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Appendix A

Governor's RTTT Steering Committee Members and Letters of Support
# Race to the Top Steering Committee

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<th>Role and Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Heineman</td>
<td>Governor – State of Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Breed</td>
<td>Commissioner of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senator Greg Adams</td>
<td>Education Committee and Nebraska Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel Alvarez, Jr.</td>
<td>Citizen Advocate (Retired Gering Teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis B. Baack</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dave Heineman**  
*Governor – State of Nebraska*  
Governor  
State of Nebraska  
State Capitol  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 94848  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848  
(402) 471-2244  
kathy.graham@nebraska.gov

**Roger Breed**  
*Nebraska Department of Education*  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987  
(402) 471-5020  
roger.breed@nebraska.gov  
denise.fisher@nebraska.gov

**Senator Greg Adams**  
*Nebraska Legislature – Education Committee*  
Education Committee (Chairperson)  
Nebraska Legislature  
State Capitol – Room 1107  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604  
(402) 471-2756  
gadams@leg.ne.gov  
collins@leg.ne.gov

**Manuel Alvarez, Jr. (“Junior”)**  
*Citizen Advocate (Retired Gering Teacher)*  
1570 Yucca Drive  
Gering, Nebraska  
Home: (308) 436-7587  
jalvarez@scottsbluff.net

**Dennis B. Baack**  
*Nebraska Community College Association*  
Executive Director  
601 South 12th Street, Suite 200  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-471-4685  
402-471-4726 FX  
dennisgb@nebrr.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ken Bird</td>
<td>President/CEO</td>
<td>7101 Mercy Road, Suite 240</td>
<td>(402) 505-6814</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kbird@bffoundation.com">kbird@bffoundation.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Blomstedt</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Educational Service Units Coordinating Council</td>
<td>(402) 499-6756</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbloomstedt2@neb.rr.com">mbloomstedt2@neb.rr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John A. Bonaiuto</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Nebraska Association of School Boards</td>
<td>(402) 423-4951</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jbonaiuto@nasbonline.org">jbonaiuto@nasbonline.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susie Buffett</td>
<td>3555 Farnam Street</td>
<td>Sherwood Foundation</td>
<td><a href="mailto:susie@sherwoodfoundation.org">susie@sherwoodfoundation.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan Carpenter</td>
<td>Chancellor of the Nebraska State College System</td>
<td>1115 K Street</td>
<td>(402) 471-2505</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scarpenter@nscs.edu">scarpenter@nscs.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Cavanaugh</td>
<td>Building Bright Futures</td>
<td>1004 Farnam Street, Suite 102</td>
<td>(402) 715 4145</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jic@buildingbrightfutures.org">jic@buildingbrightfutures.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael S. Dulaney</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Nebraska Council of School Administrators</td>
<td>(402) 476-8055</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mike@ncsa.org">mike@ncsa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Hague</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Gering Public Schools</td>
<td>(308) 436-3125</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dhague@geringschools.net">dhague@geringschools.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz S. Koop</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>EducationQuest Foundation</td>
<td>(402) 479-6902</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lizk@educationquest.org">lizk@educationquest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marty Mahler</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Nebraska P-16 Initiative</td>
<td>(402) 472-5991</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmahler@nebraska.edu">mmahler@nebraska.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Title/Position</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>James B. Milliken</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>3835 Holdrege Street</td>
<td>(402) 472-8636 <a href="mailto:president@nebraska.edu">president@nebraska.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Nebraska</td>
<td>Lincoln, NE 68583</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marilyn Moore</td>
<td>Associate Superintendent for Instruction</td>
<td>5901 O Street</td>
<td>402-436-1625 <a href="mailto:mmoore@lps.org">mmoore@lps.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lincoln Public Schools</td>
<td>Lincoln, NE 68510</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas &quot;Tip&quot; O'Neill, Jr.</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>635 South 14th Street, Suite 310</td>
<td>402-434-2818 402-434-2825 FX <a href="mailto:tip@aicunebraska.org">tip@aicunebraska.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Nebraska</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lincoln, NE 68508</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Riley</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kriley@esu3.org">kriley@esu3.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Teahon</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mteahon@esu10.org">mteahon@esu10.org</a></td>
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<td>Rebecca Valdez</td>
<td>4821 South 24th Street</td>
<td>Omaha, NE 68107</td>
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<td>402-733-2720</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rvaldez@latinocenterofthemidlands.org">rvaldez@latinocenterofthemidlands.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas H. Warren, Sr</td>
<td>3040 Lake Street</td>
<td>Omaha, NE 68111</td>
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<td>402-451-1066</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:twarren@urbanleagueneb.org">twarren@urbanleagueneb.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Katie Weitz White</td>
<td>3555 Farnam Street</td>
<td>Omaha, NE 68131</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(402) 341-1717</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:katiew@sherwoodfoundation.org">katiew@sherwoodfoundation.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jess Wolf</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Nebraska State Education Association</td>
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<td></td>
<td>605 South 14th Street</td>
<td>Lincoln, NE 68508</td>
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<td>(402) 475-7611</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jess.wolf@nsea.org">jess.wolf@nsea.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Wright Jr.</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>5321 Drew Place</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lincoln, Ne 68516</td>
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<td>cell: (402)540-7122</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>fax: (402)857-3736</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lwrightjr@gmail.com">lwrightjr@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Eash</td>
<td>Budget Management Analyst</td>
<td>State Capitol – Room 1320</td>
<td>(402) 471-4175</td>
<td><a href="mailto:matthew.eash@nebraska.gov">matthew.eash@nebraska.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Wise</td>
<td></td>
<td>P.O. Box 94664</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Wolff</td>
<td>Policy Advisor</td>
<td>1004 Farnam Street, Suite 102</td>
<td>(402) 715 4145</td>
<td><a href="mailto:r.wise@buildingbrightfutures.org">r.wise@buildingbrightfutures.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Governor’s Policy Research Office</td>
<td>Omaha, NE 68102</td>
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<td>State Capitol – Room 1319</td>
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<td>Lincoln, NE 68509-4601</td>
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<td>(402) 471-2575</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cheryl.wolff@nebraska.gov">cheryl.wolff@nebraska.gov</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partner</td>
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<td>United States Senate</td>
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<td>Nebraska State Legislature Education Committee</td>
<td>Greg Adams</td>
<td>Chair, Senator</td>
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<td>Nebraska State Education Association</td>
<td>Jess Wolf</td>
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<td>James B. Milliken</td>
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<td>Nebraska P-16 Initiative</td>
<td>Dr. Marty Mahler</td>
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<td>The State Chamber</td>
<td>Barry L. Kennedy</td>
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<td>Greater Omaha Chamber</td>
<td>David G. Brown</td>
<td>President/CEO</td>
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<td>Nebraska Association of School Boards</td>
<td>Dr. John Bonaiuto</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Nebraska Council of School Administrators</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Dulaney</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Gretna Public School District #37</td>
<td>Dr. Kevin M. Riley</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gering Public Schools</td>
<td>Don Hague</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Nebraska Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council</td>
<td>Matthew L. Blomstedt</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Avenue Scholars, Bright Futures Foundation</td>
<td>Ken Bird</td>
<td>President/CEO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Building Bright Futures</td>
<td>John Cavanaugh</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Susie Buffett/Katie Weitz</td>
<td>Chairman/President/CEO</td>
<td></td>
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<td>EducationQuest Foundation</td>
<td>Liz S. Koop</td>
<td>President/CEO</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Nebraska State College System</td>
<td>Stan Carpenter</td>
<td>Chancellor</td>
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<td>University of Nebraska - Kearney</td>
<td>Dr. Ed Scantling</td>
<td>Dean, College of Education</td>
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<td>Nebraska Community College Association</td>
<td>Dennis G. Baack</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Western Nebraska Community College</td>
<td>Junior Alvarez</td>
<td>Math Instructor</td>
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<td>Southeast Community College</td>
<td>Jack J. Huck</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Western Nebraska Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Eileen Ely</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Community College</td>
<td>Randy Schmaizl</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Concordia University - Nebraska</td>
<td>Dr. Ronald Bork</td>
<td>Dean, College of Education</td>
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<td>Northeast Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Bill R. Path</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Western Nebraska Community College Foundation</td>
<td>Dayle L. Wallien, Esq.</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Nebraska</td>
<td>Thomas O'Neill, Jr.</td>
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<td>Dr. James P. Eckman</td>
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<td>Frederik Ohles</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties</td>
<td>Julie K. Brewer</td>
<td>COO</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>ESU 10</td>
<td>Dr. Wayne Bell</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td>Marge Beatty</td>
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<td>Mick Loughran</td>
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<td>Dr. Gil Kettelhut</td>
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<td>Dr. Jeffrey D. West</td>
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<td>Dr. Daniel J. Shoemake</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td>Ponca Tribe of Nebraska</td>
<td>Larry Wright, Jr.</td>
<td>Tribal Chairman</td>
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<td>Thomas Warren, Sr.</td>
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<td>League of Nebraska Municipalities</td>
<td>L. Lynn Rex</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Susan Schnase</td>
<td>Director of Development</td>
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<td>Paul Calvert</td>
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<td>Mid Plains Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Michael R. Chipps</td>
<td>President</td>
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May 24, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Commissioner
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

On behalf of the State of Nebraska, we wish to jointly convey our strong support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top Phase II application. Nebraska has a long and substantial history of providing local schools built with quality teaching and a focus on student learning. With this application, Nebraska has taken a bold step toward accelerating reforms consistent with our substantial and historical educational assets.

From the time of the pioneers, Nebraska communities have worked hard to see that our public schools reflect the best hopes and dreams for our students. There is a tremendous pride in the quality of our schools, and we want to encourage the ongoing efforts of the Nebraska Department of Education and our many public school policy partners to make improvements in Nebraska’s educational system. The Race to the Top Phase II application provides an excellent opportunity to engage in broadly supported initiatives to ensure Nebraska students’ continued growth and future competitiveness.

We hope that the Nebraska Race to the Top Phase II application will be strongly considered in light of our pioneering background and long-standing tradition of investing in our students, which continues to make Nebraska the “Good Life” state.

Sincerely,

E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator

Mike Johanns
United States Senator
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 24, 2010

Secretary Arne Duncan
Attn: Edgar Mayes, Correspondence and Communication Control Unit
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of the State of Nebraska, we are writing to bring to your attention Nebraska’s Race to the Top Phase II application. Nebraska boasts a long and substantial educational history built on quality teaching and a focused on student learning. With this application, Nebraska has taken a bold step to accelerate reforms consistent with this tradition.

Our communities, large and small, have worked hard to see our public schools represent the best for Nebraska students. There is tremendous pride associated with the quality of schools in our state, and we want to encourage the ongoing efforts of the Nebraska Department of Education and public school policy partners to make improvements in Nebraska’s educational system. The Race to the Top Phase II application represents an opportunity to engage in initiatives designed to drive and accelerate the growth in achievement for Nebraska students.

We hope the Nebraska Race to the Top Phase II application will be strongly considered in light of our pioneering background and longstanding tradition of investing in students, which continues to make Nebraska home of the Good Life.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Lisa Terry
Member of Congress

Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress

Adrian Smith
Member of Congress
May 24, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

This letter is to offer my support for Nebraska's second application for the Race to the Top Grant Application.

I spent 30-plus years in the classroom teaching high school students and the past four years on the Education Committee, two years of which I have served as the Chair. I know full well the need for funding for sustainable improvements as they relate to assessments of the students, standards for teachers and principals, data system, and professional development. As with our first application, this application for the Race to the Top grant has the potential to significantly and positively impact the Nebraska public education system.

This grant will allow Nebraska to:

- Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high-quality, balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students;

- Create professional development and induction/mentoring systems focused on effective teaching and learning;

- Create a longitudinal data system for stakeholders to access improvement data and then support it with training and technical assistance.
I look forward to working with the Nebraska State Board of Education and schools across the state to ensure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Senator Greg Adams
District 24

GA:ja
May 20, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

This letter confirms the Nebraska State Education Association’s (NSEA) support and commitment to continue our work with you to further Nebraska’s Race to the Top application. We look forward and encourage Nebraska’s progress with your four main goals:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.

- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.

- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

NSEA and its 278 local affiliates have an abiding concern in improving the performance of students in every Nebraska public school system. We pledge our support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application. We believe, with our collaborative efforts, Nebraska is among the top contenders.

NSEA represents 28,000 teachers, principals, and education support professionals. We are the voice and advocates for Nebraska’s teachers. Though Nebraska is a right-to-work state, 100 percent of our K-12 members are covered by negotiated contracts.

NSEA will provide assistance to the locals as they move through the process of negotiating Race to the Top related subjects. We advised all of our local affiliates to sign their LEAs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to support Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application. Further, we
recommended that they commit themselves to work in partnership with their LEA on the appropriate portions as outlined in the Project Administration of the MOU.

We support the use of multiple measures of student learning and growth for purposes of planning instruction and differentiating instruction. As it pertains to the use of student performance data in teacher and principal evaluations, we have agreed to work with the state on an evaluation system that uses such data effectively and fairly and is part of a systematic and coherent evaluation system. We are excited about collaborating with the state in developing appropriate assessments, benchmark testing, and easy to use data for students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

We have collaborated with other educational organizations and the State Board of Education on the development of an alternative licensure/certification program that meets the needs of our school districts and guarantees there is a competent, highly effective teacher in every classroom. We support the concept of alternative certification as long as the licensure program promotes new qualified and quality teachers who meet the high standards we expect of all teachers and administrators. We cannot usurp the constitutional authority the State Board of Education has to license and certify educational personnel for our PreK-12 schools. We have worked diligently to enhance the ability of higher education faculty to provide “dual credit” for our students in grades 9-12. We will continue to explore avenues that are appropriate to put highly effective teachers and administrators in our schools.

We look forward to working with our Governor and our Unicameral to create legislation to assist our chronically low performing schools.

We are pleased to pledge our ongoing support of the leadership, members, and staff of the NSEA to Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application and the successful implementation of the related programs.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jess Wolf, President
Nebraska State Education Association
May 19, 2010

Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

I am writing to express the University of Nebraska’s strong support for the State of Nebraska’s Race to the Top (RTTT) Phase II Grant Application.

As Nebraska’s only public and land-grant university, the University of Nebraska has a special role in Nebraska with regard to research, teaching and outreach. This mission has important implications for the state’s education efforts, from birth to lifelong learning.

The University of Nebraska was a leader in helping to establish the statewide P-16 Initiative over a decade ago, and has helped lead the way to a new structure under the leadership of Governor Heineman with the development of a new set of education goals for Nebraska. Many of the goals of these statewide reform efforts complement the University’s own strategic objectives, and are in alignment with national imperatives and federal guidelines. RTTT funding will put Nebraska in a position to be successful in its ambitious plans to offer opportunity for educational success to every Nebraskan.

The University of Nebraska is directly involved with the RTTT initiative through development of the Nebraska Virtual Academy. The Nebraska Virtual Academy is achievable because of the University’s century-long experience with distance learning for high school students. NU has been a pioneer in the area, first through correspondence and then via digital content over the internet. We are positioned to not only serve Nebraska but to provide a national model for access to essential curricula, particularly in the STEM disciplines. The Nebraska Virtual Academy will ensure that students across Nebraska will have access to a full array of STEM courses, further enhancing their opportunity to attain additional education or be career-ready after high school. The University also will play a critical role by enhancing professional development and teacher training opportunities for current and future teachers through its distance education capacity.

Three of our campuses have colleges of education that are leaders in rural education, family issues, research-based measurement and assessment, expanding access to science and math disciplines, and many other areas pertinent to the state’s RTTT grant application. Centers in math and science education; children, youth, family and schools; and testing have expertise important to this effort.
The University of Nebraska supports the four main goals and Nebraska's plan for reform:

**Teachers and Leader Effectiveness** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning. The University of Nebraska is the largest provider of teachers and school leaders in the state and is an integral partner in successful reform efforts.

**Turning Around Low Performing Schools** – Implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement. The University’s involvement in teacher education, preparation of administrative leadership, and research-based assessment will be imperative to success in this area as well.

**Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students. The University has relevant and important experience in these areas and can be a great resource for the RTTT efforts.

**Data System** – Improve the quality of information collected on students and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. NU leaders have been early and consistent advocates for data-based evaluation and decision-making at all levels of education. Representatives from the University, the Nebraska State College System, and the state’s community colleges plan to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Board of Education to share student data.

I look forward to working with Governor Heineman, the Nebraska Board of Education, and local education leaders across Nebraska to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible, from birth through lifelong learning.

Sincerely,

James B. Milliken
President

JBM/dt
Nebraska P-16 Initiative
Nebraska’s Coalition for Student Success

May 20, 2010

Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

I am writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top (RTTT) Phase II Grant Application.

Race to the Top offers an opportunity to strategically build upon Nebraska’s current P-16 efforts and invest in key supports that: 1) refine our current rigorous state standards; 2) provide new supports for teachers and principals aimed at improving effectiveness; 3) enhance local data systems and coordinate those systems with state data systems; and 4) dramatically improve Nebraska’s persistently lowest-achieving schools. Nebraska’s Race to the Top Phase II application is built on a strong history of education reform that is grounded in some of the highest standards in the country.

Nebraska’s Race to the Top Phase II application is aligned with the Nebraska P-16 Goals to improve education statewide. The P-16 goals in Nebraska are:

1. Adopt a college and career preparation core curriculum that requires four years of English and three years each of math, science and social studies in Nebraska school districts by the 2014-2015 school year.

2. Eliminate the academic achievement gap between Nebraska’s K-12 Caucasian students and its African American, Hispanic, and Native American students.

3. Develop an effective longitudinal data system that provides information on the Nebraska education system from preschool through post-graduate degree attainment and entry into the workforce to help align resources with strategic goals.

4. Attain a high school graduation rate of 90% or higher in each Nebraska high school.

5. Improve Nebraska’s college-going rate to the top-10 tier nationally.

6. Provide affordable access for Nebraska students to attend Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions.
7. Improve time to degree completion and increase graduation rates of Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions.

8. Provide all students with the science, technology, and math skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education or the 21st-century workforce; and increase the number and diversity of individuals who pursue careers as educators and professionals in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math.

The Nebraska P-16 Initiative supports the four main goals of Nebraska’s plan for reform:

**Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

**Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.

**First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary education so that students can be tracked P-16.

**Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise; resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

I look forward to working with the Nebraska State Board of Education and education leaders across Nebraska to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Marty Mahler, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Nebraska P-16 Initiative.
Dr. Roger D. Breed, Commissioner  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Roger:

On behalf of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry, I want to convey our strong support for the Nebraska Department of Education’s application for the Race to the Top (RTTT) Phase II competitive grant.

For nearly a century, the State Chamber has served as the voice of Nebraska’s business community—representing more than 100,000 people in 400 different categories of businesses in more than 150 communities. Our business community has much at stake in the state’s plans to improve its public education system. To make our state more competitive nationally and globally, we need a first-class education system that will continue to produce a high quality workforce.

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry supports cost-effective funding for public education, with appropriate accountability measures, while exploring opportunities to improve the operating effectiveness of our schools. Moreover, our association supports efforts to develop the skills and knowledge requirements for the workplace of today and tomorrow, while helping students transition smoothly from school to career. Nebraska’s long-term plan to improve student achievement would help make these objectives a reality.

Funding from the RTTT grant is critical to helping ensure a more timely and thorough implementation of needed reforms that will significantly benefit Nebraska’s K-12 students and their future employers. We hope that Nebraska’s application for the Phase II competitive grants will be strongly considered and approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry salutes your efforts and we look forward to working with you to improve Nebraska public education system.

Sincerely,

Barry L. Kennedy
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

The Greater Omaha Chamber has been an advocate of quality of education for decades. From our Omaha 2000 efforts to our current support of Building Bright Futures and the P-16 initiative, we have shown that we are concerned about improving the quality of education across the state.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
• First Class Data System – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.

• Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents an opportunity to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

David G. Brown
President and CEO
May 20, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

I am writing on behalf of public school governing boards to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top II “Bright Futures for Nebraska Students” grant application. It is vitally important that the elected officials in each of our public school districts take an active role in sustainable teaching and learning improvements for their districts.

The Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) has been part of the education landscape in Nebraska for over ninety years! Therefore, we believe we have a great deal of experience supporting education governance, and we know the public education landscape is rapidly changing and improving with the advancements in technology and new information. It is imperative for Nebraska to adapt to these changes in order to remain competitive and modernize our education programs.

Nebraska prides itself on being at the forefront of standards development. Nebraska’s Race to the Top Phase II application represents a positive step toward creating a statewide system to support school districts in their efforts to close achievement gaps, increase overall student achievement, and improve high school graduation and college-going rates. This effort looks to be a comprehensive state-led package that has the potential of significantly and positively impacting Nebraska’s public education system.

We are in full support of the main goals and Nebraska’s plan for each of the reform areas:

**Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high-quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

**NVS/STEM Academy** – It is imperative that Nebraska has on-line access to both the highest level of rigor for courses offered in this manner, with credit recovery opportunities, as well as on-line professional development activities for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics teachers.

**Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student has access to excellent teachers and education leaders supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
First Class Data System – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on students and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary, so student progress can be tracked P-16.

Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

I look forward to continuing our policy partnership with the Nebraska State Board of Education and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Dr. John A. Bonaiuto
NASB Executive Director
May 19, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
PO Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Dr. Breed,

On behalf of the membership of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) and with authorization by the NCSA Executive Board, I hereby offer my organization’s general support of the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative and the Nebraska Race to the Top application.

We believe the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative seeks sustainable and systemic changes in the Nebraska education system that will result in documented higher levels of achievement for Nebraska public school students, a clear reduction in learning gaps, and increased graduation and college going rates.

We urge you to include this letter of support in the official application.

Best regards,

Dr. Michael Dulaney  
NCSA Executive Director

cc: Governor Dave Heineman

The mission of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) is to be an effective leader for quality education and to enhance the professionalism of its members.
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

May 20, 2010

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** — Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** — Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** — By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** — Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.
The Gretna Public Schools support the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Riley, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
May 17, 2010

Roger D. Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

RE: Race to the Top - Letter of Support

Dear Commissioner Breed:

I have had the privilege of serving as a superintendent of schools for 21 years; the last nine of those in Gering. Gering Public Schools has focused on improving student performance and that focus has made a difference. The process began by changing from three independent elementary schools each competing to be the best, using their specific curriculum to elementary schools using exactly the same curriculum, taught the same and collaborating to assist each other to produce a student who left their elementary prepared for junior high and high school. We moved from a district with 30% of our third graders reading at grade level to now over 80%. Students are able to successfully complete higher level courses because of the strong foundation they developed throughout their elementary educational experience.

Race to the Top is an opportunity for all schools in Nebraska to focus on student performance and to close the achievement gap of the different student groups in our district. It will also raise the overall student achievement by focusing on student performance. The shift of focus from the adults in our schools to students is long overdue and the Race to the Top application supports this change.

I have been fortunate enough to serve on the committee assisting with the development of this application. I not only support it as a committee member but as a superintendent of schools because it is what is best for all students. I also support it as a parent and grandparent in that every child deserves the best possible education we can provide.

We might not have a large population base in our state but we can serve as an example of developing school systems focused on improving student performance of all students and closing the achievement gap. A quality educational experience should not be based on the social-economic status of the student’s family, the family structure or community wealth. All of the excuses that have been used in the past must be eliminated as we can provide a quality educational program for all students if we chose to do so.

I give my full support to the Nebraska Race to the Top application. Just as students can improve, so can schools and this application will provide the framework for schools and districts to improve statewide.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Hague
Superintendent
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987  

May 19, 2010  

Dear Commissioner Breed,

The ESU Coordinating Council supports the Race to the Top II application and particularly supports the ongoing development of a vision outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students plan.

The ESUCC will continue to shape its statewide efforts to compliment the state's efforts in professional development, distance education and e-learning, data analysis, and school improvement. The ESUCC, in partnership with all seventeen ESUs across the state will develop strategic initiatives in professional development to assist schools identified as persistently lowest achieving. ESUs have already responded to many of the schools currently identified and are already working to address the challenges faced by those schools. The ESUCC is also identifying professional learning networks across the state in several critical areas to better develop equitable services and capacity to assist teachers and principals in high need areas.

The ESUs already have developed assistance for assessment, data analysis, and school improvement. ESUs, through the network of professional development staff, will work with districts according to the goals of objectives outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students plan. In particular, ESUs and the ESUCC envision assisting with each element of the plan including the implementation of new standards and assessment, the development of a STEM academy and virtual school environment, teacher and principal evaluation and support, technical assistance for data collection and analysis for local and state purposes, assistance in developing customized interventions for PLAs, and supports for early childhood services.

In most cases, ESUs are already engaged in these activities, but the Race to the Top effort has helped refocus our efforts to coordinate such activities statewide.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Matthew L. Blomstedt  
Executive Director
May 25, 2010

Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

Bright Futures Foundation provides an avenue of success for Omaha area students of talent and financial need by offering comprehensive support from high school through higher education and into the workforce. The Avenue Scholars program, designed to provide intrusive student support, currently serves students in three high schools, with the addition of three more new partner high schools for the 2010-11 school year. Avenue Scholar students in the high school and community college programs continue to do exceptionally well in their academic programs and experiencing new success in many facets of their lives.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** — Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** — Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
• First Class Data System – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
• Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

Bright Futures Foundation supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

• Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
• Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
• Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
• Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kenneth M. Bird, Ed.D.
President/CEO

bch
May 21, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

The purpose of this letter is to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application. The Race to the Top (RTTT) priorities are directly in line with the focus of Building Bright Futures (BBF). The mission of BBF is to improve academic performance, raise graduation rates and increase civic and community responsibility, with a goal of ensuring that all students graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education or career. To achieve our objectives, we develop partnerships with existing providers and create new evidence-based programs that develop a comprehensive, community-based network of services.

With Race to the Top, Nebraska’s determined step toward improving education includes the opportunity to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. RTTT will improve our success in standards development by linking strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps, increase overall student success and improve high school graduation and college going rates.

Building Bright Futures supports Governor Heineman, your legislative leadership and other education leaders in the development and implementation of Nebraska’s plan, an ambitious yet achievable comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

Excellent Standards and Assessments – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
Superior Teachers and Leaders – Assure every Nebraska student has excellent teachers and education leaders that are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures that include effectiveness in terms of student learning.

First Class Data System – Expand the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System to improve the quality of information collected on students and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Create linkages for pre-K, K-12 and postsecondary, so that students can be tracked P-16.

Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools – Implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources and incentives to transform low performing schools, and provide the support needed by school districts to improve overall student achievement.

Building Bright Futures commits to the following:

- Publicly advocate for the proposal and its goals.
- Commit resources to assist in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Offer our assistance in designing models that provide a variety of opportunities and academic supports that increase the number of young people, especially nontraditional students and students coming from diverse backgrounds and low economic levels, who attain a high school diploma and move on to postsecondary education or career preparation.
- Assist in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encourage dual high quality technical education opportunities that increase postsecondary education and strengthen technical skill levels to meet State workforce development needs.

Collaborations continue to occur that support education practice and reform. Race to the Top represents an opportunity for Nebraska to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to expanded cooperation and partnerships that ensure Nebraska’s students receive a quality education.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Cavanaugh
Executive Director
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

May 20, 2010

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

The Sherwood Foundation works to promote equity through community and education initiatives in Omaha. We have a close relationship with Omaha Public Schools and strive to engage students in the excellent programming all ready available. We provide resources to bolster support services to vulnerable youth and families in the community. We are also actively working to develop alternative learning spaces for youth and promote research to develop new strategies to reach struggling learners.

With this Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
• **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

The Sherwood Foundation supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:
- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Susie Buffett  
Chairman

[Signature]
Katie Weitz White  
Director
May 18, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application. EducationQuest Foundation has a mission to improve access to higher education in Nebraska, and the funding from Race to the Top would assist students in achieving their college dreams.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold, decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps, while increasing overall student success and improving high school graduation and college-going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments**—Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high-quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

- **Superior Teachers and Leaders**—Assure every Nebraska student’s excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.

- **First Class Data System**—By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.

- **Turning Around Our Low-Performing Schools**—Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low-performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.
EducationQuest Foundation supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high-quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post-secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

As a Foundation and as one of the Nebraska P-16 Co-Chairs, we have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that “Race to the Top” represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to ensure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Liz S. Koop
President and CEO
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed. D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

May 18, 2010

Dear Commissioner Breed,

I am writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application. As the Chancellor of the Nebraska State College System (NSCS), I am fully aware of the impact education has on students and their families. This opportunity to participate in significant educational reform will be invaluable to the NSCS as we strive to make a difference in the lives of our students. From having better prepared students enrolling at our colleges to the many partnerships we have with our colleagues in K-12, this effort will benefit all of us in the world of education.

The Nebraska State College System has a long history of preparing teachers for Nebraska schools. Our three institutions (Chadron State, Peru State and Wayne State Colleges) are strategically located in rural Nebraska, with each one serving a designated geographic region of the state. Our academic programs in K-12 teacher preparation are hallmarks for our colleges. All three institutions started as normal schools. In addition to our numerous partnerships with K-12 schools, we have trained thousands of individuals for rewarding careers as teachers in Nebraska and across the nation.

Race to the Top provides an opportunity for Nebraska to focus on K-12 standards and assessment, teacher improvement, a first class data system, and the identification and improvement of our low performing schools. The NSCS is positioned to influence future generations of students since its teacher education programs are inextricably linked to all aspects of Nebraska’s Race to the Top efforts.

The NSCS has, in the past, been fully engaged in educational reform needed to prepare teachers to be effective classroom leaders. We will continue to do so in the future as well. We look forward to working with you, the Governor and other leaders in Nebraska to ensure that Nebraska’s students of all ages receive the best education possible. The NSCS strongly supports Nebraska’s application for a Race to the Top grant. If I can be of further help or assistance, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

Stan Carpenter
Chancellor

Three colleges. Thousands of opportunities.

CHADRON STATE. PERU STATE. WAYNE STATE.
To: Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
   Commissioner of Education
   Nebraska Department of Education
   301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
   Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

From: Dr. Ed Scantling, Dean
   College of Education
   University of Nebraska at Kearney
   Kearney, NE 68849

Dear Commissioner Breed,

I am writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top Application. The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas that are aligned with the federal guidelines. Of particular interest to the College of Education here at the University of Nebraska at Kearney is the area entitled, “Superior Teachers and Leaders”. The overall goal for this area is to assure that every Nebraska student has excellent teachers and education leaders. This will be accomplished thru support for mentoring/induction programs for teachers. Though support for consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning. Through improved professional standards for teachers and through the development of an evaluation system that measures the learning of each teacher’s students on multiple measures critical to the student’s future success.

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has been preparing educators for over one hundred years and we have been nationally accredited by NCATE for over 25 years. We welcome the increased accountability that the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal would bring to institutions that prepare educators for Nebraska. We are committed to the Nebraska Department of Education and are proud to offer our assistance in providing positive conditions for educational reform throughout the State of Nebraska. We believe the Race to the Top proposal represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations. The University of Nebraska at Kearney looks forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.
May 19, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

The Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA), which represents all six community college areas in Nebraska, is in strong support of Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

Postsecondary institutions in Nebraska have goals of increasing their going rate, retention rate, and graduation rate. The Race to the top application is a great step towards helping achieve these goals.

By emphasizing the four areas for reform, which are excellent standards and assessments, superior teachers and leaders, first class data system, and turning around low performing schools, Nebraska will be able to make great strides towards improving all of education across the state.

The NCCA and its member schools will publicly advocate for the grant proposal, assist with reforms, assist in providing data, and encourage quality technical education opportunities in order to enhance postsecondary education and strengthen technical skill development to meet Nebraska’s workforce needs.

The NCCA stands ready to engage in the fundamental reforms in the Race to the Top grant which will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement and insure that all students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

DENNIS G. BAACK
Executive Director
Nebraska Community College Association
Race to the Top – Round 2

Letter of Support

I have taught two years at Sidney St. Patrick’s and thirty-two years in the Gering Public School System. The last four years, I have been an adjunct mathematics instructor for Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff. I whole heartedly support the Race to the Top Phase II application. If Nebraska does not receive any funding, the process is still the important aspect of the application. Discussing the failures and successes of the educational system is the right step in improving.

Having a plan to help all students is the main point of this process. Developing a strategy for evaluating effective teachers and principals will only benefit the students in the long run. I give my full support for this application.

Juanita Alvarez
Western Nebraska Community College Mathematics Instructor
May 21, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

Southeast Community College is one of Nebraska’s largest public community colleges, with a fall enrollment of nearly 12,000 students. The college offers high quality transfer and technical/career education, innovative online programming, and opportunities for high school students to access college classes through career academies, dual credit, and course articulations.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.

- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on students and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.

- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.
Southeast Community College supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Jack J. Huck
President
May 21, 2010

Via Fax: 402-471-0117
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Re: Support of Nebraska’s Grant Application for Race to the Top

Dear Commissioner Breed,

I am writing on behalf of Western Nebraska Community College to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

Western Nebraska Community College has served western Nebraska since the 1920s, and now offers courses in over 80 different program areas, including technology and career education, academic transfer education, workforce training, developmental education, adult continuing education and personal development courses. The institution’s service area is approximately 17,000 square miles. Additionally, Western Nebraska Community College offers applied research opportunities, presents community economic development and workforce development opportunities and provides community cultural offerings. Western Nebraska Community College is a vital component of western Nebraska. The success of Western Nebraska Community College correlates to the success of Nebraska’s K-12 system.

With its Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in Nebraska. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve Nebraska’s success in standards development by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.
The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.

- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by: mentoring/induction programs; consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning; professional teacher standards; and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.

- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.

- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

Western Nebraska Community College supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assisting with State of Nebraska requirements.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We are constantly and diligently working to improve education practices. We agree that Race to the Top represents a critical opportunity for Nebraska to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations, including an investment in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eileen E. Ely, President
WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
May 20, 2010

Dr. Roger Brede
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennials Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Brede,

On behalf of Metropolitan Community College (MCC), I would like to express enthusiastic support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

While Nebraska has long enjoyed a strong reputation for quality education, we increasingly find ourselves struggling with challenges shared by educators everywhere – shrinking revenues, obsolete instructional models, ineffectual data systems. In our four-county MCC service area, we reap the benefits of our urban and rural Nebraska Pre-K-12 instructional legacy. We also see the reality of students who were lost in the K-12 cracks or sidelined early in their K-12 careers, perhaps never completing even ninth grade. They have limited basic skills, no diploma, no GED, no ticket to employment or a college education. In the MCC service area alone, the number of adults lacking these basic skills is nearly 50,000 – roughly equivalent to Nebraska’s third largest city of Bellevue. At MCC we find our resources increasingly stretched to provide students with Adult Educational and Developmental Courses to help them become college ready. The resources provided to P-12 systems through Race to the Top are essential for the retooling and in some cases the remaking of our educational systems, from professional development to assessment to data driven instructional improvements.

MCC is partnering closely with area high schools on shared solutions for effective instruction and strong student outcomes. We are continually expanding early college and dual credit opportunities and collaborating on proven practices for at risk students, such as through Gateway to College, Building Bright Futures and College Now, which offers 50% tuition reductions for high schools students. We recognize our own need to shift to more data driven educational systems, so we welcome plans for the P-16 data systems outlined in Nebraska’s Race to the Top application. We intend to continue strong collaborations with area schools and we look forward to supporting the P-16 educational initiatives outlined in Race to the Top.

Sincerely,

Randy Schmailzl
President
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987  

May 20, 2010  

Dear Commissioner Breed,  

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.  

Concordia University, Nebraska has been providing quality education and preparation for teachers since 1894. We have a long tradition of success in preparing young people to serve in our schools across Nebraska and the Midwest.  

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.  

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:  

- Excellent Standards and Assessments – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.  
- Superior Teachers and Leaders – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.  
- First Class Data System – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
• Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

Concordia University, Nebraska supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

• Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals and working closely with Department of Education staff on the implementation of those goals.
• Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
• Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
• Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Ronald Bork

Ronald Bork, Ed. D.
Dean, College of Education
Concordia University, Nebraska
May 24, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

Northeast Community College is a comprehensive community college that has strong partnerships with area high schools and educational service units that have resulted in innovative career and technical education programs, as well as expanded access to academic transfer college courses for high school students. Race to the Top will enhance the state’s efforts to design curriculum to meet rigorous standards and to provide professional development for faculty to assure seamless educational transition from secondary to postsecondary. The project will assist Nebraska in developing a comprehensive statewide data system to evaluate effectiveness of efforts to improve college-going rates, degree completion, and academic preparedness.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student has excellent teachers and education leaders that are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
• **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

Northeast Community College supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

- Actively supporting and implementing the goals of the proposal.
- Providing recommendations for change throughout the state of Nebraska.
- Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

Northeast is strongly committed to improving education in Nebraska and is excited to be involved in the Race to the Top proposal. The proposal is a critical tool that is needed to continue to improve student achievement and build the state’s workforce. Northeast looks forward to participating in the activities and working towards a better tomorrow for students across Nebraska.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Bill R. Path
President
Dr. Roger Breed  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

I am writing, on behalf of the Western Nebraska Community College Foundation, to offer support for Nebraska’s “Race to the Top” grant application.

The Western Nebraska Community College Foundation is a non-profit corporation with 501(c)(3) status, and its mission is to support and advance educational opportunities and programs at Western Nebraska Community College. The Foundation currently manages approximately $2,753,405.00 in assets. In 2008-2009, the Foundation provided 260 scholarships, with over $281,000.00 being awarded to Western Nebraska Community College students.

With the “Race to the Top” application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. “Race to the Top” offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon its educational assets. This plan will improve Nebraska’s success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success and improve high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
• **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.

• **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.

• **Turning Around Nebraska’s Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

The Western Nebraska Community College Foundation supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals. The “Race to the Top” represents a chance for Nebraska to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations and for investment in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement.

Best Regards,

WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

Dayle L. Wallien, Esq.
Executive Director

Via Fax: 402-471-0117 and Regular Mail
May 25, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987

Re: Race to the Top Application

Dear Commissioner Breed:

We are writing to offer our support for Nebraska’s application for Race to the Top funding. While our support is not without qualification, we believe the goals of Nebraska’s Bright Future for Nebraska Students are important to the continued health and vibrancy of our state. We plan to work closely with you, Governor Heineman, and other education leaders in Nebraska to improve an already successful educational climate for the benefit of the state and its citizens.

Nebraska independent colleges and universities are important to the future of this state. We currently enroll more than 30,000 students. We award about 40 percent of all bachelor’s and advanced degrees. We have a longstanding commitment to education of minority and other students from historically underrepresented student populations. For example, in 2006 we awarded more degrees to African-American students than the University of Nebraska and Nebraska State College systems combined. Our teacher education programs awarded 839 degrees in education in 2008. In short, the state receives great value from the independent colleges and universities in Nebraska, especially in light of the fact that only 0.3 percent of state taxpayer funds expended for higher education come to students who attend our institutions.

Because of demographic shifts in Nebraska populations, it will be of utmost importance that we dramatically close achievement gaps among various racial and ethnic groups. Early childhood education is particularly important. High school graduation rates and college-going rates need to be improved, particularly for our new populations. Those high school graduates need to be college and career-ready if Nebraska is to thrive.
We believe there are issues that will continue to need discussion in the areas of data collection, the new Educator Preparation Program Report Card, the Nebraska Virtual High School STEM Academy, and in other areas of teacher education program regulation. However, we pledge our best efforts to resolve those issues and look forward to our sector’s full participation in efforts to improve education in Nebraska. We are part and parcel of Nebraska’s educational structure, and cooperative efforts among all stakeholders to improve education in this state are important. We look forward to a brighter future for Nebraska students.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Thomas O’Neill, Jr.
AICUN President

Cc: Governor Dave Heineman
AICUN Presidents
20 May 2010

Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

I am writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

Grace University has a robust, state-certified Teacher Education program in its undergraduate college and is the only program in the state that embeds the English Language Learning endorsement in all its education degrees. Indeed, two of our faculty have delivered papers at conferences at the University of California-Berkeley explaining our unique approach to teacher-education training.

With its Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold and decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets as a state. This plan will improve Nebraska’s success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reform in four specific areas aligned with the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
• Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

Grace University supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

• Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
• Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform in Nebraska.
• Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.

Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. Grace University looks forward to working to ensure that Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

James P. Eckman, Ph.D.
President

JPE/jrf
May 26, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

I write to lend Nebraska Wesleyan University’s support to the 2010 State of Nebraska proposal for a Race to the Top grant.

The pipeline of young Nebraskans ready to undertake college study is a matter of vital interest to us. As you know, Nebraska Wesleyan has a higher proportion of Nebraska residents among its students than any other four-year institution in this state, public or independent. Nebraska Wesleyan also has a strong record of students completing their degrees on time, with graduation rates higher than all Nebraska institutions other than Creighton University. Our dual-enrollment program for high school students earning college credit is one of the finest. Nebraska Wesleyan can be a significant partner in providing college readiness, college access, and college success.

Nebraska Wesleyan is ready and willing to work with the State and its agencies and institutions to ensure that a college education is more widely available, to keep standards high where they are high and to raise them where they are not, to continue the major contribution that this institution and Nebraska’s other independent colleges and universities make towards preparing teachers for successful public school careers.

Regarding public school teachers, Nebraska Wesleyan’s Master of Arts in Historical Studies program is surely a model that can be useful to other institutions and in other disciplines attending to the further training and renewal of today’s teachers.

Please let me know of other ways, in addition to this letter of support, that we at Nebraska Wesleyan University can contribute to the success of Nebraska’s 2010 Race to the Top proposal.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Frederik Ohles
President
May 23, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

As you know, Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties owes its creation to legislators and school districts that were willing to look outside of the box, collaborate, compromise and stay at a common table to develop a system that acknowledges the interdependency of school districts within a shared region and how student achievement in each of those districts impacts the health and welfare of the entire metropolitan area.

Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties began its work January of 2009 and is nationally unique in a number of aspects, including securing the commitment of 11 school districts across two counties to an inter-district socioeconomic desegregation plan that was not court mandated; creating a common levy to merge tax resources for stable funding; and establishing its own governing council charged with implementing the agreement, overseeing the creation of elementary learning centers in high poverty areas, and supporting new inter-district schools of choice.

To-date the Learning Community has passed, and is implementing, its first Diversity Plan that the Council passed in December 2009, and has just passed the first round of funding to support out of school time programming this summer aimed at closing the achievement gap of elementary aged students, particularly those students who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as poverty, limited English skills, and mobility.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken another bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps, while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.
The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive, state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures, including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties supports the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commits to:

- Publicly advocate for the proposal and its goals.
- Assist in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assist in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encourage dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to ensure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Julie K. Brewer  
Chief Operating Officer  
Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
May 20, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Dr. Breed:

Educational Service Unit 10 (ESU 10) supports the Race to the Top II application and the vision outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students plan. ESU 10 pledges its partnership with your institution through a concerted statewide effort with the other 16 ESUs located in the State of Nebraska to achieve the goals set forth in this plan. Established ESU 10 resources will be used to help coordinate this statewide effort and distribute the tenants of the plan to the many and varied school districts that we serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in such a worthwhile project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Wayne A. Bell  
Administrator  
Educational Service Unit 10  
Kearney, Nebraska
May 19, 2010

Dear Commissioner Breed,

ESU #16 supports the Race to the Top II application and the ongoing development of a vision outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students plan.

ESU #16 will continue to participate in statewide NDE/ESUCC efforts addressing professional development, distance education, e-learning, data analysis, and school improvement. In partnership with NDE ESU#16 will develop strategic initiatives in professional development to assist schools identified as persistently low achieving. ESU #16 has already been providing support for school improvement in one of the schools in the ESU #16 area that has been identified as persistently low achieving and we are working to address the challenges faced by all schools. ESU #16 staff members are participating in professional learning networks across the state in several critical areas to better develop equitable services and capacity to assist teachers and principals in high need areas.

ESU #16 staff members have developed assistance for assessment, data retreats and analysis to be used in the school improvement process. ESU #16, through the network of professional development staff, will work with districts according to the goals and objectives outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students plan. In particular, ESU #16 envisions assisting with each element of the plan including the implementation of new standards and assessment; the development of a STEM academy and virtual school environment; teacher and principal evaluation and support; technical assistance for data collection and analysis for local and state purposes; assistance in developing customized interventions for PLAs; and support for early childhood services.

ESU #16 is ready engaged in these activities, but the Race to the Top effort has helped refocus our efforts to coordinate such activities statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with the Nebraska Department of Education in these efforts. Your leadership in the development of the grant is greatly appreciated.

Marge Beatty, Administrator
ESU #16
May 20, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE  68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed:

Educational Service Unit #9 supports the Race to the Top II application.

ESUs across the state have a vision to create equities and consistency from border to border. All Nebraska students deserve the same opportunity to succeed. ESUs have been instrumental in the delivery of distance education. An increase in funding would allow Nebraska to take the next step by creating a virtual high school curriculum. The virtual high school should include the best distance education classes that Nebraska can offer and should include online classes, two-way interactive video courses, blended and hybrid courses. In addition, a learning management system needs to be implemented in every class across the state.

ESU #9 will continue the facilitation of state/local standards, creating assessments to measure standards, completing assessment portfolios, assistance with state reporting requirements, training related to research-based instructional strategies, classroom management, leadership development, assessing student learning, 6-Trait Writing, and other topics related to special populations.

I truly think ESUs have created a vision of collaboration across the state. The race to the top has only enhanced and confirmed this vision.

Sincerely,

Mick Loughran
Administrator
May 19, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed  
Commissioner of Education for the State of Nebraska  
301 Centennial Mall South  
PO Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Dr. Breed:

Educational Service Unit #3, located in metropolitan Omaha, is in support and would be a partner in Nebraska’s application for the Race To the Top phase II competitive grant.

In the grant proposal, one of the educational undertakings will consist of leadership in professional development, support for a virtual high school environment, and school improvement. These criteria for successful schools and students are part of the mission of ESU #3 to enhance education. ESU #3 has been a leader in professional development for over thirty years. Our expertise and desire to assist our schools should be of benefit to Nebraska as the state moves forward with school improvement focused on enhanced academic achievement for our students.

Nebraska’s application for the next phase of Race to the Top is “on target” for what needs to be accomplished in this state. It would be our hope that the U.S. Department of Education recognizes Nebraska’s efforts and supports Nebraska in achieving the goals set forth by federal, state and local educational agencies.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Gil Kettelhut,  
Administrator
Dr. Jeff West, Administrator

May 20, 2010

Roger D. Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

ESU #13 endorses the ESU Coordinating Council's support of the Race to the Top II application and particularly supports the ongoing development of a vision outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Plan.

ESU #13 welcomes the opportunity to work for consistent, statewide, quality responses to assist efforts in professional development, distance education and e-learning, data analysis, and school improvement. ESU #13 will be involved in enhancing core initiatives in professional development to assist schools identified as persistently lowest achieving. ESU #13 is currently working with those in our region to address their challenges. We want to be part of additional professional learning networks across the state to assist educators facing issues of equity, poverty, and rural access.

ESU #13's professional development department is committed to working with districts according to the goals and objectives outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Plan. ESU #13, in coordination with ESUCC, envisions a leadership role in supporting each element of the Plan including the implementation of new standards and assessment, teacher and principal evaluation and support, technical assistance for data collection and analysis for local and state purposes, assistance in developing customized interventions for PLAs, supports for early childhood services, and the development of a STEM academy and virtual school environment. ESU #13 has additional expertise in the development of a quality virtual school to contribute to the planning efforts.

ESU #13 is proactive in planning and preparing for these new educational challenges. We welcome the renewed efforts by the state to focus and coordinate all aspects of our educational support systems as part of the Rate to the Top initiative.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. West, Ed.D.
Administrator
Educational Service Unit #13

Striving to meet the needs of learners.
May 19, 2010

Roger Breed, EdD
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987

Dear Dr. Breed,

This letter is written to confirm the unqualified support of Educational Service Unit No 6 for the Nebraska Race To the Top school reform initiative proposal. The Nebraska RTTT proposal holds the promise to deliver sustainable and systemic changes in Nebraska education practice that should correspondingly result in higher levels of achievement for Nebraska public school students, a clear reduction in learning gaps, and increased graduation and college going rates. The NDE RTTT initiative will create opportunities for excellence at all levels with a focus on implementing high quality standards and assessments; promoting teacher and leader effectiveness; supporting best practices for teaching and learning; and the utilization of an effective longitudinal data system.

The need for a Nebraska coherent and sustainable state wide education reform effort has never been greater and the Nebraska RTTT proposal is focused on the 5 critical elements of necessary reform as specified in the RTTT RFP:

- **Designing and implementing rigorous standards and high-quality assessments**, Nebraska has joined 47 other states to work jointly toward a system of common academic standards that builds toward college and career readiness, and that includes improved assessments designed to measure critical knowledge and higher-order thinking skills.
- **Attracting and keeping great teachers and leaders in Nebraska’s classrooms**, by proposing uniform quality performance standards for educational leaders, teachers and support staff, increasing the requirements for certification and continuing education requirements for recertification, adopting an induction with mentoring support system for beginning educators, expanding effective classroom support to teachers and principals; reforming and improving teacher preparation; revising teacher evaluation, compensation, and retention policies to encourage and reward effectiveness; and working to ensure that our most talented teachers are placed in the schools and subjects where they are needed the most.
- **Supporting data systems that inform decisions and improve instruction**, by fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system, assessing and using data to drive instruction, and making data more accessible to key stakeholders.
- **Using innovation and effective approaches to turn-around struggling schools.**
  Nebraska's RTTT proposal outlines a comprehensive reform process that will prioritize and transform persistently low-performing schools.

- **Demonstrating and sustaining education reform,** by promoting collaborations between business leaders, educators, and other stakeholders to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps, reinvigorating math and science education, and promoting other conditions favorable to innovation and reform.

That the Nebraska RTTT proposal is tailored to meet the needs of our rural landscape and both large and small schools is significant because Nebraska is definitely not a "one size fits all" state. Educational Service Unit No 6 is pleased to, as a part of the statewide intermediate education service agency network, join with the Nebraska State Department of Education in the commitment to close achievement gaps. Education is about opportunities for high achievement levels for all students and Nebraskans want all students to graduate from high school career and college ready. Achieving the Nebraska RTTT project goals will require transformation, both within the Nebraska Department of Education and throughout Nebraska’s 253 school districts. ESU No 6 offers its unqualified support for this ambitious agenda.

As a supporting partner, Educational Service Unit No 6, Incorporated commits its resources and personnel to collaborate and coordinate RTTT project activities with the Nebraska Department of Education and its other partners. On behalf of ESU No 6, I emphasize that we are committed to the Nebraska Race To The Top proposal and as a support partner commit the use of our resources, both human and physical to achieve the goals incorporated.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Shoemake, EdD
Administrator
May 26, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

We are writing to offer support for Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.
The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska supports the Nebraska "Race to the Top" proposal and commits to:

- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State's workforce development needs.

We have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska's best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state's workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. We look forward to working to insure Nebraska's students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Larry Wright, Jr.
Tribal Chairman
May 26, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

The Urban League of Nebraska of NE (ULN) administers programs in Education and Youth Development, and we are writing to offer support for Nebraska's Race to the Top grant application.

With our Race to the Top application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. Race to the Top offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development and by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

We agree that Race to the Top represents Nebraska's best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state's workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Warren, Sr.
President/CEO
May 21, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

The League of Nebraska Municipalities strongly supports Nebraska’s Race to the Top grant application.

There are 530 cities and villages in the state of Nebraska. The member cities and villages of the League of Nebraska Municipalities represent about 97% of Nebraska’s “urban” population. The League works closely with statewide organizations representing educators and school districts on a wide variety of topics and programs, policy development, legislation and statewide ballot questions. In addition, the League in conjunction with the National League of Cities encourages municipalities to partner with local educators and school administrators. For example, the City of Ralston has been recognized at a national level for working effectively in partnership with its respective school district for youth programs and related issues in the community. The League encourages other municipalities to do so as well.

Nebraska’s Race to the Top application reflects a compelling initiative to improve education in our state. Race to the Top would allow Nebraska to accelerate reforms and strengthen our substantial education assets. By enhancing our success in standards development coupled with our great teachers, the Nebraska plan will provide a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps and increase high school graduation and college going rates. Successful students ultimately transition into a stronger, more educated workforce which is vital to economic development and vitality of communities across Nebraska!
The Nebraska plan is a state coordinated effort which outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student excellent teachers and education leaders who are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

The League of Nebraska municipalities strongly supports Nebraska’s “Race to the Top” grant application and commits to doing everything possible to publically support the proposal and its goals, as well as help convey to the public the nexus between successful educational opportunities and the need for a strong, diversified, educated workforce. The future of Nebraska depends on it!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

L. Lynn Rex
Executive Director
May 18, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

I am writing to offer support for Nebraska’s “Race to the Top” grant application.

As the University of Nebraska Foundation’s Director of Development for the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s College of Education, I have the pleasure of working with teachers and administrators throughout the state of Nebraska and have witnessed firsthand the triumphs, accomplishments, and needs of educators and students throughout the state.

With our “Race to the Top” application, Nebraska has taken a bold decisive step toward improving education in our state. “Race to the Top” offers an opportunity for Nebraska to accelerate reforms and build upon our substantial education assets. This plan will improve our success in standards development by linking these strong standards and great teachers. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps, while increasing overall student success and improving high school graduation and college going rates.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reforms in four specific areas aligned to the federal guidelines:

- **Excellent Standards and Assessments** – Develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high quality balanced assessment system that results in improved achievement for all Nebraska students.
- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Assure every Nebraska student that excellent teachers and education leaders are supported by mentoring/induction programs, consistent professional development centered on teaching and learning, professional teacher standards, and an evaluation system with multiple measures, including effectiveness in terms of student learning.
- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, we can improve the quality of information collected on student and teachers and more quickly identify and respond to problems. Further, links will be created for Pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary so that students can be tracked P-16.
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D  
May 18, 2010  
Page Two  

- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Nebraska will implement a support system with professional development and expertise, resources, and incentives to transform low performing schools and support school districts in improving overall student achievement.

I support the Nebraska “Race to the Top” proposal and commit to:

- Publicly advocating for the proposal and its goals.
- Assisting in providing positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska.
- Assisting in providing data as required by the State of Nebraska.
- Encouraging dual and high quality technical education opportunities referenced in the proposal in order to increase post secondary education and strengthen technical skill levels in order to meet the State’s workforce development needs.

I have worked in the past to support education practice and reform. I agree that “Race to the Top” represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations—to invest in state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement. I look forward to working to insure Nebraska’s students receive the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Susan Schnase  
Director of Development  
University of Nebraska Foundation

gp
Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

May 24, 2010

Dear Commissioner Breed,

The ESU 15 in Trenton, Nebraska supports the Race to the Top II application and supports the ongoing development of a vision outlined in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students plan.

The Educational Service Unit 15 strives to maintain excellence in professional development opportunities, distance education for schools, e-learning, and school improvement. This is a coordinated effort by all of the educational service units throughout the state and several efforts are already in place to address such issues for our schools. Our efforts to continue to assist teachers and principals will continue as a priority.

The Educational Service Unit 15 currently offers assistance with assessment, data analysis, and school improvement along with professional development opportunities offered on a regular basis. Additional experts are periodically brought into the unit to train teachers and administrators in specialty areas.

This application is supported by educational service unit 15 and enhances programs that the service unit is already engaged in, but the Race to the Top effort has helped refocus our efforts to coordinate such activities statewide.

Sincerely,

Paul Calvert, Administrator
Educational Service Unit 15
May 19, 2010

Dr. Roger Breed, Ed.D
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Breed,

Mid-Plains Community College supports the Nebraska Department of Education’s statewide Race to the Top goals and activities as outlined in its Phase II Race to the Top grant application.

Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC) is a comprehensive, open-access, public two-year community college that offers associate degrees, diplomas and certificates. MPCC serves a vast, highly rural 18-county area of west-central Nebraska. The mission of MPCC is to provide quality educational opportunities for lifelong student learning. MPCC offers vocational-technical education, student services, general academic transfer education, foundation education, continuing education, student services, public service programs and institutional support services. MPCC is the bridge that area residents need to access the jobs of tomorrow.

Mid-Plains Community College sees a strong need to improve educational efforts statewide. In the Fall of 2009, 45% of first-time College students at MPCC tested at the developmental level in at least one area of their placement testing. As an open enrollment facility, our College ensures that students have the opportunity to correct any deficiencies and achieve their goals. The Nebraska plan creates a statewide system to help school districts close achievement gaps while increasing overall student success, and improving high school graduation and college going rates. Improvements in graduation rates and student achievement at the secondary level will allow these students to enter college better prepared to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities available to them.

The Nebraska plan is a comprehensive state-led package that outlines reform in four specific areas that are aligned with national efforts:

- Excellent Standards and Assessments – The State will develop and implement rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and a high-quality balanced assessment system that ensures success in college and the workplace, as well as the global market, for all Nebraska students.
Office of the President

- **Superior Teachers and Leaders** – Professional development and support is critical to ensuring a quality school leadership and teaching staff. The state’s plan includes mentoring/induction programs and consistent teaching and learning-centered professional development opportunities. It will also provide a clear set of professional teacher standards and evaluation systems to garner quick feedback on the successes and failures of these efforts.

- **First Class Data System** – By expanding the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System to a P-16 system, the State will improve the quality and consistency of information collected on students and teachers. Increased data collection consistency and coordination will allow secondary and postsecondary systems to analyze the effectiveness of the reform initiatives and activities.

- **Turning Around Our Low Performing Schools** – Four schools within the MPCC’s 18-county service area were identified by the Nebraska Department of Education as Low Performing Schools. The state’s plan will provide these schools with the professional development, educational expertise, resources, and the incentives they need to turn their schools around.

In support of Nebraska’s *Race to the Top* proposal, Mid-Plains Community College commits to:

- Publicly advocating for positive conditions for reform throughout the State of Nebraska;
- Aligning our data collection systems with the P-16 State system and providing the highest quality data possible, as required by the State of Nebraska;
- Promoting dual-credit and traditional technical education opportunities available to area students in order to increase participation in the College’s high-quality postsecondary educational programs; and
- Continually monitoring and ensuring technical skill levels meet the State’s workforce needs.

Mid-Plains Community College has long recognized the need for a collaborative, State-led educational reform effort. We agree that *Race to the Top* represents Nebraska’s best chance to engage in the fundamental reforms that are needed to develop the state’s workforce and fuel future innovations. We urge you to approve the State’s proposal as it is an investment in the state and local systems that will accelerate and drive growth in student achievement.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Michael R. Chipps, President
Mid-Plains Community College
Appendix B

Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative, Race to the Top by the State of Nebraska, Memorandum of Understanding
BRIGHT FUTURES FOR NEBRASKA STUDENTS INITIATIVE
RACE TO THE TOP BY THE STATE OF NEBRASKA
LEA Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into by and between The Nebraska State Department of Education ("State") and __________________ ("Participating LEA"). The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration, as well as articulate specific roles and responsibilities in support of the State in its implementation of an approved Race to the Top grant project.

I. SCOPE OF WORK

Exhibit I, the Preliminary Scope of Work, indicates which portions of the State's proposed reform plans ("State Plan") the Participating LEA is agreeing to implement. (Note that, in order to participate, the LEA must agree to implement all or significant portions of the State Plan.)

II. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

A. PARTICIPATING LEA RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the State in implementing the tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top application, the Participating LEA subgrantee will:

1) Implement the LEA plan as identified in Exhibits I and II of this agreement;
2) Actively participate in all relevant convenings, communities of practice, or other practice sharing events that are organized or sponsored by the State or by the U.S. Department of Education ("ED");
3) Post to any website specified by the State or ED, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned developed using funds associated with the Race to the Top grant;
4) Participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant conducted by the State or ED;
5) Be responsive to State or ED requests for information including on the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered;
6) Participate in meetings and telephone conferences with the State to discuss (a) progress of the project, (b) potential dissemination of resulting non-proprietary products and lessons learned, (c) plans for subsequent years of the Race to the Top grant period, and (d) other matters related to the Race to the Top grant and associated plans; and
7) Complete the Final Scope of Work as set forth in III (4) of this MOU before it will considered a participating LEA for purposes of determining (i) sub-grant shares of funding and (ii) eligibility to receive funding.

B. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting Participating LEAs in implementing their tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top application, the State grantee will:
1) Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating LEA in carrying out the LEA Plan as identified in Exhibits I and II of this agreement;
2) Timely distribute the LEA’s portion of Race to the Top grant funds during the course of the project period and in accordance with the LEA Plan identified in Exhibit II;
3) Provide feedback on the LEA’s status updates, annual reports, any interim reports, and project plans and products; and
4) Identify sources of technical assistance for the project.

C. JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES
   1) The State and the Participating LEA will each appoint a key contact person for the Race to the Top grant.
   2) These key contacts from the State and the Participating LEA will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU.
   3) State and Participating LEA grant personnel will work together to determine appropriate timelines for project updates and status reports throughout the whole grant period.
   4) State and Participating LEA grant personnel will negotiate in good faith to continue to achieve the overall goals of the State’s Race to the Top grant, even when the State Plan requires modifications that affect the Participating LEA, or when the LEA Plan requires modifications.

D. STATE RECURSE FOR LEA NON-PERFORMANCE
   If the State determines that the LEA is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the State grantee will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include a collaborative process between the State and the LEA, or any of the enforcement measures that are detailed in 34 CFR section 80.43 including putting the LEA on reimbursement payment status, temporarily withholding funds, or disallowing costs.

III. ASSURANCES

The Participating LEA hereby certifies and represents that it:
   1) Has all requisite power and authority to execute this MOU;
   2) Is familiar with the State’s Race to the Top grant application and is supportive of and committed to working on all or significant portions of the State Plan;
   3) Agrees to be a Participating LEA and will implement those portions of the State Plan indicated in Exhibit I, if the State application is funded,
   4) Will provide a Final Scope of Work to be attached to this MOU as Exhibit II only if the State’s application is funded; will do so in a timely fashion but no later than 90 days after a grant is awarded; and will describe in Exhibit II the LEA’s specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures ("LEA Plan") in a manner that is consistent with the Preliminary Scope of Work (Exhibit I) and with the State Plan; and
   5) Will comply with all of the terms of the Grant, the State’s subgrant, and all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including laws and regulations applicable to the Program, and the applicable provisions of EDGAR (34 CFR Parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98 and 99).

