving NCYF non-compliant. We then had a teacher begin the coursework for the Library Media Specialist endorsement, but he had to drop the program due to familial concerns so again we became non-compliant with this requirement.

(013.01A) As noted in our Fall Assurance Statement and via review with Mr. Don Loeseke, NCYF Community High School has been identified again this year as being deficit of Rule 10 requirements in the area(s) of:

#### 007.04A Media Specialist

This continues to be a deficit for the NCYF Community High School. No qualified candidate has been found to fulfill the requirements of this position. As a Department, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS), employs a Masters' level Librarian who oversees the libraries at all NDCS sites. However, he does not possess the Library Media Specialist certification nor is he a certificated educator.

In prior meetings with the Accreditation Office, we had discussed the possibility of waving the requirement for this position and / or modifying it to permit this Masters' level Librarian be utilized in place of the certificated teacher/library media specialist. Currently there are less than 60 students in our school thus, per policy we need a certificated Library Media Specialist 20% of the time. We have two staff members who have previously begun the certification program but one dropped out due to conflicts outside of work and the other is unable to complete the program due to a lack of supervision availability. Additionally, attempts to hire a certificated teacher with the additional endorsement for Library Media Specialist have not been fruitful.

Thus, at this juncture, we respectfully request consideration for a waiver of the Library/Media Specialist certification.


(013.01B) As a part of the NDCS accreditation requirements, there are libraries located at all NDCS sites. Each site library is overseen/supervised by a staff member with a Master's in Library Sciences and has at least one on site staff member who has or is working on the Public Librarian Certification through the Nebraska Library Commission. At present, the master's level librarian is primarily located at one Lincoln location, but he does make site visits as needed to all sites and the staff member at the NCYF maintaining his Public Librarian Certification is Ethan Olander. He participates regularly in all library meetings (minimum of monthly meetings) with other similarly placed staff from other sites and continues to garner needed continuing education credits to remain eligible for his certification.

Teachers at the NCYF Community High School, teach based on the needs of the student body and courses are arranged to meet those highly individualized needs. Each teacher wears a number of different professional hats both in and outside of their endorsed areas. As such, they are used to integrating learning from other areas into whatever courses they may be teaching. Within the confines of various English and Social Studies classes, various aspects of Library skills are taught to our students. Research skills are a component of the English IV A class with one fifth of the course focusing on writing research papers. This curriculum includes a range of skills related to the tasks generally reinforced by a Library Media Specialist. In accordance with our Rule 10 Special Purpose Agreement, NCYF Community High School is required to have 1 teacher assigned to supervise each of the following academic areas: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Any of our teachers are permitted to be the assigned teacher of record, but we have these four positions filled with properly endorsed staff to supervise the curriculum.

(013.01C) Given the requirements placed upon us by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services to have a staff member with a Public Librarian Certification overseen by a master's level staff with a degree in Library Science as well as our teachers integrating Library Media responsibilities into their other class assignments and the exception in our Special Purpose Agreement which allows teachers to teach outside their endorsed areas I believe we have done a viable job of creating a working plan to cover the needs of 007.04A without having the required endorsed staff member on duty. We do have a current job posting for a teacher and have requested the added endorsement of Library Media Specialist as this teacher will, like the other NCYF teachers, be assigned multiple duties. Additionally, as library media endorsed staff have not previously responded to job postings with the NCYF Community High School, staff may be surveyed, and volunteers requested to begin the library media endorsement program. We have repeatedly tried to fill the position from outside so training one of our own staff may be our only way of becoming compliant with this requirement.

(013.01D) The resources that will be re-allocated to accomplish this plan will be ensuring the continued certification of the Public Librarian acting within the NCYF Community High School Library as well as ensuring the English and Social Studies teachers continue to provide library media enhancing curriculum.

(013.01E) The request for waiver is three years during which time we will further strive to hire or get a staff member endorsed in the area of Library Media. Progress on this plan will be updated annually with the Fall Assurance Statement submitted to the Nebraska Department of Education.

  
Susan G. Harder, Principal  
NCYF Community High School

4/11/2022  
Date



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** May 6, 2022

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

**FROM:** Brad Dirksen, Administrator  
Micki Charf, Director of Accreditation

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Approve Interim-Program Schools to operate for the 2022-2023 school year under Rule 18 (92 NAC 18), *Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Interim-Program Schools in County Detention Homes, Institutions and Juvenile Emergency Shelters*.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** All Interim-Program Schools have submitted a statement of assurance indicating compliance as required for the 2021-2022 school year according to the regulations in Rule 18. Based on information reviewed, the programs on the accompanying list were found to be in compliance with the approval regulations in Rule 18 and should now be classified as "approved" for 2022-2023.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** None

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

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

# Interim-Program Schools

Operating Under Rule 18: *Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Interim-Program Schools in County Detention Homes, Institutions, and Juvenile Emergency Shelters*

## School Year 2022-2023

### **Boys Town Interim Program Schools:**

Boys Town Intervention & Assessment Home – Omaha  
Boys Town Residential Treatment Center – Omaha  
Boys Town Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Center – Omaha

### **Lincoln:**

Child Guidance School  
Morton School  
Nebraska Youth Academy  
Pathfinder Education Program

### **Madison:**

Northeast Nebraska Juvenile Services, Inc.

