



NEWS RELEASE

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Nebraska Department of Education Receives \$55 Million Federal Literacy Grant

The Nebraska Department of Education will receive \$55 million dollars over the next five years to help improve literacy throughout the state. This is the largest grant the NDE has ever received and is part of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Nebraska is one of 23 recipients nationwide. The CLSD award spans five years, with a first-year award of \$11,020,244.

The purpose of the federal CLSD program is to support State Education Agencies (SEA) in the implementation of comprehensive, statewide literacy efforts. The program is designed to advance literacy skills for children from birth through grade 12, with an emphasis on disadvantaged students, those living in poverty, English learners, and students with disabilities. Literacy skills include pre-literacy, reading, and writing.

Award recipients must use funds to support activities such as explicit interventions and support in reading and writing that have been implemented in response to identified gaps in literacy in the state. The practices, strategies, and interventions must be evidence-based and highly effective.

With the grant the NDE will focus on a number of proven strategies including providing professional development, improving family literacy, providing high quality instructional materials, utilizing tutoring and extended learning opportunities outside of school hours, and working towards reducing chronic absenteeism.

Evidence-based literacy strategies include development of phonemic awareness, decoding words, analyzing word parts, writing, and recognizing words, building students' reading comprehension, and providing fluency activities to help students read effortlessly. The CLSD funds will support Nebraska teachers in participating in evidence-based reading instruction statewide.

CLSD program activities will enhance other state initiatives, such as the Nebraska Literacy Project, that share the goal of improving literacy outcomes. The Nebraska State Board of Education has outlined its goal to increase third grade proficiency in English language arts test scores from 62% measured in the 2023 statewide assessments to 75% by 2030.

CLSD awards are made annually over a five-year period and are contingent upon Congressional appropriations and grantees' substantial progress towards its literacy goals.

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