IV. MODIFICATIONS
   This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the parties involved, and in consultation with ED.
V. DURATION/TERMINATION

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a grant is received, ending upon the expiration of the grant project period, or upon mutual agreement of the parties, whichever occurs first.

VI. SIGNATURES

School District Name ____________________________ County/District Number ____________________________

LEA Superintendent (or equivalent authorized signatory) - required:

Signature __________________________________________ Date ____________________________

Print Name ________________________________________ Title ____________________________

President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable) Optional*:

Signature __________________________________________ Date ____________________________

Print Name ________________________________________ Title ____________________________

Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable) Optional*:

Signature __________________________________________ Date ____________________________

Print Name ________________________________________ Title ____________________________

Authorized State Official - required:
By its signature below, the State hereby accepts the LEA as a Participating LEA.

Roger D. Breed, Commissioner of Education __________________________ Date __________________________

***PLEASE return this page only by December 16, 2009***
PDF Format: roger.breed@nebraska.gov
FAX: 402-471-4433
Additional Note provided by the Nebraska State Department of Education regarding optional signatures for this form agreement:

This form agreement is reproduced from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) website at: http://www.ed.gov/programs/racettothetop/applicant.html. The USDOE has also provided a "Race to the Top Guidance and FAQ" document on its website at: http://www.ed.gov/programs/racettothetop/faq.pdf. Page 16 of that document states that: "A signature is required from an authorized LEA representative; however, criterion (A)(1)(ii)(c) encourages LEAs to demonstrate the support of their leadership by obtaining signatures from as many as possible of the following: the LEA superintendent (or equivalent); the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable); and the local teachers' union leader (if applicable)."

This agreement is between the State of Nebraska and the school district, and a signature by the Superintendent or other representative of the district authorized to sign on behalf of the local School Board is required, as is a signature by a representative of NDE. Other signatures are optional. The signature of a bargaining unit leader does not make the bargaining unit, or such individual, a party to the agreement.
EXHIBIT I – PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

LEA hereby agrees to participate in implementing the State Plan in each of the areas identified below.

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<th>LEA Participation (Y/N)</th>
<th>Comments from LEA (optional)</th>
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For the Participating LEA

Authorized LEA Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

For the State

Authorized State Signature/Date

Print Name/Title
Appendix C

Detailed Participating LEA Table for Criteria (A)(1)
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### LEA Demographics

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Appendix D

Nebraska progress on NAEP reading and math scores and AYP percentages 2003-2009
Nebraska progress on NAEP reading and math scores and AYP percentages 2003 - 2009

January, 2010
The line graph displays the changing demographics in the student population for Nebraska public schools, various years, 2002 to 2009.

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1 Information for English Language Learners only available for 2009.

Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System.
The line graph displays the student performance of students meeting AYP in the elementary grades in reading for various years based on ethnicity.

**AYP READING ELEMENTARY**

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Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System
The line graph displays the student performance of students meeting AYP in the elementary grades in mathematics for various years based on ethnicity.

**AYP MATHEMATICS ELEMENTARY**

![Line graph showing percentages of students proficient in mathematics for different years and ethnicities.]

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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>71%</td>
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<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<td>85%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System
The line graph displays the student performance of students meeting AYP in the middle school grades in reading for various years based on ethnicity.

**AYP READING MIDDLE SCHOOL**

![Line Graph](image)

### Percentage of students proficient

- **American Indian/Alaskan Native**
- **Asian or Pacific Islander**
- **White, not Hispanic**
- **Black, not Hispanic**
- **Hispanic**
- **Students with Disabilities**
- **NSLP Eligible**
- **ELL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSLP Eligible</td>
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<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>61%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System*
The line graph displays the student performance of students meeting AYP in the middle school grades in mathematics for various years based on ethnicity.

**AYP MATHEMATICS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

![Graph showing student performance over years by ethnicity.]

**Percentage of students proficient**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSLP Eligible</td>
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<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System
The line graph displays the student performance of students meeting AYP at the high school level in reading for various years based on ethnicity.

**AYP READING HIGH SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
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<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
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<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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</table>

Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System
The line graph displays the student performance of students meeting AYP at the high school level in mathematics for various years based on ethnicity.

AYP MATHEMATICS HIGH SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
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<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSLP Eligible</td>
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<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
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<td>ELL</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</table>

Source: Nebraska Student and Staff Record System
NAEP Reading Grade 4
Nebraska White - African-American Gaps
Average reading scale scores and score gaps for White - African-American students, grade 4: Various years, 1992-2009

*Value is significantly different from the value in 2005.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
NAEP Reading Grade 4
Nebraska White - Hispanic Gaps
Average reading scale scores and score gaps for White - Hispanic students, grade 4: Various years, 1992-2009

Value is significantly different from the value in 2009.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
NAEP Mathematics Grade 4
Nebraska White - African-American Gaps
Average mathematics scale scores and score gaps for White - African-American students, grade 4: Various years, 1992-2009

*Value is significantly different from the value in 2009.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
Scores for Nebraska 4th Grade White and Hispanic students showed a significant improvement from 2003 to 2009, with Hispanic students showing a significant improvement from 2005. There were significant differences in the achievement gap between White and Hispanic students, 2003 to 2009.
NAEP Reading Grade 8
Nebraska White - African-American Gaps
Average reading scale scores and score gaps for White - African-American students, grade 8: Various years, 2002-2009

*Value is significantly different from the value in 2009.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
NAEP Reading Grade 8
Nebraska White - Hispanic Gaps
Average reading scale scores and score gaps for White - Hispanic students, grade 8: Various years, 2002-2009

*Value is significantly different from the value in 2005.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
NAEP Mathematics Grade 8
Nebraska White - African-American Gaps
Average mathematics scale scores and score gaps for White - African-American students, grade 8: Various years, 1990-2009

*Value is significantly different from the value in 2009.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.
NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
NAEP Mathematics Grade 8
Nebraska White - Hispanic Gaps
Average mathematics scale scores and score gaps for White - Hispanic students, grade 8: Various years, 1990-2009

Scores for Nebraska 8th Grade White and Hispanic students showed no significant change from 2005 to 2009, but were significantly higher in 2009 than in 2000. There were significant differences in the achievement gap between White and Hispanic students, 1992 to 2009.

*Value is significantly different from the value in 2000.
**Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.
NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 4 — Overall

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

1 Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 4 — Race/Ethnicity

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

1 Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.

NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 4 — National School Lunch Program

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

280
270
260
250
240
230
220
210
200
190
180

2003  2005  2007  2009¹

229  232  232
207  205  208

NSLP Eligible  NSLP Not Eligible

¹ Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 4 — English Language Learners

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

1 Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.

NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 4 — Overall
Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

280
270
260
250
240
230
220
210
200
190
180

2003 2005 2007 2009

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 4 — Race/Ethnicity

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

2003  2005  2007  2009
211  211  211  213

White  Black  Hispanic  Asian  American Indian  Linear (White)

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 4 — National School Lunch Program

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

280
270
260
250
240
230
220
210
200
190
180

2003 2005 2007 2009

NSLP Eligible NSLP Not Eligible

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 4 — English Language Learners

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scale Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>211</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>213</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>241</td>
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NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 8 — Overall

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

266
267
267

2003
2005
2007
2009

1 Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.

NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 8 — Race/Ethnicity

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

1 Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.
NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 8 — National School Lunch Program

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

273  274  273

253  253  254

2003  2005  2007  2009

Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.

NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

Nebraska NAEP Reading Grade 8 — English Language Learners

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

268 268 267

2003 2005 2007 2009

Ell — Not ELL

1 Reading results for 2009 NAEP assessment to be released in spring, 2010.

NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 8 — Overall
Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 8 — Race/Ethnicity

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

2003 2005 2007 2009

White Black Hispanic Asian American Indian

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 8 — National School Lunch Program

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Nebraska NAEP Mathematics Grade 8 — English Language Learners

Average Scale Score: 2003-2009

Scale Score

283 285 285 285

242 241 245

2003 2005 2007 2009

ELL Not ELL

NOTE: The NAEP Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.
Appendix E

Excerpts from 2009 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report
2009
Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report

Nebraska’s
Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary Education

Approved by the Commission
March 5, 2009
1.1.a High School Graduation Rate

Increase the proportion of students who graduate from Nebraska high schools.

One strategic approach to increasing the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska is to increase the proportion of students who graduate from the state’s high schools. In other words, increase Nebraska’s high school graduation rate and, in the process, increase the percentage of high school students who could potentially attend college.

Past and Present Trends in the Total Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

- As shown in Figure 1.1.a.1, the number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools started to decline slightly after the 2002–2003 school year, the latest year for which official data were available from the Nebraska Department of Education for the 2004 Baseline Report for the LR 174 Higher Education Task Force.

- Over the next four years, the number of students receiving regular diplomas decreased 3.3%, from 21,972 in 2002–2003 to 21,188 in 2005–2006.

- The number of graduates from Nebraska high schools increased 0.3% in 2006–2007 and 4.5% in 2007–2008 for a two-year increase of 4.7%.

- As a result of the 4.5% increase in 2007–2008, 221 or 1% more students graduated in 2007–2008 than in 2002–2003, which is the baseline for this progress report.

Figure 1.1.a.1
Total Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

The Proportion of Graduates from Public and Nonpublic Nebraska High Schools

- Since 2002–2003, about 90% of Nebraska's high school graduates have received their diplomas from public schools while the remaining 10% have graduated from nonpublic (private) schools.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Graduates</td>
<td>% of Graduates</td>
<td>No. of Graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>19,604</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>18,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpublic</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>2,186</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>21,838</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESU &amp; SO²</td>
<td>134</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Total</td>
<td>21,972</td>
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<td>21,241</td>
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</table>


²ESU = Educational Service Units; SO = State-Operated Schools.

- Between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008, the number of public high school graduates increased 2.0% to 19,995, while the number graduating from private high schools decreased 3.4%.

Figure 1.1.a.2

Numbers of Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High School Graduates

Projected Trends in the Total Number of Nebraska High School Graduates

- Based on projections by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education:
  - About 340 more students will be graduating from Nebraska public and nonpublic high schools in 2018–2019 than graduated during the 2007–2008 school year.
  - As in the past, public schools are projected to account for about 90% of Nebraska’s high school graduates through the 2018–2019 school year.¹

Figure 1.1.a.3
Projected Numbers of Graduates from Nebraska Public and Nonpublic High Schools
2008–2009 through 2018–2019¹

¹Data Source: Knocking at the College Door, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008, page 91. Projections do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See Table A2.2 in Appendix 2 for supporting data.

¹Knocking at the College Door, Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008, page 121. See Table A2.2 in Appendix 2 for supporting data.
Projected and Recent Changes in Nebraska High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

- Although the number of graduates from Nebraska high schools is projected to increase only 1.5% over the next decade, minority students, especially Hispanics, are projected to account for much higher percentages of the graduates from the state’s public schools in 2018–2019 than they did in 2002–2003, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.a.4. This is projected to be the case, despite the fact that Hispanic students tend to graduate from high school at lower rates than white and Asian students. Conversely, white non-Hispanics are projected to account for a significantly lower percentage of the students who will graduate from Nebraska’s public high schools in 2018–2019.

Figure 1.1.a.4


Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2002–2003 Baseline

- Native American, 0.8%
- Hispanic, 4.0%
- Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.4%
- White (non-Hispanic), 89.5%

Projected Percentages of Graduates: 2018–2019

- Native American, 1.0%
- Hispanic, 17.9%
- Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.9%
- White (non-Hispanic), 71.6%

Data Sources: 2002–2003 percentages are based on the numbers of graduates obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education, December 2007. Projected percentages are based on data from Knocking at the College Door: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008, page 91. Actual counts and projections do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See Table A2.3 in Appendix 2 for supporting data.
• As shown in Figure 1.1.a.5 below, actual changes in the racial/ethnic distribution of Nebraska’s high school graduates over the past four years have been in the direction of the projected trend.


- In comparison, the total number of minority students who graduated from Nebraska’s high schools increased 48.1% from 2002–2003 to 2007–2008. Minorities accounted for higher percentages of the total number of graduates than they did five years earlier.

Figure 1.1.a.5
Actual Percentages of Nebraska Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity in 2006–2007 Compared to 2002–20031

Actual Percentages of Graduates: 2002–2003 Baseline


1Data Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, December 2007 for 2002-2003 data and January 2009 for 2007-2008 data. Counts do not include graduates of educational service units or state-operated schools. Graduates do not include GED recipients or completers who did not receive regular diplomas. See Table A2.4 in Appendix 2 for supporting data.
Trends in the Nebraska State Four-Year, High School Graduation Rates

• Although the total number of students who graduated from Nebraska high schools increased only 1% between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008, the state’s graduation rate increased significantly.

• The Nebraska Department of Education uses the four-year high school graduation rate to measure the proportion of high school students who receive regular diplomas.

  - Nebraska’s state four-year graduation rate is based on data that include the graduates of educational service units, state-operated schools and nonpublic (private) schools as well as the graduates of the state’s public schools.

  - In comparison, the public four-year graduation rate is also a statewide rate, but it is limited to data from Nebraska’s public high schools.

  - See Explanatory Note A3.1 in Appendix 3 for information on how four-year graduation rates are calculated.

• As shown in Figure 1.1.a.6 below, Nebraska’s state graduation rate increased from 85.8% in 2002–2003, which is the baseline for this progress report, to 89.7% in 2007–2008, or 3.9% over the five-year period.

• In comparison, the graduation rate for the public high schools rose 4.3%, from 84.7% in 2002–2003 to 89.0% in 2007–2008, narrowing the gap between the state and public four-year graduation rates.

Figure 1.1.a.6

- The graduation rate for Nebraska’s public high schools is lower than the overall state rate, whereas the graduation rate for Nebraska’s nonpublic (private) schools is significantly higher than the state rate.\(^1\) Nevertheless, Nebraska’s public high school graduation rate is among the highest rates in the United States.\(^2\)

- As shown in Table 1.1.a.3 below, 45.8% of Nebraska’s 254 public school districts had four-year high school graduation rates of 100%, and 61.0% had graduation rates in the range of 96% to 100% for the 2007–2008 school year. In contrast, only 11.8% of Nebraska’s public high school districts had graduation rates that were equal to or below the statewide rate of 89.0% for public schools in 2007–2008.

- See Table A3.2 in Appendix 3 for a list of the 30 public school districts with graduation rates below the public statewide rate of 89.0% in 2007–2008.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Four-Year High School Graduation Rate & No. of School Districts & Percentage of School Districts & Subtotaled Percentages of School Districts & Cumulative % of School Districts \\
\hline
100.0% & 116 & 45.8% & 61.0% & 45.7% \\
96.0% - 99.9% & 39 & 15.4% & 61.0% & 61.0% \\
93.0% - 95.9% & 45 & 17.8% & 27.2% & 78.7% \\
89.1% - 92.9% & 24 & 9.5% & 88.2% & 11.8% \\
85.0% - 89.0% & 17 & 6.7% & 94.9% \\
80.0% - 84.9% & 8 & 3.2% & 98.0% \\
75.0% - 79.9% & 1 & 0.8% & 98.4% \\
Less than 75.0% & 4 & 0.8% & 100.0% & \\
\hline
254 & 100.0% & 100.0% & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Distribution of the Four-Year, High School Graduation Rates of Nebraska Public High School Districts 2007–2008\(^1\)}
\end{table}

\(^1\)Four-year graduation rates by district obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009. See Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 for the comparable baseline distribution of public high school graduation rates for 2002–2003.

\(^2\)The statewide public high school graduation rate for 2007–2008 was 89.0%.

\(^1\)Compared to the public high school graduation rates of 84.7% in 2002–2003 and 89.0% in 2007–2008, the four-year graduation rates for nonpublic (private) high schools were 99.4% for 2002–2003 and 97.4% for 2007–2008, based on data obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009. See Table A3.3 in Appendix 3 for supporting data.

\(^2\)Compared to the other 49 states and the District of Columbia, Nebraska had the fifth highest public high school graduation rate in 2004, and the sixth highest rate in 2003, 2005 and 2006, the most recent years for which national comparisons are available. Data for these comparisons are published on the Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY Web site, www.postsecondary.org, in the spreadsheet titled Public High School Graduation Rates by State, updated April 10, 2008.
Nebraska Four-Year, Public High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

- The relatively high four-year graduation rates that characterize most of the state's public high schools mask the fact that graduation rates within the state vary significantly by race/ethnicity.

- As illustrated in Figure 1.1.a.7, the four-year high school graduation rate for each of the five reported racial/ethnic groups generally increased between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.

- Among the minorities, the largest increase in graduation rates between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 was evidenced among Hispanics, while less improvement was reported for Native Americans and black non-Hispanics.

- Although graduation rates have improved for all racial/ethnic groups, the four-year graduation rates for Hispanics, blacks and Native Americans have continued to be significantly lower than the graduation rates for whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders since 2002–2003.

- The net effect of the lower graduation rates for black non-Hispanics, Hispanics and Native Americans is that these minorities continue to account for disproportionately high percentages of the students who drop out of the public high schools in Nebraska, compared to their representation among the graduates of these schools. This is an important finding because minorities, and Hispanics in particular, are projected to account for higher percentages of Nebraska's high school students in the future.

Figure 1.1.a.7
Nebraska Four-Year, Public High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

For the purposes of computing four-year graduation and dropout rates for any given high school class, the numbers of students who dropped out of the class in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades are added together to determine the total number of students who dropped out over the four years. The resulting total number of dropouts can then be compared to the number of graduates in the class, as shown in Table 1.1.a.4 for the class of 2007–2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>No. of Graduates</th>
<th>% of Graduates</th>
<th>No. of Dropouts 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grades</th>
<th>% of Dropouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>16,939</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Public Total</td>
<td>19,995</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2,460</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As evidenced in Table 1.1.a.4 above and illustrated in Figure 1.1.a.8 on the next page, white non-Hispanics accounted for the largest number and percentage of dropouts from the class of 2007–2008. However, Hispanics, Native Americans and blacks accounted for a disproportionately higher percentage of students who dropped out of the class relative to the number of students who graduated in 2007–2008.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1.1.a.9 on the next page, Hispanics, Native Americans and blacks accounted for higher percentages of the dropouts from the class of 2007–2008 than they did from the class of 2002–2003. This increase is a result of both the higher number of minority students and their lower graduation rates, relative to their white and Asian/Pacific Islander classmates.

Consequently, although the four-year graduation rates for Hispanics, Native Americans and blacks increased between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008, these minorities continue to account for disproportionate and increasing percentages of Nebraska’s public high school dropouts compared to the extent they are represented among the graduates of the state’s public high schools.
Figure 1.1.a.8
Percentages of Public High School Graduates and Dropouts by Race/Ethnicity
Based on Four-Year Graduation Rate Data
2007–2008¹

65.5% of Graduates
54.0% of Dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Dropouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁰Data Source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009. See Table 1.1.a.4 for supporting data.

Figure 1.1.a.9
Percentages of Public High School Dropouts by Race/Ethnicity
Based on Four-Year Graduation Rate Data

62.7% of Dropouts '02-03
54.0% of Dropouts '07-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Data Source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009. See Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 for supporting data.
Nebraska Four-Year, Public High School Graduation Rates by Gender

- Analyses of the four-year, public high school graduation rate data obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education reveal that females continue to have higher graduation rates than males who attend Nebraska’s public high schools.

- As evidenced in Figure 1.1.a.10, the graduation rates for males and females both gradually increased from 2002–2003 to 2007–2008. Beginning in 2005–2006, the gender gap in graduation rates slightly narrowed.

- Over the three years from 2002–2003 through 2004–2005, there was a 4.1 percentage difference between the graduation rates of males and females who completed high school in Nebraska.

- The difference between the graduation rates of males and females narrowed slightly to 3.9 percentage points in 2005–2006 and the difference narrowed to 3.4 percentage points in 2006–2007, due to a slightly higher increase in the graduation rate for males than for females in 2005–2006 and no change in the graduation rate for females in 2006–2007.

- However, the difference between the graduation rates of males and females increased from 3.4 percentage points in 2006–2007 to 3.7 percentage points in 2007–2008, indicating that the gender gap in Nebraska high school graduation rates continues to persist.

Figure 1.1.a.10
Nebraska Four-Year, Public High School Graduation Rates by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male Grad Rate</th>
<th>Female Grad Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–2004</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–2005</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–2006</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009. See Table A3.5 in Appendix 3 for supporting data.
Nebraska Public School Districts Selected for Further Analysis

An analysis of the four-year public high school graduation rate data for 2002–2003 through 2007–2008 indicates that Nebraska's statewide public graduation rate has increased and that the graduation rates for students in all of the reported racial/ethnic groups have improved. However, more than 2,400 students in the class of 2007–2008 dropped out of Nebraska's public high schools before they completed the requirements for graduation.

Further analysis of the four-year graduation rate data reveals that 14 (5.5%) of the state's 254 public high school districts currently account for 73% of the state's dropouts from public high schools. Consequently, efforts to further increase graduation rates and reduce dropout rates might best focus on these selected districts in order for the graduation rates for each racial/ethnic group and the state as a whole to continue to improve.