### **Omaha:**

Alegent/Immanuel Hospital Residential Treatment Center  
Douglas County Youth Center  
NOVA Alternative School  
Omaha Home for Boys School  
Uta Halee Academy

### **Papillion:**

Patrick J. Thomas Juvenile Justice Center



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** May 6, 2022

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

**FROM:** Brad Dirksen, Administrator  
Micki Charf, Director of Accreditation

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Approve accreditation for the Educational Service Units appearing on the accompanying list for the 2022-2023 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 84 (92 NAC 84), *Regulations for Educational Service Units*.

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** All Educational Service Units have submitted a statement of assurance indicating compliance with the provisions of Rule 84. Based on the assurance statements, a review of staff qualifications, and other relevant documents, all the service units are found to be in compliance with Rule 84 and are thereby entitled to be accredited for the 2022-2023 school year.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May 2022

**ESTIMATED COST:** None

### FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

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

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNITS**

In accordance with Rule 84  
*“Regulations for Educational Service Units”*

**School Year 2022-2023**

Educational Service Unit 1  
Wakefield

Educational Service Unit 10  
Kearney

Educational Service Unit 2  
Fremont

Educational Service Unit 11  
Holdrege

Educational Service Unit 3  
LaVista

Educational Service Unit 13  
Scottsbluff

Educational Service Unit 4  
Auburn

Educational Service Unit 15  
Trenton

Educational Service Unit 5  
Beatrice

Educational Service Unit 16  
Ogallala

Educational Service Unit 6  
Milford

Educational Service Unit 17  
Ainsworth

Educational Service Unit 7  
Columbus

Educational Service Unit 18  
Lincoln

Educational Service Unit 8  
Neligh

Educational Service Unit 19  
Omaha

Educational Service Unit 9  
Hastings



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

FROM: Brenda Wid, Legal Services

DATE: April 20, 2022

SUBJECT: Report on Rules

**RULES AWAITING APPROVAL FROM GOVERNOR**

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24, *Regulations for Certificate Endorsements*

Sent to Governor 12/10/2021

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

Sent to Governor 02/16/2022

# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 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 \*

Joan

Last name \*

Kugler

City \*

Eagle

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 think we should all be concerned with the low testing and performance scores the students in our state scored. We need to focus on core competencies.

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 \*

Kugler

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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 \*

Sylvia

Last name \*

Zeller

City \*

Ravenna

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 still concerned about the health standards going forward. I know that Kirk Penney proposed to have the standards scrapped but that was turned down by the rest of the members. You are still not listening to the people of Nebraska. When the health standards are scrapped I will stop worrying about them being passed. The math standards are next and I will be watch those.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Sylvia

Last name \*

Zeller

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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 \*

Kristen

Last name \*

Widman

City \*

Yutan

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 former para I know first-hand how dedicated Nebraska teachers are. Despite their hard work and dedication they are judged by the results of student's standardized test scores. It absolutely floors me that the NE Board of Education spent time and energy on sex ed standards, and still refuse to completely abandon that political ideology that has no impact on the academic success of Nebraskan students. Nebraska teachers need the board to provide them with the tools and resources to administer quality education in core subjects. Nebraska students are suffering academically and I hope the board will begin to take those numbers seriously and work to equip teachers academically in core subjects going forward.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Kristen

Last name \*

Widman

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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 \*

Laura

Last name \*

Rasgorshek

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 very concerned with the low testing and performance scores of our Nebraskan students. Many teachers are doing the best they can with the situations they are in. We need the Nebraska State Board of Education to focus on core competencies and leave subjects outside of the legislated mandate to local 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 \*

Laura

Last name \*

Rasgorshek

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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 \*

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 begging you to reevaluate our current teaching system. As a taxpayer and a conservative Christian, I would love to see the teachers teaching the basic subjects of math,science,history, and expect a better performance than the students are giving now. Abandon CRT, sex classes, equity issues and racism classes. Get back to basics and maybe our overall scores will improve. It is so simple and so clear.

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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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 \*

Rowland

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.)

Thank you for the opportunity to address that Nebraska State Board of Education. I am so concerned regarding the direction of education in our Nebraska Public Schools. My children attended a public school, Westside School District, many years ago and at that time the district was ranked first or second in their region in the Midwest. Fast forward to present I am appalled at what is occurring in our schools in regards to social emotional learning. I'm not sure how long this has been going on but it appears to me for some time which is why the decline in Nebraska test scores. I'm also so concerned about CSE, Comprehensive Sex Education in Nebraska Public Schools. This is an overreach by the State Board of Education and is a parents responsibility not yours! I am speaking out for my grandchildren now that do NOT have the same opportunities that my children once had in the public schools. How can you approve this curriculum when you should be condoning it! But that's not what the board and schools do now, they are dishonest, lie, and hide what content they are teaching and counseling our children!! Where is your sense of decency, integrity and oath you took as teachers and educators! My husband was a teacher long ago and became a police officer! I think that I will approach a senator to put cameras in the classrooms to keep our classrooms safe!!! Thank you again for the opportunity and I implore you to do the right thing and start teaching a core curriculum only! Change course for our children's sake!

## 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 \*

Rowland

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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 2022

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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 \*

Kathy

Last name \*

Peter

City \*

O'Neill

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 Nebraska State Board of Education: Time and time again parents have said they are against the standards. Time and time again all that is wanted is for our children to be taught academics, not sexual and racial junk that is being passed off as education. Can you not understand the dangerous consequences of these standards being pushed on the innocent? How perverse are you going to be? Remember- you will stand accountable to God for what you do to these children!!!

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 \*

Peter

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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 \*

Judy

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.)

The citizens/patrons/stakeholders of Nebraska continue to be very concerned about the general state of education in our public schools, especially with the low test scores! The proposed health/sex standards, temporarily tabled, still are in the forefront of concerns as well. The current state of teacher shortages is frightening, too. This SBOE has so much damage control to be done, especially in the area of trust and competency. These issues MUST be addressed and full transparency MUST be in place! 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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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 2022

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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 \*

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.)

We are watching, we are not going away. Our children and Grandchildren are worth our vigilance and care.

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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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 2022

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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 \*

Robert

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.)

The state board of education needs to be more transparent and honest with Nebraska taxpayers. What has this board been doing the past 14 months?? I don't understand. So many people are seeing the dismal test scores of our students and wonder what needs to be done? How much time has been spent on the health and sex standards and not on the things the board is actually supposed to be doing!!??? And now we are hearing about issues with school accreditation and curriculum???? This board needs to work overtime to even start to gain back trust with Nebraska citizens!! In the meantime, more and more people are getting involved across the state and watching! Please, this board needs to start making some positive changes! 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 \*

Rebecca

Last name \*

Wilkins

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.)

I am still actively watching the proceedings of the Nebraska State Board of Education and am vehemently against the proposed health standards!

I continue to be very concerned with the low testing and performance scores of our Nebraskan students.. The Nebraska State Board of Education needs to focus on core competencies and leave subjects (health standards) outside of your legislated mandate to local 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 \*

Tebbecca

Last name \*

Wilkins

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## Identification

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First name \*

Janene

Last name \*

Feikert

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 am concerned that this board intends to eventually approve the health standards that have been tabled at this time. The information being included in the standards is to be left up to parents of the children. Please focus your efforts on Reading, writhing and arithmetic. I understand that your board will consider Math standards at a future meeting. Please be sure that math-only information is included in those standards. I have seen the wording that is being slipped into math problems referring to sex preferences by other schools. DO NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Janene

Last name \*

Feikert

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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 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 \*

Vicki

Last name \*

Johnson

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.)

No CRT in our schools!

No CST in our schools!

Kick out Siecus!

Kick out Planned Parenthood!

Kick out Deb Neary!

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 \*

Johnson

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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 \*

Karla

Last name \*

Downey

City \*

North Platte

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 admit my public comment. I am adamantly opposed to CRT, SEL and CSE being taught in our public schools. Our proficiency numbers show that our students need to spend more time on the education that matters; meaning reading, writing and arithmetic! The State school board and local school administrators across the state of Nebraska need to do the jobs they've been elected/hired to do. There is no reason to indoctrinate and groom our children! Anything outside of the standard education job descriptions impede on our God-given responsibilities as parents. I will continue to fight for my children and the children across the state! They deserve a quality education that does not involve an agenda that goes against what we believe.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Karla

Last name \*

Downey

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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 \*

Cyndi

Last name \*

Splear

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.)

Children are God's gift. These precious gifts must be loved and safely led into his Devine plan for them. Teachers have a job that's to teach school fundamentals. Nurturing is the parents role.

There simply should not be any over step by school boards, teachers and administrative bodies as to what is best for the children.

We parents, grandparents, custodial partners, will not back down. We are watching closely on curriculum changes or new proposed changes. CRT will not be allowed. Pedofile stalking is not allowed . We are alert, We are watching, and we won't back down.

Thank you.  
Cyndi Splear.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Cyndi

Last name \*

Splear

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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 \*

Sheree

Last name \*

Slagle

City \*

Berwyn

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 would like to encourage the Board of Education to really take a step back and analyze where public education is headed in our state. We should be aiming for our students, all of them, to the best of their ability, to EXCEL. In core academic subjects. School is for learning and yes, we need to support our students but the school is NOT the parent and must not usurp parental roles. Our first three children attended public schools and our last two were home schooled K-12. I believe many of the problems facing students, teachers and the school systems are the result of the breakdown of families and cultural instability. Stop inserting extreme agendas into the state standards and curriculums! The interest in home schooling and the exodus of students out of the public school system should be a wake up call to you all!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Sheree

Last name \*

Slagle

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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 \*

Kelly

Last name \*

Haack

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.)

Dear Nebraska Board of Education, I am concerned about the low performance of students in Nebraska. According to standardized testing, only 37% of children in the eighth grade are at or above proficiency in math in Nebraska. The testing is equally dismal in other areas of academics. I believe this is because schools have taken upon themselves responsibilities that belong in the homes, such as values training. Please put the focus back on academics. Thank you.

Kelly Haack

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 \*

Haack

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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 \*

Beth

Last name \*

Hiatt

City \*

MINDEN

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.)

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD

PERMANENTLY SCRAP THE HEALTH STANDARDS!

For the last year, the great majority of your public comments at your monthly meetings, oral and written, have been to completely SCRAP THE EVIL HEALTH STANDARDS!