The 14 public school districts that currently account for more than 70% of the state's dropouts are located in the 12 counties highlighted on the map of Nebraska in Figure 1.1.a.11.

Figure 1.1.a.11

The 12 Nebraska Counties Where the 14 Selected School Districts that Account for More than 70% of the States Dropouts are Located

Table 1.1.a.5 lists the school districts that have accounted for 70% or more of the state's dropouts from public high schools since 2002–2003, which is the baseline for this report. To be included initially among the 14 school districts selected for analysis, a district had to meet one or both of the following criteria:

1. The district's four-year graduation rate was lower than the statewide rate for Nebraska public schools in 2002–2003 and 2003–2004, and the district reported more than 15 dropouts from the class of 2002–2003.

2. The district's four-year graduation rate was one of the five lowest in the state for the 2002–2003 or 2003–2004 school year.
The school districts listed in Table 1.1.a.5 included North Platte Public Schools for the analysis of data from 2002–2003 through 2006–2007. However, for this year’s analysis, North Platte Public Schools was removed from the list of monitored districts because the school district had a graduation rate that was higher than the statewide rate for Nebraska public schools in 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. We congratulate them for this significant improvement. Conversely, Kearney Public Schools was added to the list this year because the district had a graduation rate that was lower than the statewide rate for Nebraska public schools and the district reported more than 15 dropouts from the classes of 2007 and 2008.

- As shown in Table 1.1.a.5, the 14 selected school districts represented about 31% of the states public high school graduates but almost 73% of all of the dropouts from Nebraska’s public high schools in 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.

- Although 14 districts continue to account for 73% of the state’s high school dropouts, the number of dropouts from the districts decreased 30.2% between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008. During the same period, the number of graduates from the districts increased 4.3%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>District or School Name</th>
<th>No. of Graduates</th>
<th>No. of Dropouts g&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt; – 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>Hastings Public Schools</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>Kearney Public Schools</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colfax</td>
<td>Schuyler Central High School</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>South Sioux City Community Schools</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawson</td>
<td>Lexington Public Schools</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>Fremont Public Schools</td>
<td>2,336</td>
<td>2,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>Omaha Public Schools</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>Grand Island Public Schools</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox</td>
<td>Santee Community Schools</td>
<td>1,883</td>
<td>1,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>Lincoln Public Schools</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>North Platte Public Schools</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotts Bluff</td>
<td>Scottsbluff Public Schools</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurston</td>
<td>Walthill Public Schools</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurston</td>
<td>Umo&lt;sup&gt;ho&lt;/sup&gt; Nation Public School</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total for 14 School Districts</td>
<td>6,045</td>
<td>6,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Nebraska Public School Total</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nebraska Public School Total</td>
<td>19,604</td>
<td>19,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>Data Source: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009.
- As illustrated in Figure 1.1.a.12 below, the combined graduation rate for the 14 districts increased from 70.2% in 2002–2003 to 77.9% in 2007–2008, an increase of 7.7 percentage points.\(^1\)

- As also evidenced in Figure 1.1.a.12, the overall four-year graduation rate for the 14 selected school districts continues to be significantly lower than the combined graduation rate for all of Nebraska's other public high schools. However, the difference between the overall graduation rate for the 14 monitored districts and the graduation rate for all other Nebraska public school districts generally narrowed between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008. This means that, in general, the percentage of students receiving regular high school diplomas in the 14 districts has increased at a higher rate than the graduation rate for all of the other public school districts.

- With the exception of the North Platte Public Schools, which had graduation rates of 90.2% in 2005–2006 and 93.7% in 2006–2007, the selected school districts have continued to have relatively low graduation rates, compared to the graduation rates of all but a few of the state's other public high schools.

- See Table A3.6 and Table A3.7 in Appendix 3 for detailed four-year graduation rate statistics for 2002–2003 through 2007–2008 for the 14 monitored school districts.

**Figure 1.1.a.12**


Data Source: Nebraska Department of Education; updated January 2009. The selected districts are Fremont Public Schools, Grand Island Public Schools, Hastings Public Schools, Kearney Public Schools (beginning in 2007–2008), Lexington Public Schools, Lincoln Public Schools, North Platte Public Schools through (2006–2007), Omaha Public Schools, Santee Community Schools, Schuyler Central High School, Scottsbluff Public Schools, South Sioux City Community Schools, UNO \(^1\)HO \(^1\) Nation Public Schools, Walthill Public Schools and Winnebago Public Schools. See Table A3.7 in Appendix 3 for supporting data.

\(^1\)If North Platte and Kearney Public Schools are excluded from the analysis, the combined graduation rate of the remaining 13 districts increased 7.8 percentage points, from 69.6% in 2002–2003 to 77.4% in 2007–2008.
1.1.b Preparation for College

Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who are adequately prepared to enroll in postsecondary education and proceed through degree completion.

The results of the ACT Assessment and the SAT Reasoning Test™ are summarized in this section as indicators of the extent to which Nebraska high school graduates are prepared academically to enter and proceed through postsecondary education. Of particular interest are (1) the estimated percentages of Nebraska high school graduates who are prepared for college-level coursework and (2) the significantly higher average ACT scores achieved by students who take the "core" high school courses recommended to prepare them for college.

Nebraska Participation Rates for the ACT Assessment and the SAT Reasoning Test

- The ACT Assessment is the predominant college entrance exam available to measure the extent to which Nebraska students are prepared for academic coursework beyond high school. As shown in Figure 1.1.b.1, 74.7% of the Nebraska high school students in the graduating class of 2008 took the ACT Assessment. In comparison, 5.1% of the students took the SAT Reasoning Test.

- As also illustrated in Figure 1.1.b.1, the participation rates for the ACT Assessment and the SAT Reasoning Test were, respectively, 1.4 and 2.5 percentage points lower in 2008 than in 2004, which is the baseline for this annual progress report. (See Table A4.1 in Appendix 4 for supporting data.)

Figure 1.1.b.1

Percentages of Nebraska High School Graduates
Who Took the ACT Assessment and/or the SAT Reasoning Test
2004–2008¹

¹Data Sources: ACT, Inc., College Examination Board and the Nebraska Department of Education. See Table A4.1 in Appendix 4 for supporting data.
Appendix F

Common Core Memorandum of Agreement, Participating States, International Benchmarking Evidence, and Draft Standards
The Council of Chief State School Officers and
The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

Common Core Standards
Memorandum of Agreement

Purpose. This document commits states to a state-led process that will draw on evidence and lead to
development and adoption of a common core of state standards (common core) in English language arts
and mathematics for grades K-12. These standards will be aligned with college and work expectations,
include rigorous content and skills, and be internationally benchmarked. The intent is that these standards
will be aligned to state assessment and classroom practice. The second phase of this initiative will be the
development of common assessments aligned to the core standards developed through this process.

Background. Our state education leaders are committed to ensuring all students graduate from high
school ready for college, work, and success in the global economy and society. State standards provide a
key foundation to drive this reform. Today, however, state standards differ significantly in terms of the
incremental content and skills expected of students.

Over the last several years, many individual states have made great strides in developing high-quality
standards and assessments. These efforts provide a strong foundation for further action. For example, a
majority of states (33) have joined the American Diploma Project (ADP) and have worked individually to
align their state standards with college and work expectations. Of the 15 states that have completed this
work, studies show significant similarities in core standards across the states. States also have made
progress through initiatives to upgrade standards and assessments, for example, the New England
Common Assessment Program.

Benefits to States. The time is right for a state-led, nation-wide effort to establish a common core of
standards that raises the bar for all students. This initiative presents a significant opportunity to accelerate
and drive education reform toward the goal of ensuring that all children graduate from high school ready
for college, work, and competing in the global economy and society. With the adoption of this common
core, participating states will be able to:

- Articulate to parents, teachers, and the general public expectations for students;
- Align textbooks, digital media, and curricula to the internationally benchmarked standards;
- Ensure professional development for educators is based on identified need and best practices;
- Develop and implement an assessment system to measure student performance against the
common core; and
- Evaluate policy changes needed to help students and educators meet the common core standards
and “end-of-high-school” expectations.

An important tenet of this work will be to increase the rigor and relevance of state standards across all
participating states; therefore, no state will see a decrease in the level of student expectations that exist in
their current state standards.

Process and Structure

1. Common Core State-Based Leadership. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) shall assume
responsibility for coordinating the process that will lead to state adoption of a common core set
of standards. These organizations represent governors and state commissioners of education who
are charged with defining K-12 expectations at the state level. As such, these organizations will facilitate a state-led process to develop a set of common core standards in English language arts and math that are:

- Fewer, clearer, and higher, to best drive effective policy and practice;
- Aligned with college and work expectations, so that all students are prepared for success upon graduating from high school;
- Inclusive of rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills, so that all students are prepared for the 21st century;
- Internationally benchmarked, so that all students are prepared for succeeding in our global economy and society; and
- Research and evidence-based.

I. **National Validation Committee.** CCSSO and the NGA Center will create an expert validation group that will serve a several purposes, including validating end-of-course expectations, providing leadership for the development of K-12 standards, and certifying state adoption of the common core. The group will be comprised of national and international experts on standards. Participating states will have the opportunity to nominate individuals to the group. The national validation committee shall provide an independent review of the common core. The national validation committee will review the common core as it is developed and offer comments, suggestions, and validation of the process and products developed by the standards development group. The group will use evidence as the driving factor in validating the common core.

II. **Develop End-of-High-School Expectations.** CCSSO and the NGA Center will convene Achieve, ACT and the College Board in an open, inclusive, and efficient process to develop a set of end-of-high-school expectations in English language arts and mathematics based on evidence. We will ask all participating states to review and provide input on these expectations. This work will be completed by July 2009.

III. **Develop K-12 Standards in English Language Arts and Math.** CCSSO and the NGA Center will convene Achieve, ACT, and the College Board in an open, inclusive, and efficient process to develop K-12 standards that are grounded in empirical research and draw on best practices in standards development. We will ask participating states to provide input into the drafting of the common core and work as partners in the common core standards development process. This work will be completed by December 2009.

IV. **Adoption.** The goal of this effort is to develop a free common core of state standards that are internationally benchmarked. Each state adopting the common core either directly or by fully aligning its state standards may do so in accordance with current state timelines for standards adoption not to exceed three (3) years.

This effort is voluntary for states, and it is fully intended that states adopting the common core may choose to include additional state standards beyond the common core. States that choose to align their standards to the common core standards agree to ensure that the common core represents at least 85 percent of the state’s standards in English language arts and mathematics.

Further, the goal is to establish an ongoing development process that can support continuous improvement of this first version of the common core based on research and evidence-based learning and can support the development of assessments that are aligned to the common core across the states, for accountability and other appropriate purposes.
National Policy Forum. CCSSO and the NGA Center will convene a National Policy Forum (Forum) comprised of signatory national organizations (e.g., the Alliance for Excellent Education, Business Roundtable, National School Boards Association, Council of Great City Schools, Hunt Institute, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, and others) to share ideas, gather input, and inform the common core initiative. The forum is intended as a place for refining our shared understanding of the scope and elements of a common core; sharing and coordinating the various forms of implementation of a common core; providing a means to develop common messaging between and among participating organizations; and building public will and support.

Federal Role. The parties support a state-led effort and not a federal effort to develop a common core of state standards; there is, however, an appropriate federal role in supporting this state-led effort. In particular, the federal government can provide key financial support for this effort in developing a common core of state standards and in moving toward common assessments, such as through the Race to the Top Fund authorized in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Further, the federal government can incentivize this effort through a range of tiered incentives, such as providing states with greater flexibility in the use of existing federal funds, supporting a revised state accountability structure, and offering financial support for states to effectively implement the standards. Additionally, the federal government can provide additional long-term financial support for the development of common assessments, teacher and principal professional development, other related common core standards supports, and a research agenda that can help continually improve the common core over time. Finally, the federal government can review and align existing federal education laws with the lessons learned from states' international benchmarking efforts and from federal research.

Agreement. The undersigned state leaders agree to the process and structure as described above and attest accordingly by our signature(s) below.

[Signatures]

Governor of Nebraska

Date

Commissioner of Education Nebraska

Date
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State</th>
<th></th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>31</td>
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</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Maine</td>
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<td>Utah</td>
</tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International Benchmarking and the Common Core

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are designed to be college- and career-ready and internationally benchmarked. To that end, the development process included the review and consideration of many sources, including research studies, existing standards from the U.S and abroad, and the professional judgment of teachers, content area experts, and college faculty. This paper will briefly describe how international benchmarking was used to develop the CCSS.

What documents were used to ensure that the CCSS were internationally benchmarked?

To ensure that the standards prepare students to be globally competitive, the development team used a number of sources, including: the frameworks for PISA and TIMSS; the International Baccalaureate syllabi; the American Institutes for Research report, *Informing Grades 1-6 Mathematics Standards Development: What Can Be Learned From High-Performing Hong Kong, Korea, and Singapore* and; the A+ Composite found in *A Coherent Curriculum: The Case for Mathematics* by Bill Schmidt, Richard Houang, and Leland Cogan.

In addition, the development team looked to the standards of a number of individual countries and provinces to inform the content, structure and language of the CCSS. In mathematics, twelve set of standards were selected to help guide the writing of the standards: Belgium, Canada (Alberta), China, Chinese Taipei, England, Finland, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, and Singapore. In English language arts, the writing team looked closely at ten sets of standards from Australia (New South Wales and Victoria), Canada (Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario), England, Finland, Hong Kong, Ireland, and Singapore.

How were the international benchmarks used to inform the development of the CCSS?

The goal of the international benchmarking in the common core state standards development process was to ensure that the CCSS are as rigorous as comparable standards in the high-performing and other countries. However, the use of international benchmarks as evidence is no easy feat; it is not simply a matter of identifying the “best” source and copying it, or of aggregating all viable sources to find some set of shared expectations. Rather, international benchmarks were used to guide critical decisions in the following areas:

- **Whether particular content should be included:** One of the principal ways international standards were used in this development process was as a guide when making tough decisions about whether content should be included or excluded.

- **When content should be introduced and how that content should progress:** The progression of topics in the international mathematics standards helped the development team make decisions about when to introduce topics in the CCSS as well as when to stop focusing on them.

- **Ensuring focus and coherence:** Standards from other countries tend to be very focused, including only what is absolutely necessary.
• **Organizing and formatting the standards**: Certain organizational aspects or characteristics of international standards that promoted clarity and ease of reading and use served as a model for the CCSS.

• **Determining emphasis on particular topics in standards**: Where emphasis on particular topics was found repeatedly in international standard, this was instructive in determining their importance for inclusion in the CCSS.

* * * *

When the final version of the K-12 Common Core State Standards is released, it will be accompanied by a discussion of the evidence that was used in their development. In the meantime, the evidence from the September 2009 draft of the College and Career Ready Standards is available: The URL for the ELA document is [http://www.corestandards.org/Files/ELAEvidence.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/Files/ELAEvidence.pdf), and the URL for the mathematics document is [http://www.corestandards.org/Files/MathEvidence.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/Files/MathEvidence.pdf).

---

1 Eight of these were high-performers on either TIMSS, PISA or both: Belgium, Canada [Alberta], Chinese Taipei, Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Singapore. England and Ireland, which have uneven performances on international assessments, were included because of their cultural links to the United States. China and India were included because of their growing global competitiveness.

2 Differences in language have a greater impact on the teaching and learning of language arts than of mathematics, so the teams looked primarily at English-speaking countries. All were high-performers on PISA except Singapore, which did not participate, and England, which as in mathematics was selected partly for its cultural links to the United States.
English Language Learners in Mathematics Classrooms

The Common Core K-12 Mathematics Standards
2. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \)

3. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \)

4. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \leq \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \)

5. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \)

6. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i \)

7. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i \)

8. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + b_i \)

9. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i \)

10. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + b_i \)

11. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + b_i \)

12. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \)

13. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \)

14. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \)

15. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \)

16. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \)

17. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \)

18. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \)

19. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \)

20. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \)

21. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \)

22. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \)

23. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \)

24. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \)

25. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \)

26. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \)

27. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \)

28. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \)

29. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \)

30. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \)

31. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \)

32. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \cdot h_i \)

33. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \cdot h_i \)

34. \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \cdot h_i \)

35. \( \prod_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot b_i + \prod_{i=1}^{n} b_i \cdot c_i \cdot d_i \cdot e_i \cdot f_i \cdot g_i \cdot h_i \)
1. The June Snows episode shows the power of family love and the impact of past experiences on the present. How does this theme resonate with you?

2. Describe the setting and atmosphere of the episode. How do the physical descriptions contribute to the overall mood of the story?

3. Identify any significant symbols or motifs in the episode and explain their significance. How do these elements enhance the narrative?

4. How does the episode explore the theme of redemption? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis.

5. Discuss the role of dialogue in the episode. How do the conversations between characters reveal their personalities and advance the plot?

6. The June Snows episode features a number of unique and memorable characters. Choose one character and analyze their development throughout the story. What are the key events that influence their growth?

7. The June Snows episode is known for its poetic language and imagery. Identify at least three examples of these elements and explain how they contribute to the episode's emotional impact.

8. How does the episode's setting reflect the cultural and historical context in which it was written? Provide specific details to support your analysis.

9. The June Snows episode is often praised for its use of foreshadowing. Identify at least two examples of foreshadowing in the text and explain how they build tension and anticipation.

10. The June Snows episode is a classic example of the coming-of-age genre. How does the protagonist's journey evolve throughout the story? What are the key lessons or insights gained at the end of the journey?

Mathematics: First Grade

10. 0997 - 0732

Measurement: Common Core Standards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations and Problem Solving</th>
<th>Developing Communication Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add or subtract numbers.</td>
<td>Compare, sort, arrange, group,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>order, analyze, and transform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                              | data in a way that makes sense.

**Common Core Standards - Student Expectations**

- Operations and Problem Solving
  - Add or subtract numbers.
  - Compare, sort, arrange, group, order, analyze, and transform data in a way that makes sense.

- Developing Communication Skills
  - Communicate and explain mathematical ideas using precise language, symbols, and formal notation.
**Comprehensive Care Standards: Evidence and Practice**

### Quality and Measurement

1. **Overview**
   - "Overall quality improvement initiatives have been shown to result in improved patient outcomes and reduced healthcare costs." (Refer to references 1 and 2)

2. **Evidence-Based Practice**
   - "Evidence-based practice guidelines are essential for ensuring the delivery of high-quality care." (Refer to references 3 and 4)

3. **Data and Measurement**
   - "Data collection and measurement tools are critical for evaluating the effectiveness of care interventions." (Refer to references 5 and 6)

---

| Objective | Methodology | Outcome
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve patient satisfaction</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Higher satisfaction scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce readmission rates</td>
<td>Cohort study</td>
<td>Significant reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance efficiency in care delivery</td>
<td>Time-series analysis</td>
<td>Increased process efficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

![Graph showing patient outcomes improvement over time](image_url)
The core of the expression is the mathematical operations involved. Nullary functions are operations that do not require any arguments. For example, \( f(x) = x^2 \) is a function that takes a single argument and returns its square. Binary operations, on the other hand, involve two arguments. An example is the addition operation \( + \), which takes two numbers and returns their sum.

A common example in high school mathematics is the expression \( 2x^2 + 3x - 4 \), which involves both nullary and binary operations. The nullary operation is the constant term \(-4\), while the binary operations are the addition and multiplication.

In summary, understanding the structure of expressions is crucial for simplifying and manipulating mathematical expressions.
Correspondence - Manufacturers' Notes

1. The manufacturer's notes in the engineering drawings and specifications should be followed.

2. Please note that the dimensions provided are approximate and should be verified.

3. The use of the product is subject to the terms and conditions stated in the manual.

4. The warranty is valid only if the product is used as intended.

Drafting Instructions - Manufacturers' Notes

1. The draftsmen should follow the instructions provided in the manual carefully.

2. The use of the product is subject to the terms and conditions stated in the manual.

3. The warranty is valid only if the product is used as intended.

A Correlation of Course Content

The course content and standards are correlated as follows:

- Mathematics: High School—Coordinate Geometry

- Common Core State Standards

- Content Standards

- Mathematics Common Core State Standards

- Expressions and Equations

- Number Sense and Operations

- Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

- Geometry and Spatial Sense

- Measurement and Data Analysis

- Statistics and Probability

- Mathematical Reasoning

- Mathematical Practices

- Standards for Mathematical Practice

- Standards for Mathematical Content
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Standards</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Content:**
- Geometry concepts and principles
- Trigonometry functions and applications
- Calculus fundamentals and problem-solving
- Algebraic equations and inequalities
- Statistical analysis and interpretation

**Objectives:**
- Understand and apply geometric theorems and properties
- Solve trigonometric equations and problems
- Calculate derivatives and integrals
- Interpret and analyze statistical data

**Outcomes:**
- Students will be able to...
- Demonstrate proficiency in solving geometric problems
- Apply trigonometric concepts to real-world scenarios
- Analyze and interpret calculus problems
- Use statistical methods to draw conclusions

**Assessment:**
- Quizzes and tests
- Projects and case studies
- Group discussions and presentations
- Self-assessment and peer review
Writing and Research Standards

1. Comprehension - Students can analyze and evaluate the work of others and their own writing.
2. Organization - Students can develop a logical structure and provide clear evidence to support their ideas.
3. Audience Awareness - Students can adjust their writing to meet the expectations of their audience.
4. Effective Communication - Students can use language effectively to convey their ideas clearly and persuasively.
5. Accuracy - Students can use standard English spelling, punctuation, and grammar in their writing.