You have not listened.

You all had the opportunity to stop this madness when your fellow Board Member, Kirk Penner, made the motion to throw the proposed Health Standards completely out...except for Penner, YOU ALL VOTED TO KEEP THEM!

As a voting taxpayer of Nebraska, I call for several things:

1. An independent investigation of Member Deb Neary's actions to hide from the public and the other board members and lying as a public official for her part in using activists to formulate these immoral, racist Health Standards which you are holding onto like some kind of pet.
2. Her immediate resignation!
3. The firing of the NDE staff that helped in the plot.
4. Commissioner Blomstedt's resignation for lying to the public about the activists involvement in an open letter to the public. I looked at Blomstedt in the eyes during one of my public comment speeches, telling him and you all, 'The public is watching you'. Yet you don't get the dangerous, racist ramifications of your proposal or what it is doing and would do to children of all colors.

This madness of transgenderism is harming children for life! Last count I read; 23,000 of these 'trans children' are publicly declaring remorse because of the hormones that left them sterile and mutilated by castration and breast removal!

5. Robin Steven's immediate resignation for repeating Blomstedt's lie about 'no activists' in newspapers.

I asked him personally if he would recognize his error and print an apology? He did not.

Now he has LIED AGAIN in his re-election campaign saying 'he tried to STOP the standards'. WHAT A LIAR!...I watched as he voted more than once, at best, to keep the Standards by postponement! You are found out, Robin!

6. Except for Penner, I call for each one of your resignations as you are complicit in this pornographic, immoral, un-godly, dangerous, racist, trumping and going against parent's rights, satanic-agenda driven farce of Health Standards you hold up as righteous.

PERMANENTLY THROW OUT THESE HEALTH STANDARDS OR ANY FUTURE ATTEMPTS TO REVIEVE THEM IN ANY FORM! THEY ARE GARBAGE!

Your legacy is set as a failure in your time as public servants. YOU CAN CORRECT THIS NOW BY REPENTING FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT. Then resign immediately as you are NO LONGER TRUSTED WITH THE CARE OF CHILDREN! A PEDOPHILE WOULD BE CHARGED AND ARRESTED FOR PROPAGATING SUCH FILTH IN A SCHOOL! THOSE VOTING FOR KEEPING THESE HEALTH STANDARDS ARE DOING THIS IN THE WHOLE STATE!

Please listen...for your soul's sake...LISTEN!

Beth Hiatt

Minden, 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 \*

Beth

Last name \*

Hiatt

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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 \*

Nancy

Last name \*

Bentley

City \*

Gering

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.)

State Board should focus on high standards for the core competencies such as Math and English. It should not include any health, CRT, or other standards in any of the core standards. Nebraskans want local control and are watching SBE actions carefully

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Nancy

Last name \*

Bentley

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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 \*

Annette

Last name \*

Swantek

City \*

Genoa

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 Distinguished School Board Members,

I am concerned that the idea of teaching children fictional ideas about their sex is detrimental to their development. We were each created male or female. From birth we were given an identity. When we put ideas in the heads of those we are asked to teach and protect, we are doing a disservice to them to say the least.

The sexual standards are a fad. In ten years this will become more evident. In the mean time, let's not cause damage to the developing brains of Nebraskans.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Annette

Last name \*

Swantek

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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 \*

Ashland

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 Math Standards in our state and the low testing and performance scores coming out of our schools. We need our State Board of Education to focus on core competencies and leave subjects outside of the legislated mandate to the local schools or in some cases the parents to handle. This is there opportunity to get things turned around from the dangerous path we are on in our schools. As an employer here in Nebraska, the students we are producing with good core competencies are what will help sustain our State for years to come. Let's get away from Culture issues and get back to these Core competencies.

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

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First name \*

Michael

Last name \*

Meyer

City \*

Kearney

State \*

Disappointment that my SBOE won't let go of filth.

Written Comment

There is a limit of 750 words.

Written Comments \*

There is a limit of 750 words (approximately 5000 characters with spaces.)

Please stay in your lane and create policy for your four topics!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Michael

Last name \*

Meyer

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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 \*

Matt

Last name \*

Barth

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.)

I just wanted to make the State Board of Educators aware that the general public is still engaged and watching the outcomes of this Board's decisions that will affect our children now and in the future. As you are currently discussing and setting standards for the math curriculum which are important based on current poor testing records for kids in the State of Nebraska, we are still watching what will happen with the Health Standards in the future. The outcomes of your decisions will affect your ability and access to be voted to the Board in the future.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Matt

Last name \*

Barth

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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 \*

Kaila

Last name \*

Mailahn

City \*

Denton

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 a taxpayer. We are overtaxed for what we get in return. I am very concerned with the low testing and performance scores of our Nebraskan students. We need the Nebraska State Board of Education to focus on core competencies and leave subjects outside of their legislated mandate to local schools. NO TO CRT - it creates racism and division.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Kaila

Last name \*

Mailahn

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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 \*

bradd

Last name \*

richter

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.)

May 3, 2022

Good Morning Nebraska State School Board Representatives,

My understanding from an ad that is being aired in western Nebraska, is that one current board member (from western Nebraska) was instrumental in shutting down the initial proposed health standards?

I must have missed that, but when current board member Kirk Penner proposed 3 different options, in a meeting earlier this year, to shut down the health standards, the vote was 7 opposed and 1 for the change that Kirk proposed. This was a huge missed opportunity by the 7 members to stand up with the 90% of the people testifying in 2021 and 2022 who have been adamantly opposed to these ever being brought forward in the future.

Scrap Draft #1 and Draft #2 Health Standards

Sincerely

Bradd and Micki Richter

3809 W. Rosedale Rd.

Doniphan Nebraska 68832

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Bradd

Last name \*

Richter

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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 \*

Julie

Last name \*

Bottger

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.)

I am concerned the State school board is trying to implement ideas and curriculum into the public schools involving issues that should only be taught by parents in the home. In the meantime, performance and testing scores continue to decline.

I urge you to focus on core curriculum issues, and carefully review the new math standards, Please stay within your legislated mandate when making decisions that affect our children.

I will continue to stay on top of issues concerning the education of Nebraska students, and can only hope you will listen to the voices of concern coming from across 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 \*

Julie

Last name \*

Bottger

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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 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 \*

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.)

To whom it may concern,

I continue to be very concerned with the Nebraska State Board of Education's seeming disregard for the low testing performance scores of Nebraska's students. We need the Nebraska State Board of Education to focus on core competencies and leave subjects outside of the Board's legislated mandates to local schools boards where they belong.

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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## Identification

Please complete the following information to identify yourself. This information will appear with the text of your written public comment.

First name \*

Anne

Last name \*

Daly

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.)

State BOE,

The overwhelming consensus is for your board to permanently ban any so called health standards. Your concern should be with true academics such as math, science and Reading. Leave the teaching of sexuality to children's parents or guardians. God has given them authority to raise their own children as they see best not public educators!

Again please permanently ban any kind of health 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 \*

Anne

Last name \*

Daly

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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 \*

Clayton Bruce and Cheryl

Last name \*

Willis

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.)

We continue to urge the State Board of Education to stop the unwanted overreach and "scrap the standards." Parents and their elected representatives at yhe the local level should be the ones to decide education curriculum for their children.

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 \*

Clayton Bruce and Cheryl

Last name \*

Willis

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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 \*

Jeana

Last name \*

Hackel

City \*

Ord

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 strongly oppose the critical race theory and the comprehensive sex education measures mainly because we get what we focus on. When our focus is on inequality and exploring sexuality, we end up with confused and angry children. National test scores are proof of this.

The role of the state board of education is to set standards for objective education, not indoctrination. Place energy into building mastery in math, science, history, grammar, writing, and critical thinking skills. Give teachers objective material that teaches skill, character, and service that enables Nebraskan kids to excel.

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Jeana

Last name \*

Hackel

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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 \*

Darci

Last name \*

Hosier

City \*

Kenesaw

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.)

To the State Board of Education. SCRAP THE HEALTH STANDARDS ALTOGETHER! Focus on the core subjects such as math, language arts, etc. 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 \*

Darci

Last name \*

Hosier

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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 (Micki)

Last name \*

Mahowald

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.)

Please keep any kind of sex education, including pushing a transgender ideology out of our schools. Parents need to be the educator for these things. I don't want the school to provide any sort of abortion care, condoms, birth control, hormones, or even aspirin provided to my child without my consent.

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 \*

Mahowald

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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 \*

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.)

For Written Public Comment May 6, 2022

State Board of Education Members,

I am writing today to ask you to reconsider the towns you have chosen for your away meetings. Omaha is only 59 minutes away from Lincoln. I do not believe Omaha should be one of the away meetings because people travel back and forth between Omaha and Lincoln daily and it is not that much of a hard ship in my opinion. I think the meetings should be held in a different location each meeting with 6 different meeting towns such as Lincoln, Grand Island or Kearney, North Platte, Ogallala, and Sidney to give the people a greater chance to participate in the State Board of Education Meetings in person.

The people of Nebraska are constituents, and the definition of constituent is

- being a voting member of a community or organization and having the power to appoint or elect:  
"The constituent body has a right of veto"

I think it is very important for people to have the opportunity to meet you all in person, face to face, and to hear you in person as well as for you to hear your constituents in person. Online is convenient but online does not give one a good observation point. I believe it would be a good idea for you all in the Omaha and Lincoln area to travel to and become familiar with the western half of this great state and the people that live there instead of being in your own little bubble of urban culture and life. Get to know your whole state.

I also would like to ask, what are your definitions of discussion, debate, and delivering a speech? Are your statements to the point you are trying to make or just throwing around words to hear yourself talk trying to look scholarly and educated? Ms. Neary, these two questions are mainly for you.

I really wish I could have seen you teachers back when you were actually in the classroom teaching. I am looking at you all from my own personal experience with teachers, administrators, co-workers, and those outside of the education setting in other work settings and social settings as well. I loved all but two of my teachers throughout 1st to 12th, and all but 1 of my instructors in college. I did not have any trust whatsoever in those three – their hearts were not good. And my gut instincts as far as who can be trusted are usually pretty good. I have an idea that most of you will not even bother to read my or anyone else's comments. I really doubt most of you have really listened at the meetings to any of us. There is no indication from most of you that you have heard us. Seven of you first told us it was due to the Pandemic that you were indefinitely were tabling the Health Standards and now you have one of you touting that he led the charge to stop the standards, but we see he is still voting for their existence. The Standards have not been taken off the table but are still there to be stirred and served when someone calls for them to be. It wasn't the pandemic that caused the pause, it was because you original 7 were hoping we would all back off. We are not backing off, we are standing firm, and we will work hard to make our voices heard at the ballot box.