Developing Habits for Reading Text

1. Students will monitor their comprehension and infer meaning from the text.
2. Students will pay close attention to the text and actively engage with it.
3. Students will use context clues to understand unfamiliar words and expressions.
4. Students will analyze and evaluate the author's purpose and perspective.

Standards - Students can:

1. Identify and analyze the types of text they encounter in various contexts.
2. Use a variety of strategies to improve their reading comprehension.
3. Use their knowledge of the world to enhance their understanding of the text.
4. Recognize the importance of reading and its role in their development.
Grade 7

English Language Arts

1. Understanding the meaning of words (vocabulary)
2. Determining the meaning of words
3. Core Standards—Students can do:
   a. Identify the main idea and details of a text.
   b. Summarize the main ideas of a text.
   c. Draw conclusions from a text.
4. Core Standards—Students can read:
   a. Read a variety of texts with increasing complexity.
   b. Acquire and use knowledge of language and vocabulary.
5. Core Standards—Students can write:
   a. Write arguments to support claims with reasons and evidence.
   b. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information.
6. Core Standards—Students can speak:
   a. Conquer challenging vocabulary and analyze how vocabulary and word structure contribute to meaning.
Learning Objectives and Performance Expectations

Writing and Research Standards

1. Develop an outline for a research paper
2. Conduct research using appropriate methods
3. Quote and cite sources accurately
4. Use APA citation style

Common Core Standards

Reading and Literature

1. Analyze the structure of a text
2. Determine a central idea or theme
3. Identify the author's purpose

Speaking and Listening

1. Participate in discussions
2. Listen actively and respond
3. Contribute to group discussions

Mathematics

1. Solve word problems
2. Understand mathematical concepts
3. Use mathematical models

Science

1. Conduct scientific investigations
2. Interpret data
3. Communicate scientific findings
Grades 4-5
English Language Arts

Core Standards — Students can read:

Vocabulary
- Define and use vocabulary in written and spoken language.
- Understand the meanings of words (derivational and connotative).
- Deriving the meanings of words.

Language Development
- Improve fluency in reading and writing.
- Develop a sense of the appropriate use of language in various contexts.
- Choose and use language that is appropriate to the form of writing and to the intended audience.

Reading & Literature
- Engage in reading for enjoyment and understanding.
- Identify the elements that contribute to the structure and meaning of a text.
- Analyze the effects of various elements on the overall meaning and significance of a text.

Writing
- Write effectively to communicate information and ideas and to express personal feelings and opinions in a variety of contexts.
- Use writing to explore, understand, and express ideas and information.
- Analyze and critique the ideas and information presented in writing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade E</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
<th>Grade B</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade D</th>
<th>Grade E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required for Grades A-E:**
- English Language
- Science
- Math

**Developmental Competency:**
- Reading Comprehension
- Language and Communication
- Math Concepts
- Science Fundamentals

**Affirmative Statements:**
- I have read and understood the requirements for grade.
- I have met all the requirements for grade.
- I will apply my knowledge and skills in the next stage of learning.
Speaking and Listening Standards

Listening and Speaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Understand and interpret spoken language effectively, analyzing and synthesizing ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Comprehend and respond to spoken language in a variety of contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Use effective speaking strategies to convey ideas and information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Listen to and comprehend a variety of spoken messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Identify and analyze the purpose and structure of spoken messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Critically evaluate spoken messages for accuracy and effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Use oral language to express ideas and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Engage in effective communication and collaboration with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Adapt speaking strategies to different audiences and purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing Standards

Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Use writing to express ideas, opinions, and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Use writing to convey information, arguments, and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Adapt writing styles and formats to different contexts and purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Use writing to communicate effectively with various audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Use writing to analyze and critique texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Adapt writing strategies to different genres and purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades 9-10

English Language Arts

Reading & Literature

Writing & Research

Listening & Speaking

Language Development

Overall Focus: Focus on instruction and practice in the following areas:

- Reading and Literature:
  - Enhance reading comprehension and critical thinking.
  - Analyze and interpret literary works.

- Writing and Research:
  - Develop skills in drafting, revising, and editing.
  - Conduct research and apply findings in writing.

- Listening and Speaking:
  - Improve listening skills and engage in effective speaking.

- Language Development:
  - Strengthen vocabulary and grammar knowledge.
Learning and Literacy Standards

Speaking and Listening Standards

Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Standards

Reading Standards

Writing and Research Standards

Counting and Quantitative Reasoning

Science and Engineering Practices

Science and Engineering Standards
Definitions of Key Writing Types

Dear Committee,

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to present my ideas for the proposed project. As you may know, the project aims to enhance the educational experience for students by integrating technology into the classroom. I believe that this initiative will not only improve the learning outcomes but also prepare students for the workforce of the future.

Before delving into the details of the project, I would like to highlight the importance of communication skills in today's society. As a writer, I have observed that effective communication is essential in every aspect of life. It is the foundation upon which successful relationships, businesses, and communities are built.

In the context of education, communication skills are equally important. Students need to be able to articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly and persuasively. This is where writing comes into play. Writing is the medium through which ideas are communicated, and it is a skill that can be developed and refined over time.

There are several types of writing that are commonly used in the educational setting. Each type has its own purpose and audience. For instance, informative writing is used to provide information to the reader, while persuasive writing aims to influence the reader's opinion.

In my proposed project, I plan to focus on the development of these writing skills among students. The project will involve the implementation of a technology-based writing program that will provide students with interactive tools and resources to enhance their writing abilities. The program will include workshops, online resources, and a writing center where students can receive individualized feedback.

I am confident that this project will have a significant positive impact on the educational experience of students. It will not only improve their writing skills but also enable them to communicate effectively in various contexts.

Thank you for considering my proposal. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this project further with you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
## ELA Conventions Progressive Skills: By Standard

The following standards, marked with an asterisk (*) in the standards document, are skills and understandings that require continued attention in higher grades (after their introduction in lower grades) as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking.

### Grade 3

#### Grades 4 - 5

1.1 Generate complete sentences, avoiding sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-ons.
1.2 Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
1.3 Choose words for effect.

#### Grades 6 - 8

2.1 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.
2.2 Form and choose between adjectives and adverbs (including comparative and superlative forms), placing them appropriately within the sentence.
2.3 Correctly use frequently confused words.
2.4 Use idiomatic language.
2.5 Use pronouns to replace nouns in a sentence.
2.6 Use grade-appropriate vocabulary correctly, expanding references as needed.
2.7 Use specialized, topic-specific language to convey ideas precisely.
2.8 Use figurative language to create images or make comparisons and connotate between people, objects, or ideas.
2.9 Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

3.1  Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers.
3.2 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
3.3 Recognize and correct vague pronoun use with unclear singular antecedents.
3.4 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense and mood.
3.5 Set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical clauses with commas, parentheses, or dashes.
3.6 Varied sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
3.7 Choose words and phrases to express ideas precisely and concretely, avoiding redundancy and overstatement.
Appendix G

SMARTER Balanced Consortium Memorandum of Understanding and Member States
Memorandum of Understanding  
SMATER Balanced Assessment Consortium  
Race to the Top Fund Assessment Program: Comprehensive Assessment Systems Grant Application  
CFDA Number: 84.395B

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered as of __________, 2010, by and between the SMATER Balanced Assessment Consortium (the "Consortium") and the State of ________________, which has elected to participate in the Consortium as (check one)

____ An Advisory State (description in section e),

OR

____ A Governing State (description in section e),

pursuant to the Notice Inviting Applications for the Race to the Top Fund Assessment Program for the Comprehensive Assessment Systems Grant Application (Category A), henceforth referred to as the "Program," as published in the Federal Register on April 9, 2010 (75 FR 18171-18185).

The purpose of this MOU is to

(a) Describe the Consortium vision and principles,
(b) Detail the responsibilities of States in the Consortium,
(c) Detail the responsibilities of the Consortium,
(d) Describe the management of Consortium funds,
(e) Describe the governance structure and activities of States in the Consortium,
(f) Describe State entrance, exit, and status change,
(g) Describe a plan for identifying existing State barriers, and
(h) Bind each State in the Consortium to every statement and assurance made in the application through the following signature blocks:
   (i)(A) Advisory State Assurance  
   OR
   (i)(B) Governing State Assurance  
   AND
   (ii) State Procurement Officer
(a) **Consortium Vision and Principles**

The Consortium’s priorities for a new generation assessment system are rooted in a concern for the valid, reliable, and fair assessment of the deep disciplinary understanding and higher-order thinking skills that are increasingly demanded by a knowledge-based economy. These priorities are also rooted in a belief that assessment must support ongoing improvements in instruction and learning, and must be useful for all members of the educational enterprise: students, parents, teachers, school administrators, members of the public, and policymakers.

The Consortium intends to build a flexible system of assessment based upon the Common Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics with the intent that all students across this Consortium of States will know their progress toward college and career readiness.

The Consortium recognizes the need for a system of formative, interim, and summative assessments—organized around the Common Core Standards—that support high-quality learning, the demands of accountability, and that balance concerns for innovative assessment with the need for a fiscally sustainable system that is feasible to implement. The efforts of the Consortium will be organized to accomplish these goals.

The comprehensive assessment system developed by the Consortium will include the following key elements and principles:

1. A Comprehensive Assessment System that will be grounded in a thoughtfully integrated learning system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction and teacher development that will inform decision-making by including formative strategies, interim assessments, and summative assessments.

2. The assessment system will measure the full range of the Common Core Standards including those that measure higher-order skills and will inform progress toward and acquisition of readiness for higher education and multiple work domains. The system will emphasize deep knowledge of core concepts within and across the disciplines, problem solving, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking.

3. Teachers will be involved in the design, development, and scoring of assessment items and tasks. Teachers will participate in the alignment of the Common Core Standards and the identification of the standards in the local curriculum.

4. Technology will be used to enable adaptive technologies to better measure student abilities across the full spectrum of student performance and evaluate growth in learning; to support online simulation tasks that test higher-order abilities; to score the results; and to deliver the responses to trained scorers/teachers to access from an
electronic platform. Technology applications will be designed to maximize interoperability across user platforms, and will utilize open-source development to the greatest extent possible.

5. A sophisticated design will yield scores to support evaluations of student growth, as well as school, teacher, and principal effectiveness in an efficient manner.

6. On-demand and curriculum-embedded assessments will be incorporated over time to allow teachers to see where students are on multiple dimensions of learning and to strategically support their progress.

7. All components of the system will incorporate principles of Universal Design that seek to remove construct-irrelevant aspects of tasks that could increase barriers for non-native English speakers and students with other specific learning needs.

8. Optional components will allow States flexibility to meet their individual needs.

(b) Responsibilities of States in the Consortium

Each State agrees to the following element of the Consortium’s Assessment System:

- Adopt the Common Core Standards, which are college- and career-ready standards, and to which the Consortium’s assessment system will be aligned, no later than December 31, 2011.

Each State that is a member of the Consortium in 2014–2015 also agrees to the following:

- Adopt common achievement standards no later than the 2014–2015 school year,
- Fully implement statewide the Consortium summative assessment in grades 3-8 and high school for both mathematics and English language arts no later than the 2014–2015 school year,
- Adhere to the governance as outlined in this document,
- Agree to support the decisions of the Consortium,
- Agree to follow agreed-upon timelines,
- Be willing to participate in the decision-making process and, if a Governing State, final decision, and
- Identify and implement a plan to address barriers in State law, statute, regulation, or policy to implementing the proposed assessment system and to addressing any such barriers prior to full implementation of the summative assessment components of the system.
(c) Responsibilities of the Consortium

The Consortium will provide the following by the 2014-15 school year:

1. A comprehensively designed assessment system that includes a strategic use of a variety of item types and performance assessments of modest scope to assess the full range of the Common Core Standards with an emphasis on problem solving, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking.

2. An assessment system that incorporates a required summative assessment with optional formative/benchmark components which provides accurate assessment of all students (as defined in the Federal notice) including students with disabilities, English learners, and low- and high-performing students.

3. Except as described above, a summative assessment that will be administered as a computer adaptive assessment and include a minimum of 1–2 performance assessments of modest scope.

4. Psychometrically sound scaling and equating procedures based on a combination of objectively scored items, constructed-response items, and a modest number of performance tasks of limited scope (e.g., no more than a few days to complete).

5. Reliable, valid, and fair scores for students and groups that can be used to evaluate student achievement and year-to-year growth; determine school/district/state effectiveness for Title I ESEA; and better understand the effectiveness and professional development needs of teachers and principals.

6. Achievement standards and achievement level descriptors that are internationally benchmarked.

7. Access for the State or its authorized delegate to a secure item and task bank that includes psychometric attributes required to score the assessment in a comparable manner with other State members, and access to other applications determined to be essential to the implementation of the system.

8. Online administration with limited support for paper-and-pencil administration through the end of the 2016–17 school year. States using the paper-and-pencil option will be responsible for any unique costs associated with the development and administration of the paper-and-pencil assessments.
9. Formative assessment tools and supports that are developed to support curricular goals, which include learning progressions, and that link evidence of student competencies to the summative system.

10. Professional development focused on curriculum and lesson development as well as scoring and examination of student work.

11. A representative governance structure that ensures a strong voice for State administrators, policymakers, school practitioners, and technical advisors to ensure an optimum balance of assessment quality, efficiency, costs, and time. The governance body will be responsible for implementing plans that are consistent with this MOU, but may make changes as necessary through a formal adoption process.

12. Through at least the 2013–14 school year, a Project Management Partner (PMP) that will manage the logistics and planning on behalf of the Consortium and that will monitor for the U.S. Department of Education the progress of deliverables of the proposal. The proposed PMP will be identified no later than August 4, 2010.

13. By September 1, 2014, a financial plan will be approved by the Governing States that will ensure the Consortium is efficient, effective, and sustainable. The plan will include as revenue at a minimum, State contributions, federal grants, and private donations and fees to non-State members as allowable by the U.S. Department of Education.

14. A consolidated data reporting system that enhances parent, student, teacher, principal, district, and State understanding of student progress toward college- and career-readiness.

15. Throughout the 2013–14 school year, access to an online test administration application, student constructed-response scoring application and secure test administration browsers that can be used by the Total State Membership to administer the assessment. The Consortium will procure resources necessary to develop and field test the system. However, States will be responsible for any hardware and vendor services necessary to implement the operational assessment. Based on a review of options and the finance plan, the Consortium may elect to jointly procure these services on behalf of the Total State Membership.
(d) Management of Consortium Funds

All financial activities will be governed by the laws and rules of the State of Washington, acting in the role of Lead Procurement State/Lead State, and in accordance with 34 CFR 80.36. Additionally, Washington is prepared to follow the guidelines for grant management associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and will be legally responsible for the use of grant funds and for ensuring that the project is carried out by the Consortium in accordance with Federal requirements. Washington has already established an ARRA Quarterly reporting system (also referred to as 1512 Reporting).

Per Washington statute, the basis of how funding management actually transpires is dictated by the method of grant dollar allocation, whether upfront distribution or pay-out linked to actual reimbursables. Washington functions under the latter format, generating claims against grant funds based on qualifying reimbursables submitted on behalf of staff or clients, physical purchases, or contracted services. Washington’s role as Lead Procurement State/Lead State for the Consortium is not viewed any differently, as monetary exchanges will be executed against appropriate and qualifying reimbursables aligned to expenditure arrangements (i.e., contracts) made with vendors or contractors operating under “personal service contracts,” whether individuals, private companies, government agencies, or educational institutions.

Washington, like most States, is audited regularly by the federal government for the accountability of federal grant funds, and has for the past five years been without an audit finding. Even with the additional potential for review and scrutiny associated with ARRA funding, Washington has its fiscal monitoring and control systems in place to manage the Consortium needs.

- As part of a comprehensive system of fiscal management, Washington’s accounting practices are stipulated in the State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM) managed by the State’s Office of Financial Management. The SAAM provides details and administrative procedures required of all Washington State agencies for the procurement of goods and services. As such, the State’s educational agency is required to follow the SAAM; actions taken to manage the fiscal activities of the Consortium will, likewise, adhere to policies and procedures outlined in the SAAM.
- For information on the associated contracting rules that Washington will adhere to while serving as fiscal agent on behalf of the Consortium, refer to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 39.29 “Personal Service Contracts.” Regulations and policies authorized by this RCW are established by the State’s Office of Financial Management, and can be found in the SAAM.
(e) Governance Structure and Activities of States in the Consortium

As shown in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium governance structure, the Total State Membership of the Consortium includes Governing and Advisory States, with Washington serving in the role of Lead Procurement State/Lead State on behalf of the Consortium.

A Governing State is a State that:
- Has fully committed to this Consortium only and met the qualifications specified in this document,
- Is a member of only one Consortium applying for a grant in the Program,
- Has an active role in policy decision-making for the Consortium,
- Provides a representative to serve on the Steering Committee,
- Provides a representative(s) to serve on one or more Work Groups,
- Approves the Steering Committee Members and the Executive Committee Members,
- Participates in the final decision-making of the following:
  - Changes in Governance and other official documents,
  - Specific Design elements, and
  - Other issues that may arise.

An Advisory State is a State that:
- Has not fully committed to any Consortium but supports the work of this Consortium,
- Participates in all Consortium activities but does not have a vote unless the Steering Committee deems it beneficial to gather input on decisions or chooses to have the Total Membership vote on an issue,
- May contribute to policy, logistical, and implementation discussions that are necessary to fully operationalize the SMARTER Balanced Assessment System, and
- Is encouraged to participate in the Work Groups.

Organizational Structure

Steering Committee
The Steering Committee is comprised of one representative from each Governing State in the Consortium. Committee members may be a chief or his/her designee. Steering Committee Members must meet the following criteria:
- Be from a Governing State,
- Have prior experience in either the design or implementation of curriculum and/or assessment systems at the policy or implementation level, and
- Must have willingness to serve as the liaison between the Total State Membership and Working Groups.

Steering Committee Responsibilities
- Determine the broad picture of what the assessment system will look like,
SMATER Balanced Assessment Consortium MOU

- Receive regular reports from the Project Management Partner, the Policy Coordinator, and the Content Advisor,
- Determine the issues to be presented to the Governing and/or Advisory States,
- Oversee the expenditure of funds in collaboration with the Lead Procurement State/Lead State,
- Operationalize the plan to transition from the proposal governance to implementation governance, and
- Evaluate and recommend successful contract proposals for approval by the Lead Procurement State/Lead State.

Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee is made up of the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee, a representative from the Lead Procurement State/Lead State, a representative from higher education and one representative each from four Governing States. The four Governing State representatives will be selected by the Steering Committee. The Higher Education representative will be selected by the Higher Education Advisory Group, as defined in the Consortium Governance document.
- For the first year, the Steering Committee will vote on four representatives, one each from four Governing States. The two representatives with the most votes will serve for three years and the two representatives with the second highest votes will serve for two years. This process will allow for the rotation of two new representatives each year. If an individual is unable to complete the full term of office, then the above process will occur to choose an individual to serve for the remainder of the term of office.

Executive Committee Responsibilities

- Oversee development of SMATER Balanced Comprehensive Assessment System,
- Provide oversight of the Project Management Partner,
- Provide oversight of the Policy Coordinator,
- Provide oversight of the Lead Procurement State/Lead State,
- Work with project staff to develop agendas,
- Resolve issues,
- Determine what issues/decisions are presented to the Steering Committee, Advisory and/or Governing States for decisions/votes,
- Oversee the expenditure of funds, in collaboration with the Lead Procurement State/Lead State, and
- Receive and act on special and regular reports from the Project Management Partner, the Policy Coordinator, the Content Advisor, and the Lead Procurement State/Lead State.
Executive Committee Co-Chairs

- Two Co-chairs will be selected from the Steering Committee States. The two Co-chairs must be from two different states. Co-chairs will work closely with the Project Management Partner. Steering Committee members wishing to serve as Executive Committee Co-chairs will submit in writing to the Project Management Partner their willingness to serve. They will need to provide a document signed by their State Chief indicating State support for this role. The Project Management Partner will then prepare a ballot of interested individuals. Each Steering Committee member will vote on the two individuals they wish to serve as Co-chair. The individual with the most votes will serve as the new Co-chair.
- Each Co-chair will serve for two years on a rotating basis. For the first year, the Steering committee will vote on two individuals and the one individual with the most votes will serve a three-year term and the individual with the second highest number of votes will serve a two-year term.
- If an individual is unable to complete the full term of office, then the above process will occur to choose an individual to serve for the remainder of the term of office.