Kathy Adams  
2515 62nd Ave Pl  
Kearney, NE 68845-1668  
308-440-2150  
[canteenlady.ka@gmail.com](mailto:canteenlady.ka@gmail.com)

### 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 \*

Adams

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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 \*

Laurie

Last name \*

Brokaw

City \*

Bancroft

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 and Commissioner,

My name is Laurie Brokaw. My husband and I live in Bancroft, NE.

I have written you SEVERAL time in the last year and a half, asking you to SCRAP THE STANDARDS!! I just wish that SOMEBODY on this board would have the guts to answer some of the questions expressed during the public comment portions of the monthly SBOE meetings. My reasons for writing have not changed. I still have nine grandchildren in the Nebraska school system, four BOYS and five GIRLS, just as God made them!

I am deeply concerned about the indoctrination taking place in these public facilities, where REAL EDUCATION should be being taught, namely, reading, writing, math and TRUE history.

Social Emotional Learning, critical race theory and comprehensive sexuality education OR whatever new names you've dreamed up lately, HAVE NO PLACE IN OUR SCHOOLS. PERIOD!!!!

Election day is around the corner, May 10. Your actions on this board have consequences, SO DO ELECTIONS!!

Sincerely, a concerned grandma and tax paying citizen of Nebraska,  
Laurie Brokaw

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Laurie

Last name \*

Brokaw

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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 \*

Shayla

Last name \*

Stutzman

City \*

Dorchester

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.)

Well, here we are again, still expressing our opposition to CRT and CSE!!! We will NEVER let up in our fight to protect our children!

Month after month you have heard the voices of the majority, the parents, grandparents and concerned citizens who oppose these CSE standards and CRT, and yet you continually ignore what the MAJORITY are saying.

You refuse to LISTEN to the people who voted you into this office. You continue to follow your own biased opinions. That is NOT how this democracy is supposed to work.

Please, please listen to the voices and concerns of the people, who show up and speak at the meetings and to the responses of the people who are putting their concerns in writing.

Get rid of CRT and CSE!!!! Focus on core competencies, math, reading, writing, science and social studies. Leave subject's that are outside of your legislative mandate, to local schools.

I pray for changed hearts for all of you. I pray that you recognize the harm that you are imposing on our innocent children. I pray that you are enlightened and turn your opinions and votes to protect the minds of our most vulnerable and youngest members of society. Thank you, Shayla Stutzman (retired teacher)

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Shayla

Last name \*

Stutzman

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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 \*

Arle

Last name \*

Preisendorf

City \*

Grand Island

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 what is being taught to our children in school without the parents knowledge. It is the parents responsibility to educate their children about sexuality, morals, and family values. The books that are available in libraries an be described as soft porn. CRT is divisive and racist! If we are to make this world a better place we need to be involved in knowing the curriculum being taught to our children!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Arlene

Last name \*

Preisendorf

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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 \*

Deb

Last name \*

Pickering

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.)

**PERMANENTLY SCRAP THE HEALTH STANDARDS!!!!!!!**

It's simple. Why can't you get it – the majority of Nebraska citizens object to your proposed standards.

How many times and in how many ways do you need to hear this. Our students need to learn the basics and excel in those basics to become successful in all they do.

**STOP WASTING YOUR TIME AND THAT OF ALL OF US. SHAME ON 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 \*

Deb

Last name \*

Pickering

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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 \*

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 from District 7 sw nebraska area of the wildfires. I am white, a woman, heterosexual, a wife, mother, grandmother and greatgrandmother and I am Catholic and a Republican. I am unable to be in North Platte in person for the SBOE May meeting. I will be submitting my comment. I want to continue to expect from the District 7 Robin Stevens that he represent the western part of our state as the constituents of this part of Nebraska! I hope that the Board concentrates on academics as the surveys certainly rank us less than 50% proficiethe health standards in all areas. I want to convey my continued opinion to permanantly do away with the health standards. Leave them up to the individual school districts. I also want my opinion known that CRT/SEL is anti American and racist in itself. Noone is going to tell me or my children/grandchildren to apologise for being white and then to be called racist. I am voting for Elizabeth Tegtmeier for District 7 on May 10.

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 \*

Marvin

Last name \*

Tiffany

City \*

York

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.)

To the Nebraska State Board of Education:

I strongly believe that there needs to be local control in education with parent's involvement in their children's school topics. There should not be comprehensive sex education or critical race theory. Parent's should have some control about what their children are taught in public schools. 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 \*

Marvin

Last name \*

Tiffany

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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 \*

Amber

Last name \*

Brown

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.)

Scrap the sex education standards. Stay with the areas you are tasked to cover. Families rights matter!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Amber

Last name \*

Brown

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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 \*

Patricia

Last name \*

Bartels

City \*

Upland

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 writing again tonight to express my concern that you have not scrapped the sex standards that are in the CSE standards ,please scrap them and put your time and effort into setting standards concerning educating our kids . Raise the standards instead of thinking 40 or less percent is acceptable in our basic subjects . It is time to help the teachers teach and not be kept busy with subjects that do not prepare our kids to succeed in careers and live a fulfilling life .Do away with present standards and let schools set sex standards on local level .Thank You Patrica Bartels Upland ,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 \*

Patrica

Last name \*

Bartels

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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 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 \*

Caroline

Last name \*

Epp

City \*

Giltner

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 writing again to state that I am against the sex standards which this board has been pushing on our kids. Our Creator designed sex to be kept for marriage between a man and a woman, simple as that! Then kids can grow up in healthy environments, especially if the parents are following the rest of what God instructs in His Word. It pays to read equipment manuals, how much more the One about life!

This leads me also, to the SEL. Kids don't need this! They need structure to feel secure and to thrive. They need discipline; they need the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, and true history!!!! You are wasting our money and the time of our kids with all this extra distraction of SEL and your sex agenda!

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Caroline

Last name \*

Epp

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# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 2022

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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 \*

Julie

Last name \*

Lilienthal

City \*

Grand Island

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.)

State Board of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
Attn. Ryan Foor  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

May 4, 2022

To All whom this concerns,

Once again I am submitting a letter in regards to the proposed "health" standards written by the State Board in Nebraska. I must continue to resist this form of instruction as it is on its face - worrisome. One would not need to look deeply to understand that it is a ploy for the systematic control of young children's minds and bodies.

A brief look at the scorecard of the national standards for core subjects of reading, writing, math and science yields disappointing results for Nebraska youth. Graphs furnished from the "Nation's Report Card" (see attached\*) show that Nebraska youth collectively score under 50% consistently for 4th and 8th grades. High School scores were not made available. Why is this? If 4th graders are 37% "at or above" grade level in reading, and 8th graders are at 34%, why would any educator be comfortable with this? Writing skills of these two grade levels in Nebraska are poorer yet at 27% for 4th graders and no data made available for 8th grade or High School students. Science and math score higher at 47 and 45% in 4th grade, yet taper off again in 8th grade. More emphasis on core is required!

Now enters the discussion of sexual picture books being placed into the hands of even younger students. Proper body part names should rarely enter these children's vocabulary on a daily basis, yet the Nebraska Board is fighting to keep this in place. At the 4th grade level, children have already passed first base in knowledge of terms like "boner"; mutual, single or group masturbation, and are learning to ask their peers how to address proper technique for "blow jobs" in innocuous books like "Looking for Alaska" by John Green. This new age primer is found in several Nebraska public school libraries. Curiously, "Anti-Racist Baby" by Ibram X shows up at most elementary schools, and our local Sam's club book table. If reading scores across Nebraska are at 37% in composite should one expect the under-served minority youth to struggle with this, or are picture books enough? Stunting of any bright mind is a shame.

The Nation's Report Card also submits that test scores have continued to drop since 2015. As a parent of a college student who graduated in 2015 I find it depressing to watch this future teacher struggle to pass the Teacher's Praxis exam after multiple attempts, hours of tutoring and the financial cost. Again, who assists the student who is not blessed with these resources? A GPA of 3.1 at a Nebraska University should serve to show this student can do the work required, yet is unable to surmount this obstacle. This student had a required Sex Ed class as well, with entire chapters devoted to perverse sex acts including bestiality. State Board of Education appears to be grooming the lower grades for these same courses, at an accelerated pace. This particular student would also be required to teach these programs when she is

employed as an educator. This categorically goes against the grain of our family's moral basis.

In sum I would again submit opposition to this radical sexual education of youth of all ages. I am well aware that you will continue on your quest to push this through. Eventually I know this will be to your detriment at the ballot box. There is an undercurrent and a ground swell that is and will continue to investigate this Board and the monies that are attached to it on a local, state and national scale. We are well aware that this is part of a plan to dumb down and steal our youth and culture. I would again reinforce that the Elkhorn Band teacher (Dr.) was arrested on grooming charges in 2021, and a Grand Island teacher was sentenced for child pornography in 2021. These cases reflect two demographics and two sexes (read male, female) and multiple lives were affected. Mercy does not rob justice in the State of Nebraska criminal law, nor can the Board of Education find immunity within its statutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Lilienthal  
5700 S. Locust St  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
308-379-2090

(attachment not allowed due to length)

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Julie

Last name \*

Lilienthal

# Google Forms

# Nebraska State Board of Education Written Public Comment May 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 \*

Laura

Last name \*

Empson

City \*

Chadron

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 a concern to me that our Nebraska students are showing low testing and performance scores in core subjects. See "How Did U.S. Students Perform On The Most Recent Assessments?" at [nationsreportcard.gov](https://nationsreportcard.gov).

We need to improve our students' competencies in core subjects. I urge you to focus on these and leave subjects outside of your legislated mandate to local schools.

Critical Race Theory is a dangerous philosophy which promotes racist and other discrimination. Do not allow Critical Race Theory to be included in part or in whole in any standards or curricula for our Nebraska students.

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 \*

Empson

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## 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 \*

Martha

Last name \*

Empson

City \*

Chadron

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 still have concerns about what the Nebraska State Board of Education is doing to protect our children from Critical Race Theory. I also am concerned about Nebraska students' competency on core subjects, such as math, English (such as Grammar and Writing) and Health. What can the State Board of Education do about these concerns?