Executive Committee Co-Chair Responsibilities

- Set the Steering Committee agendas,
- Set the Executive Committee agenda,
- Lead the Executive Committee meetings,
- Lead the Steering Committee meetings,
- Oversee the work of the Executive Committee,
- Oversee the work of the Steering Committee,
- Coordinate with the Project Management Partner,
- Coordinate with Content Advisor,
- Coordinate with Policy coordinator,
- Coordinate with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and
- Coordinate with Executive Committee to provide oversight to the Consortium.

Decision-making

Consensus will be the goal of all decisions. Major decisions that do not reach consensus will go to a simple majority vote. The Steering Committee will determine what issues will be referred to the Total State Membership. Each member of each group (Advisory/Governing States, Steering Committee, Executive Committee) will have one vote when votes are conducted within each group. If there is only a one to three vote difference, the issue will be re-examined to seek greater consensus. The Steering Committee will be responsible for preparing additional information as to the pros and cons of the issue to assist voting States in developing consensus and reaching a final decision. The Steering Committee may delegate this responsibility to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will decide which decisions or issues are votes to
be taken to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee makes the decision to take issues to the full Membership for a vote.

The Steering Committee and the Governance/Finance work group will collaborate with each Work Group to determine the hierarchy of the decision-making by each group in the organizational structure.

Work Groups
The Work Groups are comprised of chiefs, assessment directors, assessment staff, curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, technical advisors and other specialists as needed from States. Participation on a workgroup will require varying amounts of time depending on the task. Individuals interested in participating on a Work Group should submit their request in writing to the Project Management Partner indicating their preferred subgroup. All Governing States are asked to commit to one or more Work Groups based on skills, expertise, and interest within the State to maximize contributions and distribute expertise and responsibilities efficiently and effectively. The Consortium has established the following Work Groups:

- Governance/Finance,
- Assessment Design,
- Research and Evaluation,
- Report,
- Technology Approach,
- Professional Capacity and Outreach, and
- Collaboration with Higher Education.

The Consortium will also support the work of the Work Groups through a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Policy Coordinator in collaboration with the Steering Committee will create various groups as needed to advise the Steering Committee and the Total State Membership. Initial groups will include

- Institutions of Higher Education,
- Technical Advisory Committee,
- Policy Advisory Committee, and
- Service Providers.

An organizational chart showing the groups described above is provided on the next page.
(f) State Entrance, Exit, and Status Change

This MOU shall become effective as of the date first written above upon signature by both the Consortium and the Lead Procurement State/Lead State (Washington) and remain in force until the conclusion of the Program, unless terminated earlier in writing by the Consortium as set forth below.

Entrance into Consortium

Entrance into the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is assured when:

- The level of membership is declared and signatures are secured on the MOU from the State’s Commissioner, State Superintendent, or Chief; Governor; and President/Chair of the State Board of Education (if the State has one);
- The signed MOU is submitted to the Consortium Grant Project Manager (until June 23) and then the Project Management Partner after August 4, 2010;
- The Advisory and Governing States agree to and adhere to the requirements of the governance;
- The State’s Chief Procurement Officer has reviewed its applicable procurement rules and provided assurance that it may participate in and make procurements through the Consortium;
- The State is committed to implement a plan to identify any existing barriers in State law, statute, regulation, or policy to implementing the proposed assessment system and to addressing any such barriers prior to full implementation of the summative assessment components of the system; and
- The State agrees to support all decisions made prior to the State joining the Consortium.

After receipt of the grant award, any request for entrance into the Consortium must be approved by the Executive Committee. Upon approval, the Project Management Partner will then submit a change of membership to the USED for approval. A State may begin participating in the decision-making process after receipt of the MOU.

Exit from Consortium

Any State may leave the Consortium without cause, but must comply with the following exit process:

- A State requesting an exit from the Consortium must submit in writing their request and reasons for the exit request;
- The written explanation must include the statutory or policy reasons for the exit;
- The written request must be submitted to the Project Management Partner with the same signatures as required for the MOU;
- The Executive Committee will act upon the request within a week of the request, and
- Upon approval of the request, the Project Management Partner will then submit a change of membership to the USED for approval.
Changing Roles in the Consortium
A State desiring to change from an Advisory State to a Governing State or from a Governing State to an Advisory State may do so under the following conditions:
- A State requesting a role change in the Consortium must submit in writing their request and reasons for the request,
- The written request must be submitted to the Project Management Partner with the same signatures as required for the MOU, and
- The Executive Committee will act upon the request within a week of the request and submit to the USED for approval.

(g) Plan for Identifying Existing State Barriers
Each State agrees to identify existing barriers in State laws, statutes, regulations, or policies by noting the barrier and the plan to remove the barrier. Each State agrees to use the table below as a planning tool for identifying existing barriers. States may choose to include any known barriers in the table below at the time of signing this MOU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Issue/Risk of Issue (if known)</th>
<th>Statute, Regulation, or Policy</th>
<th>Governing Body with Authority to Remove Barrier</th>
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(h) Bind each State in the Consortium to every statement and assurance made in the application through the following signature blocks

(Required from all “Advisory States” in the Consortium.)

As an Advisory State in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, I have read and understand the roles and responsibilities of Advisory States, and agree to be bound by the statements and assurances made in the application.

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<th>State Name:</th>
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<td>Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):</td>
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<td>Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:</td>
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<td>Chief State School Officer (Printed Name):</td>
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<td>Signature of the Chief State School Officer:</td>
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<td>President of the State Board of Education, if applicable (Printed Name):</td>
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<td>Signature of the President of the State Board of Education, if applicable:</td>
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</table>
(h)(i)(B) GOVERNING STATE SIGNATURE BLOCK for Race to the Top Fund Assessment Program Comprehensive Assessment Systems Grant Application Assurances

(Required from all "Governing States" in the Consortium.)

As a Governing State in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, I have read and understand the roles and responsibilities of Governing States, and agree to be bound by the statements and assurances made in the application.

I further certify that as a Governing State I am fully committed to the application and will support its implementation.

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<td>President of the State Board of Education, if applicable (Printed Name):</td>
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**State Procurement Officer Signature Block** for Race to the Top Fund Assessment Program Comprehensive Assessment Systems Grant Application Assurances.

*(Required from all States in the Consortium.)*

I certify that I have reviewed the applicable procurement rules for my State and have determined that it may participate in and make procurements through the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.

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Appendix H

Teacher Preparation a White Paper, Greater Nebraska Superintendents
Teacher Preparation
A White Paper

3/1/2009
Greater Nebraska Superintendents
A Discussion on Teacher Preparation

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A Discussion on Teacher Preparation

Introduction

Nearly everyone will agree that teaching is an important profession. In fact, most of us can probably name at least one or two teachers that have profoundly affected us in either a positive or negative manner.

Current research supports these statements, indicating that teachers are, at the very least, an important part of the educational process. Furthermore, the results of recent studies have found that a student's assigned teacher has a much stronger influence on how much he or she learns than other factors, including things such as class size and composition. In fact, results of several studies have established that students who are assigned to very effective teachers over consecutive years have significantly greater gains in achievement than students assigned to less or ineffective teachers and the impact carries over into the ensuing school years.

Many in education have assumed that factors in a student's background, such as income, parents' level of education and other family issues, are the primary forces that impact student achievement. However, a number of studies indicate that the expertise of a classroom teacher has as much, if not more, of an impact than individual student demographics. As a result of this research, it is imperative that educators improve the quality of teachers in the classroom to help students educationally at risk or prone to fail.

Nationally, beginning teachers will enter a classroom where at least 25% of the students live in poverty, from 12% to 20% have identified learning differences, 15% primarily speak a language other than English, and about 40% are members of racial/ethnic minority groups, many of them recent immigrants from countries with different educational systems and cultural trends. Nebraska's statistics place 36.42% of students in low income, 6.49% with limited English proficiency and students identified with disabilities at 14.95%. The Nebraska mobility rate is 6.42%, meaning that 18,442 students move two or more times. Changing schools impedes the academic and social growth of students and it is estimated that it takes four to six months to recover academically after changing schools. Additionally, No Child Left Behind has increased
accountability through Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements and Nebraska has moved to a statewide test, Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA), in the areas of writing, reading, mathematics and science.

The Greater Nebraska Superintendents (GNS) organization is submitting this White Paper to the university and college systems as a way to start a dialogue about teacher preparation in Nebraska. The reasons presented to this point are the rationale behind the proposed discussion items listed below. It is our belief that schools of education must prepare teachers to meet the myriad of needs for diverse learners in today's classrooms by increasing the number of education-based classes required in the colleges and universities by one semester. To balance this necessary increase, the general classes required of students would be reduced by one semester.

This White Paper addresses the following areas in teacher preparation:

1. Knowledge of Subject Matter and Curriculum (State Standards)
2. Knowledge of Teaching
3. Classroom Management
4. Technology Literacy
5. Life-Long Learning
6. Knowledge of Assessment Tools
7. Developing Teachers for High Poverty and Culturally Diverse Students

**Knowledge of Subject Matter and Curriculum (State Standards)**

Effective teaching means that instructors build lessons based upon state standards, possible national standards and the needs of their students. Effective teachers convey content at the appropriate level that is both educational and engaging to students. A first year teacher must be able to take in large amounts of content information and shape it into meaningful instruction.

- Every first year teacher, regardless of grade or content area, needs to know what the state standards are in the curricular area in which they are teaching, along with their local district’s curriculum, and shape their lesson plans and instructional strategies accordingly.
- First year teachers should be familiar with creating individual curriculum maps that identify by calendar months the topics, skills and assessment they are addressing.
• Teaching and learning in a core subject requires specific mental activities including extending and applying knowledge; reflecting about experiences; articulating what the teacher knows; making knowledge one's own; and scaffolding.

• Effective subject matter teachers need to know how to solve problems they pose to students and to know that there are multiple approaches to solving many problems.

As related to subject matter, it is the belief of the GNS that all K-12 teachers must be able to teach reading and writing. Results of research demonstrate that regardless of curriculum or grade level, the biggest obstacle to learning is a lack of reading skills. One current model for teaching reading in grades 3-12 is called the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, which makes content comprehensible while at the same time developing English language skills. Another model is Rewards Training, again, a model that can be implemented in middle and secondary schools. Prospective teachers should have opportunities to explore the various types of assessment instruments that are used to assess students' reading and writing.

With the current mobility rate of students, it is essential that new teachers have the skills to provide support to students with demonstrated reading and writing problems at all levels and curricular areas. One of the best ways to improve students' reading and writing competency is to give them ample time to use these competencies across the curriculum. Therefore GNS would like to see content area teachers trained in how to help students read and write in their focus areas. For example, it is essential that social studies and science teachers know how to help their students develop strategies for comprehending their textbooks and other content-related information sources. Likewise it is critical that teachers understand how to utilize writing in all subject areas as an efficacious method for reviewing learning and deepening understanding.

In the area of writing, two instructional models in use by most districts are the Six Trait Writing and Step Up to Writing models. As school superintendents, we believe that every first year teacher should have both a reading and writing model to use in their classroom appropriate for the grade levels at which they teach. This model should be consistent throughout the college/university system and every professor teaching education courses should have an understanding of and be able to demonstrate this model to their students.
Knowledge of Teaching

Teacher education programs must train candidates to be effective instructors and this includes clear strategies that result in active learner engagement. Currently the school districts that make up the GNS provide new teachers an average of 5-12 days of additional training in their first year. First year teachers need practical knowledge and skills in research-based effective instructional strategies, and these should be consistent throughout the college or university educational program:

1. Beginning of Class
   - Setting the Stage
   - Lesson Agenda
   - Lesson (Instructional) Objectives
   - Reviewing Homework

2. Middle of Class
   - Anticipatory Set
   - Active Participation
   - Wait Time
   - Interaction Sequence
   - Checking for Understanding
   - Clear Directions and Information
   - Managing Time
   - Knowledge of Results
   - Modeling

3. End of Class
   - Closure
   - Practice
   - Homework

One way to measure the consistency of these skills would be to observe first year teachers across grade levels and various curricular areas to determine if they are consistent in demonstrating these skills.
In the discussion regarding the importance of first year teachers having standards-based teaching practices, these skills would include knowing:

1. How to organize instruction around the goals of a lesson.
2. How to plan instruction based on differences in students' prior knowledge.
3. How to use various strategies to reach diverse students and to create environments that support differentiated teaching and learning.
4. How to plan instruction based on students' individual differences in learning (e.g., due to culture, ability, learning styles, etc.). How to identify students' particular learning styles, intelligences, strengths and weaknesses.
5. How to assess a student's level of progress for a lesson using a variety of methods.
6. How to adapt instruction during the lesson based on a student's level of progress toward the goals of the lesson.
7. How to identify what a student must know and be able to do in order to meet a standard.
8. How to assess students for proficiency on standards.
9. How to organize grading around standards.

First year teachers need to know how to organize a lesson or instructional unit that drives purposeful instruction and impacts learning. Teachers should be knowledgeable about direct instruction and project-oriented teaching methods. They need to be familiar with differentiation of instruction, such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, curriculum compacting, learning station centers and project-based learning.

Having a basic understanding of grading and the understanding of a true grading philosophy is essential for new teachers. Grades have three important audiences: parents, the student and outside users, such as college admissions staff. First, it is important for new teachers to understand that the grades are only as good as the assessments used to gather the information. Another important consideration is what factors determine the final grade. It is our belief that new teachers should have a grading philosophy that measures academic achievement with nothing else factored in to interfere with the message. “Soft skills” as identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which include effort, attitude, compliance, behavior, etc., should be provided to the student and their parents as separate information. One final note: at
times teachers give a zero to students who miss a test or report. As part of the grading process, teachers need to recognize the difference between learning the material and grading for not completing an activity.

While the Greater Nebraska Superintendents see tremendous value in developing a strong basic skills foundation in youth, they see this as only part of a school’s learning mission. Equally important is helping students learn to the highest levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. This also is stressed in the **Breaking Ranks** research that challenges high schools to provide a rigorous educational experience for all learners.

To do this, teachers must first of all expect all students to develop high level thinking abilities. This can be done through skillful questioning, project-based learning, and the infusion of technology within the learning process. It can also be accomplished by embedding what the International Center for Leadership in Education calls high rigor and high relevance into the learning process.

Too often students are spectators in the teaching and learning process. In an information-driven and technology-rich global society, schools cannot afford to turn off students through excessive dependence on lecture and a teacher-controlled learning environment. One way to increase relevance and active participation in the instruction process is to build real-life applications into lessons. This tie-in with practical experiences gives students a reason to learn and helps them see the importance of classroom learning to later life success.

All of this is only possible when students have trusting positive relationships with their teachers. Having relationship-building skills is an essential basic competency for all effective teachers.

**Assessment Tools**

Today’s teachers need access to data on a real-time basis, including attendance, discipline, formative and summative assessments. New teachers need to experience practical techniques to organize data in a manner that will provide information on student performance. When assessment informs instruction, students' academic growth progresses along a natural continuum.
of learning. It is extremely important that teachers using classroom assessments recognize that the results should include the analysis of a student's strengths as well as weaknesses.

First year teachers need to have a balanced knowledge base of assessment that includes summative and formative assessments. When making decisions about the standards, curriculum, selection of materials and effectiveness of instructional programs, teachers and district administrators typically use summative assessments. Formative assessments are the most critical to first year teachers, since they demonstrate a child's current knowledge and skills and gauge how well a student is progressing toward specific outcomes.

Teacher preparation programs need to train their students how to incorporate formative assessments into classroom discussions and rubrics of student work, whether in writing or projects and other related classroom activities. These assessment skills are critical because they have an immediate impact on daily instruction and learning. Effective teaching requires monitoring student progress through frequent assessment, recognizing student problem areas and learning needs for the targeted curriculum, and then differentiating the instructional approach and methods to meet the specific child's learning needs. First year teachers need to have the knowledge and skills to select and develop appropriate assessment methods and procedures for individuals as well as their classroom, subject content, or tasks and instructional situations.

**Classroom Management**

When it comes to managing a classroom, a first year teacher needs to have the same expertise and knowledge as a veteran teacher. The GNS have observed that the majority of teachers who fail in the profession lack student management skills as their primary teaching deficit. Two major factors in student achievement are *time on task* and *the classroom environment*. Thirty years of research on effective teachers established that one of the major factors contributing to good classroom management occurred during the first two weeks as master teachers taught the students their behavioral expectations. A study found that only 18% of teachers claimed they learned management skills during initial training, whereas 82% learned them on the job.
The GNS propose that upon graduation, all prospective teachers should have a minimum of one full semester class on classroom management. At a minimum, the initial management plan might include the following steps:

1. The teacher should develop a set of specific expectations or behaviors that are important in the successful management of their classroom. Examples might include things such as: how to enter the room; pass papers forward; participate in class; follow cafeteria procedures; come prepared for class; etc.

2. The teacher should specify information that the students should know for each identified behavior, as well as the outcomes resulting from the correct use of the behavior.

3. The behavior should then be taught to the students. This should include the reasoning behind the importance of the behavior, as well as the steps necessary for the students to successfully complete the behavior. The teacher should then check for the understanding of the students.

4. In order for the students to understand what the appropriate behavior looks like, the teacher should model the identified behavior.

5. To allow the opportunity for the students to learn and exhibit the behavior on a consistent basis, they should be given the opportunity to practice it. The teacher should provide specific and immediate feedback to the students and reinforcement, either verbally or non-verbally, should be offered upon acceptable completion of the behavior.

6. If a student should fail to perform the behavior acceptably, they should be re-taught the desired behavior. The re-teaching should occur on the student's own time and should only take as long as necessary to demonstrate the correct behavior. The goal should be for the child to learn the behavior and should not be viewed as a punishment.

For students with more severe behavior problems, first year teachers should be able to conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA) in their classroom. A basic FBA should include an Antecedent, Behavior and Consequence (ABC) analysis. An ABC analysis enables the teacher to analyze clues about why the student keeps having the same problem behavior. The purpose is to identify patterns in order to hypothesize about the function the problem behavior is serving.

- **Antecedent** is what occurs prior to the problem behavior and should include specific people, events and/or things identified in the situation leading up to the behavior.
• **Behavior** is the specific action exhibited by the student that has been identified as a problem behavior and should be described in observable terms.

• **Consequence** is what occurs after the student exhibits the problem behavior.

• **Hypothesis**: A hypothesis should be formulated based on the examination of several ABC analyses and identifying similar patterns in behavior. For example, a hypothesis might state that the behavior is occurring because the student wants to get out of reading class.

• **Sample Plan**: Based on the ABC analysis and the hypothesis developed, a plan should be created to address the reason the student is engaging in the problem behavior. For example, if a student wants to get out of reading class, ease the difficulty of the reading class by partnering the student with a peer and together have them read an assigned passage aloud prior to the lesson. Then, during the lesson, have the student read through the passage that was rehearsed with their partner. If the data indicates that there is a decrease in the inappropriate behavior, gradually adjust the assignment until the student is reading unrehearsed passages.

As previously mentioned, the GNS recommend that a semester class be taught on classroom management. In addition to teaching general classroom rules and developing functional behavioral assessments for at-risk behaviors, the class might also address the following skills:

1. Communicating effectively and working with parents.
2. Building and maintaining rapport with all students.
3. Developing positive teaching/preventative approaches with students.
   - Putting students on the clock
   - The “Pass” option
   - Keeping everyone involved: “Interaction sequence”
   - Bell Ringers
   - Putting up an agenda for the class
4. Providing a classroom management toolbox.
5. Training students how to work with children of poverty.
Moreover, to effectively managing a classroom, it is also important is that first year teachers are familiar with the Rule 27 Professional Practices Criteria so that on a personal behavioral level, they have an understanding what is expected of professional teachers. The GNS propose that it would be educationally sound if all instructors would have the knowledge and practical skills to integrate some of the positive teaching approaches outlined in this paper. We believe that it would create exceptional teachers if the student saw these strategies modeled in their classes.

**Technology Literacy**

We live in a technology and media-driven environment, marked by access to a wealth of information, speedy changes in hardware and software and the ability to communicate on an unprecedented scale. New teachers must be able to integrate 21st century skills, tools and teaching strategies into their classroom practice. They will need to enable their students to learn in relevant, real world 21st century contexts (via project-based or other applied work). To be effective workers in the 21st Century, our students must be able to demonstrate a wide range of functional and critical thinking skills, such as:

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy

The Framework for 21st Century Learning (*Partnership for 21st Century Skills*) advocate that schools move beyond the basic competencies in core subjects to promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels, including weaving 21st Century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects:

- Global Awareness
- Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Civic Literacy
- Health Literacy

In order to teach in a 21st Century classroom, first year teachers must have the technology skills to develop and teach in a synchronous and asynchronous environment while using learning
management software. This is especially true given the changing student demographics in our state. In addition, in order to provide more educational opportunities, school districts are investing more time, money and work into developing different delivery models for classes. Network Nebraska currently provides opportunities for most school districts in our state to connect to another district via polycom or distance learning. Furthermore, the National Repository of Online Classes (NROC) offers asynchronous classes at no charge to any district in Nebraska. Finally, most classrooms have up-to-date hardware and software tools available for students and staff.