Signature

Please type your first and last name again. This will appear with your written comments and serves as your signature.

Signed,

First name \*

Martha

Last name \*

Empson

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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 \*

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 you have heard again and again, scrap the health standards.

Since all (except Kirk Penner) are not listening to the vast majority of parents, grandparents and educators you should all step down from your positions.

Fighting for all Nebraskan children is the most important thing and a school system and Board of Education that want to sexualize and indoctrinate children must be held accountable.

Parents are awake and the vast majority do not want any of this "wokeism" to be taught in schools.

Math, real science, real biology real history is what should be taught free from this woke agenda.

The people have spoken now please scrap the health standards.

I pray for each and everyone of 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 \*

Teresa

Last name \*

Cook

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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.)

Permantly scrap the CRT & CSE standards!!!!

Don't try to rewrite history or teach controversial standards to our children. Teach them READING, WRITING, MATH & PATRIOTISM!!!!

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 \*

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.)

COMMENTS TO THE NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION FROM  
THE NEBRASKA INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
MAY 6, 2022-NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA

The Nebraska Indian Education Association (NeIEA) persists in its endeavors to share accurate and appropriate lesson plans about the first peoples of Nebraska to school districts across the state. NeIEA also endeavors to supply each of the four schools located on Tribal lands (currently CSI or Priority Schools) with comprehensive governance training on their roles and responsibilities to improve educational outcomes for students. NeIEA believes the State Board of Education joins us in these wishes and labors. NeIEA therefore now proposes to submit a grant to the Nebraska Department of Education and requests Board approval of the concept of this initial submission, pursuant to Policy Directive P5.

The grant would have two components. The first would improve instruction about Indigenous people through an Indigenous Institute (Institute). The Institute will be planned all teachers in Nebraska to: increase teacher knowledge and resources about Indigenous people; to offer useful studies of Indigenous people by Native educators and scholars, and provide the critical context of lessons for the instructors.

The second component is to position the local Boards of Education in Macy, Walthill, Winnebago, and Santee to fully understand their roles and responsibilities to improve the educational progress and status of their students through the use of data, community and local government input, and community engagement. This situation is unique in Nebraska as these four schools are located on federal Indian reservations, or tribal lands, and require special attention in the need to consult with the local tribal governments.

Since this is NeIEA's first time in requesting state funds to assist with our common work, we welcome the assistance of NDE staff in relating our rationale and tapping into existing resources-if they exist. We want to ensure our current plans conform to existing administrative requirements and grant application procedures. Thank you.

Submitted by Marian Holstein, Executive Director  
Nebraska Indian Education Association

---

## 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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Google Forms

TO: MATTHEW L. BLOMSTEDT, PH.D.  
FROM: BRYCE WILSON, DENISE THEGE  
DATE: May 6, 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): National Council for Mental Wellbeing  
Contract Amount: \$26,000  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide training.  
Date of Contract: 3/17/22-7/15/22  
Contact Person: Zainab Rida
2. Contractor(s): OCIO  
Contract Amount: \$10,000  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide ad hoc technical support and maintenance.  
Date of Contract: 3/25/22-2/28/23  
Contact Person: Zainab Rida
3. Contractor(s): Todd Schmeeckle  
Contract Amount: \$10,000  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Plan and implement NE CAFÉ.  
Date of Contract: 4/1/22-3/31/23  
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
4. Contractor(s): Antonia Szymanski  
Contract Amount: \$17,100  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide professional learning and coaching.  
Date of Contract: 7/1/22-7/2/24  
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
5. Contractor(s): Eric Knoll  
Contract Amount: \$10,250  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Plan & conduct professional development workshop.  
Date of Contract: 4/18/22-7/31/22  
Contact Person: Katie Graham
6. Contractor(s): Megan Shepherd  
Contract Amount: \$28,800  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Monitor and update online course in Canvas.  
Date of Contract: 6/1/22-5/31/23  
Contact Person: Melody Hobson

7. Contractor(s): UNL  
Contract Amount: \$19,914  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide graduate assistant.  
Date of Contract: 8/1/22-7/31/23  
Contact Person: Katie Graham
  
8. Contractor(s): UNL  
Contract Amount: \$40,804  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Assist with reporting requirements.  
Date of Contract: 4/1/22-3/31/23  
Contact Person: Amy Rhone
  
9. Contractor(s): Michelle Rupiper  
Contract Amount: \$13,500  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Coaching/training svcs.  
Date of Contract: 5/1/22-4/30/23  
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
  
10. Contractor(s): Linda Meyers  
Contract Amount: \$27,000  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide services as a trainer and reliable  
observer for program quality tools.  
Date of Contract: 5/1/22-4/30/23  
Contact Person: Melody Hobson
  
11. Contractor(s): UNMC  
Contract Amount: \$46,273.07  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide summer transition program for youth.  
Date of Contract: 4/1/22-7/31/22  
Contact Person: Lindy Foley
  
12. Contractor(s): HHS  
Contract Amount: \$10,000  
Funding Source: Federal  
Scope of Services: Provide staff to facilitate meetings.  
Date of Contract: 4/5/22-4/4/23  
Contact Person: Amy Rhone