If first year teachers are to incorporate 21\textsuperscript{st} Century teaching into their classrooms, they will need to integrate the opportunities of the latest technological tools into their teaching tool kit. First year teachers should be expected to be accomplished in instructional techniques using technology, and also in the integration of technology into the curriculum. Specialty staff (industrial technology, band, business, etc) teachers should have knowledge of the readily available technologies currently in use in their field of expertise. As a consequence, students should become fluent in the use of the technology tools that will be part of their knowledge base for ongoing work and learning.

\textit{Life-long Learning}

Most high-skill jobs today are not accessible without an education that prepares students to work and live in technology and media-driven environments in a globally competitive information age. Employers report that new entrants to the workforce need not only the basic skills – reading, writing and math – but in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century business world, possessing a range of applied skills directly related to the workplace is also critical to success. Employers put professionalism, teamwork and oral communications at the top of the list in terms of importance to the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century work environment. Given this information, one of the most important challenges facing schools of education is to create and orchestrate learning experiences that motivate new teachers to become life-long learners.
A key to being a master teacher is to constantly get better at one's craft. A mindset of continuous improvement is critical to teacher effectiveness. Finding ever-better ways to increase learning for all students should be the ongoing goal of every teacher. One way to do this is through action research. It is important that teachers are constantly reflecting on student success in their classrooms, forming and testing hypotheses to improve learning, measuring the effects of changes, and creating responses based on results.

Currently many school districts in Nebraska have implemented professional learning communities (PLC) as way of improving student achievement. Many in the education profession believe that implementing PLCs in a school district is the most effective model of examining organizational development, change processes, leadership and successful educational practices. In order to use researched based instructional strategies, teachers need to experience them in their own learning and then practice them with peers. Professional discussions in response to a book, critical discussions on curriculum, assessment and instructional ideas will support first year teachers in developing an appreciation for ways to prepare students for life beyond the classroom.

It is critical that schools of education develop in their students a passion for learning that goes beyond their school work. In 2003, the Business-Higher Education Forum released *Building a Nation of Learners*, which defined what many have believed. The report states, “Even if employees are equipped for today’s jobs, they need to be ready to learn, relearn, and in some cases, unlearn to respond to corporate downsizing, workplace modifications and other realities.” First year teachers must have a personal love of learning and a strong desire for acquiring knowledge to meet an ever-changing society. Education provides teachers and students with a foundation and skills that help them integrate new information, new skills and new instructional approaches into the classroom. The most effective teachers in the 21st Century will be those who stay current on new information, new skills and new approaches and have the ability to think critically and creatively in making decisions about their learners and teaching.
Developing Teachers for High Poverty and Culturally Diverse Students

Across the state of Nebraska, in both urban and rural settings, schools are seeing a higher occurrence of students from diverse backgrounds and living in poverty. This complicates both the teaching and learning processes and presents added challenges for beginning teachers. English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest-growing student population in U.S. public schools. According to the Educational Research Service, the enrollment of ELL students has increased by 57% since the 1995-1996 school year, while the total enrollment has increased by less than 4% during the same time frame.

A number of studies indicate that teachers negatively evaluate the intelligence, social characteristics and academic potential of diverse and high poverty students. These studies have further determined that students living in poverty and/or from a culturally diverse background underperform on cognitive assessments and scores below their peers in the core subject areas of reading and mathematics. Additionally, these students face other barriers to school success including things such as poor nutrition, broken families, child abuse and neglect, drug abuse, and underemployed and undereducated parents. Further, a child in Nebraska who drops out of high school is typically from a low income, minority or single parent family. Research has also shown that students from diverse backgrounds are more likely to be punished at school, labeled and categorized for special education services, and experience academic failure.

Studies have shown that there are benefits of English language instruction for ELL students, especially preschoolers, and that educators should encourage development and use of both English and the student’s home language. However, research has found that teachers are often under-prepared to educate these students. According to the Educational Research Service, 90% of teachers participating in ELL education were frustrated by their ability to teach English-as-a-Second-Language effectively, and all teachers surveyed felt that their greatest area of need for professional development was in helping students transition from Spanish to English.

Ruby Payne describes the need for a specific profile of knowledge and skills required in teachers who work with children in poverty. Beginning teachers should be trained in differentiated instruction and content area classes on teaching students with varying learning styles. They must
have the skills to generate and maintain student engagement and to organize learning environments to ensure that learning occurs. The new teachers must be able to find ways to capitalize on opportunities for learning by going beyond the traditional textbook to connect the curriculum with their children’s daily lives. To be effective in these settings, the first year teacher must learn about each student and establish relationships with the students to create connections in their classroom. They must also have the skills to oversee numerous learning activities and projects.

The GNS believe that first year teachers need to have the skills to work in the most challenging learning situations. They should have the opportunity to cultivate certain characteristics, in addition to other skills outlined throughout this paper that would better equip them to teach students with additional needs due to diversity or poverty. These characteristics should include the ability to:

a. Build trusting relationships with both students and families;
b. Communicate frequently with families;
c. Demonstrate high expectations;
d. Integrate students’ cultural knowledge throughout the curriculum;
e. Develop a temperament to focus on the entire child (intellectual, social and emotional); and
f. Connect classroom content with the life experiences of students.

Additionally, teacher preparation programs need to provide specific skills and strategies to enhance the quality of educators, but also reduce the number of teachers leaving the profession. Research shows that diverse and poverty-stricken students are taught more often by new and less experienced teachers. Teacher preparation programs should provide all student teachers with opportunities to gain first-hand experience working with culturally diverse, high poverty students. Quality opportunities should also be provided for every graduate to participate in internships in public schools with high rates of poverty or diversity. Colleges of education should also offer a class that addresses the behaviors and practices found in effective teachers of diverse children and youth in poverty, which should include classroom and community practice.
Finally, a model needs to be discussed that improves teacher education through interaction between the colleges of education and public school administration. Such a partnership would allow college instructors who teach methods classes to observe firsthand the effectiveness of instructional practices. They would also be able to interact with the school’s teachers to receive feedback about effective and ineffective instruction with students from diverse and high poverty backgrounds. It is also extremely important for student teachers to receive more feedback and have more experience teaching in diverse classrooms.

One component of this model could be strategic teaching partnerships between the GNS districts and colleges of education. Currently, there are pilot programs in Nebraska that center on an entire year of student teaching in a district. Key elements would include imbedded staff development designed to provide training in key instructional strategies, the assignment of a mentor teacher and appropriate coursework taught by both district and post-secondary institution staff. The opportunity for students to receive this level of training and be given preferential employment opportunities will undoubtedly strengthen a district’s recruiting and retention of quality staff. It is hoped that consideration can be given to programs similar to this. It is evident that the GNS request that colleges of education to take unprecedented steps to redesign teacher education programs to include specific frameworks for the development of teachers in public schools facing high poverty and diversity issues. We truly believe that these changes are the key ingredients for improving the teaching and learning process for these students.

Conclusion

Teacher training programs will be a crucial component in educational improvement and the incorporation of 21st Century skills into classrooms. However, schools of education will only have an impact if focused on specific changes in teachers’ classroom behaviors. New technologies and a changing global environment require new teacher roles, new pedagogies and new approaches to teacher training. The Greater Nebraska Superintendents would like to start a dialogue with leaders in higher education about what we see as the changing face of education in Nebraska.

Greater Nebraska Superintendents

Teacher Preparation
We have suggested increasing the number of core education classes and reducing by one semester the number of general education classes taken by students majoring in education. Some suggestions for possibilities of new classes might include:

- Classroom Management (full semester class)
- Researched Based Instructional Strategies (full semester class) Note: This would include training all teachers on how to teach reading and writing skills in addition to generic instructional strategies that enhance the art of teaching.
- Teaching Students of Poverty and Diversity (full semester class)
- 21st Century Student Outcomes (full semester class) Note: Visit the Partnership For 21st Century Skills website for more information: http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/

In general, we see a need for new teachers to have consistent educational guiding principles and practices for teaching reading and writing, classroom management, teaching varied populations, technology literacy, assessment tools, 21st century skills and teaching in a standards-based environment. Historically, school district administrators see first year teachers from the same college or university system using dissimilar educational strategies. We are now at a place and time where it is imperative that beginning teachers have the knowledge and skills to use consistent educational strategies when working with students across our state. If teaching is truly a profession based on research about instructional strategies and teaching methods that lead to achievement for all students, then educators should exhibit consistent practices in the classroom. When observing a teacher at any grade level, a principal should have some idea of the teacher’s methods based on classroom practices at the college or university from which the teacher graduated. This can be achieved through collaboration within higher education departments and by continued dialogue with the Greater Nebraska Superintendents.

It has been documented that teacher quality is the single most important factor in a student’s academic success. If public schools are to prepare our future citizens with the most competent, creative and innovative skills, it will require collaboration and alignment among all agencies, including education reform in both public and higher education. This White Paper is meant as a way to begin discussions on how our school districts can have ongoing dialogue with educational leaders about how to best prepare teachers to serve in our school districts.
References


Lauer, Patricia A., Dean, Ceri B., Martin-Glenn, Mya L., and Asensio, Margaret L. "Teacher Quality


"What Makes a Teacher Effective: A Summary of Key Research Findings on Teacher Preparation." National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.
Appendix I

Growth in Education's Share of State Appropriations from 2008-2009
# Race to the Top General Criterion F.1(i): Making Education Funding a Priority
(Growth in Education's share of State Appropriations from 2008 to 2009)

## K-12 Education Appropriations

### General Funds

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## Total K-12 Education Appropriations

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Percent of Total State Appropriations (General, Cash, Construction, Distributive)

- 20.64%
- 21.98%

## Higher Education Appropriations

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<td>Coordinating Commission for Post Secondary Education</td>
<td>8,029,474.00</td>
<td>8,136,134.00</td>
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### Cash Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY07-08</th>
<th>FY08-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community College Aid</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska State College System</td>
<td>21,821,486.00</td>
<td>21,821,486.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska</td>
<td>8,460,000.00</td>
<td>10,090,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating Commission for Post Secondary Education</td>
<td>4,775,017.00</td>
<td>6,010,037.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Construction Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY07-08</th>
<th>FY08-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community College Aid</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska State College System</td>
<td>4,534,360.00</td>
<td>6,034,360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska</td>
<td>21,456,923.00</td>
<td>11,146,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating Commission for Post Secondary Education</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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### Distributive Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY07-08</th>
<th>FY08-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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</table>

## Subtotal General Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY07-08</th>
<th>FY08-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal General Funds</td>
<td>627,938,189.00</td>
<td>632,901,848.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal Cash Funds</td>
<td>35,056,503.00</td>
<td>37,921,523.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal Construction Funds</td>
<td>25,991,283.00</td>
<td>17,180,360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal Distributive Funds</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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## Total Higher Education Appropriations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY07-08</th>
<th>FY08-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Higher Education Appropriations</td>
<td>686,955,970.00</td>
<td>688,008,731.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of Total State Appropriations (General, Cash, Construction, Distributive)

- 13.63%
- 13.66%
The State of Nebraska increased the percentage of total state appropriations used to support public education (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary) from 34.47% in FY 2008 to 35.63% in FY 2009, an increase of 1.16%.

For this analysis, total state appropriations represent both operations and construction, and include General Funds\(^1\), Cash Funds\(^2\), Construction Funds\(^3\), and certain Distributive Funds\(^4\). If appropriations derived only from tax revenue are considered, the percentage increase of support for public education from FY 2008 to FY 2009 would be approximately 1.84%. If construction appropriations are not considered, the percentage increase would be approximately 2.07%.

\(^1\)General Funds are used to account for activities funded by general tax dollars, primarily sales and income taxes, and related expenditures and transfers.

\(^2\)Cash Funds are used to account for revenues and expenditures that are directly related to specific activities and may be derived from sources other than taxes, excluding federal sources.

\(^3\)Construction Funds are typically transferred from General Funds, and are used to account for the financial activities related to the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities.

\(^4\)Distributive Funds are technically appropriated but not “expendited”, and usually function similarly to an imprest fund. This analysis includes only Distributive Funds which directly receive a tax or fee imposed by the State and subsequently transmit to a non-State recipient. All other Distributive Funds appear as “expenditures” of other Funds and are therefore already accounted for within those Funds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2008</th>
<th>FY2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total State Support for Public Education (Elementary, Secondary, and Post-secondary)</td>
<td>$1,717,162,745</td>
<td>$1,795,135,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total State Appropriations</td>
<td>$4,981,312,200</td>
<td>$5,037,442,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of total Nebraska Appropriations used to support Public Education</td>
<td>34.47%</td>
<td>35.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the percentage of State Appropriations used to support Public Education</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J

Tax Equity and Education Opportunities Support Act Certification of 2009/10 Aid
Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
Certification of 2009/10 State Aid

This Document Contains:

Part I.
Data Sources for the 2009/10 State Aid Calculations

Part II.
2009/10 Concept Summary

Part III.
Questions and Answers Related to the 2009/10 State Aid Calculation

Revised June 2009
Part I.
DATA SOURCES FOR THE 2009/10 STATE AID CALCULATIONS

SYSTEM FORMULA NEEDS

Is the sum of:

(Basic Funding + Poverty Allowance + Limited English Proficiency Allowance + Elementary Class Size Allowance + Focus School & Program Allowance + Summer School Allowance + Special Receipts Allowance + Transportation Allowance + Elementary Site Allowance + Distance Education & Telecommunications Allowance + Instructional Time Allowance + Averaging Adjustment + Teacher Education Adjustment + New School Adjustment + Student Growth Adjustment + Learning Community Transportation Adjustment) – (Limited English Proficiency Allowance Correction + Poverty Allowance Correction + Local Choice Adjustment - Negative Student Growth Adjustment Correction)

✓ Formula Needs Stabilization:

District Formula Need that is less than 100% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need is increased to 100% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need

AND

District Formula Need that is greater than 112% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need is decreased to 112% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need, except that the Formula Need for Districts receiving a student growth adjustment is not decreased.

FORMULA STUDENTS

Students educated by the district and students for which tuition is paid.

DATA SOURCES:

As defined for the June 1, 2009 Certification of 2009/10 State Aid:
✓ Fall Membership in grades Kindergarten (KDG); Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK)-6; 7-8; and 9-12 from the 2008 Student Snapshot Template in the Nebraska Staff and Student Record System (NSSRS).
✓ The Fall Membership is adjusted based on the historical ratio of Average Daily Membership (ADM) to Fall Membership using the ratios from 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08.
Qualified Early Childhood Fall Membership is multiplied by the ratio of the planned instructional hours of the program divided by 1032 then multiplied by 0.6. Contracted Students in grades KDG; FDK-6; 7-8; and 9-12 are taken from the 2008 School Enrollment Template in the NSSRS. As defined for the year-end recalculation of 2009/10 State Aid:

- Average Daily Membership (ADM) in Qualified Early Childhood Programs and grades KDG; FDK-6; 7-8; and 9-12 from the 2008 Student Summary Attendance in the NSSRS.
- Contracted Students from the 2008 School Enrollment Template in the NSSRS.

**GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENDITURES**

Each district's General Fund Operating Expenditures for the most recently available complete data year. Calculated from the 2007/08 Annual Financial Report (AFR) as follows:

- Total General Fund Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2-20400-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-7090-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-3000-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-6500-605 &amp; 610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-2750-333 &amp; 1-2-2790-333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-3500-000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2-2200-281</td>
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<td>1-1-4600-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-1-4690-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-2310-317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADJUSTED GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENDITURES**

(General Fund Operating Expenditures X 1.055) – (Transportation Allowance + Special Receipts Allowance + Poverty Allowance + Limited English Proficiency Allowance + Distance Education & Telecommunications Allowance + Elementary Site Allowance + Elementary Class Size Allowance + Summer School Allowance + Instructional Time Allowance + Focus School & Program Allowance)

*Note: Instructional Time Allowance will be part of adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures calculation beginning in 2009/10 through 2012/13. Beginning in 2013/14 Elementary Class Size Allowance will not be part of adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures calculation.*
COST GROWTH FACTOR
For school fiscal year 2009/10, the cost growth factor shall equal the sum of (1) 1 plus (2) the basic allowable growth rate for the school fiscal year in which the aid is to be distributed; plus (3) the basic allowable growth rate for the school fiscal year immediately preceding the school fiscal year in which the aid is to be distributed; plus (4) 1.5%.

COST GROUPING
The local systems are divided into three cost groupings: Standard, Sparse, and Very Sparse.

DATA SOURCES:
✓ 2007 Census Report for children 5 to 18 years of age
✓ County Square Miles from the 2008 Consolidated Data Collection
✓ System Square Miles from the 2008 Consolidated Data Collection
✓ Formula Students from the 2008 Student Snapshot Template and the Student Enrollment Template in the NSSRS
✓ High School Distance from the 2008 Consolidated Data Collection

Very Sparse:
1) Less than .5 census students per square mile in the county where the high school is located.
2) Less than 1 formula student per square mile in the local system.
3) More than 15 miles between high school attendance centers.
   OR
1) More than 450 square miles in the local system.
2) Less than .5 formula students per square mile in the local system.
3) More than 15 miles between high school attendance centers.

Sparse:
1) Less than 2 census students per square mile in the county in which each high school is located.
2) Less than 1 formula student per square mile in the local system.
3) More than 10 miles between each high school attendance center.
   OR
1) Less than 1.5 formula students per square mile in the local system.
2) More than 15 miles between each high school attendance center.
   OR
1) Less than 1.5 formula students per square mile in the local system.
2) More than 275 square miles in the local system.
   OR
1) Less than 2 formula students per square mile in the local system.
2) The local system includes an area equal to 95% or more of the square miles in the largest county in which a high school attendance center is located.

Standard: Local systems that do not qualify for the Very Sparse or Sparse Cost Grouping will be in the Standard Cost Grouping.
SPECIAL RECEIPTS ALLOWANCE
DATA SOURCES:

✓ Special Receipts Allowance includes district specific special education, state ward, and accelerated or differentiated curriculum program receipts included in local system formula resources reported on the 2007/08 Annual Financial Report (1-1-1230-000, 1-1-1240-000, 1-1-1330-000, 1-1-1340-000, 1-1-3120-000, 1-1-3125-000, 1-1-3135-000, 1-1-3160-000, & 1-1-3161-000) and receipts from the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 - to the extent the district would have received payment pursuant to the Special Education Act (taken from NDE records) for 2007/08.

TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCE
The lesser of actual specific transportation costs or a calculated amount based on the miles transported (excluding activities) plus in-lieu-of transportation for the most recently available complete data year.

DATA SOURCES:


-Or- ✓ District specific calculated transportation expenditures based on: Route miles reported on the 2007/08 Annual Statistical Summary Report (Section C, Item 9) x .505 x 400% + In-Lieu-of Transportation (1-2-2750-332) reported on the 2007/08 Annual Financial Report.

POVERTY ALLOWANCE
Poverty Student = number of low income students or the number of students who are free lunch and free milk students whichever is greater + (poverty students - 3 year average of poverty students) if greater than 0.

Low Income Students = number of low income children within the local system X ratio of formula students/total children under 19

Low Income Child = a child under 19 living in a household having an annual adjusted gross income in 2007/08 equal to or less than the maximum household income that would allow a student from a family of four people to be a free lunch and free milk student during the 2008/09 school year.

2009/10 Statewide Average General Fund Operating Expenditures per Formula Student = 8,800.05

The lesser of:

Maximum Poverty Allowance designated by the school district

OR

Poverty Adjustment (Povadj)
Local System Formula Students = (Stu)
Poverty Students = (Poverty)
Poverty Adjustment = (Povadj)
\[ \text{Stu X .05 = a} \]
\[ \text{Stu X .10 = b} \]
\[ \text{Stu X .15 = c} \]
\[ \text{Stu X .20 = d} \]
\[ \text{Stu X .25 = e} \]
\[ \text{Stu X .30 = f} \]

- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is less than or equal to \(a\), then \((\text{Povadj}) = 0\)
- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is greater than \(a\), and \((\text{Poverty})\) is less than or equal to \(b\), then \(((\text{Poverty}) - a) \times (0.0375 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student}) = (\text{Povadj})\)
- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is greater than \(b\), and \((\text{Poverty})\) is less than or equal to \(c\), then \(((b-a) \times (0.0375 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student}) + (((\text{Poverty}) - b) \times (0.075 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) = (\text{Povadj})\)
- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is greater than \(c\), and \((\text{Poverty})\) is less than or equal to \(d\), then \(((b-a) \times (0.0375 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student}) + ((c-b) \times (0.075 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + (((\text{Poverty}) - c) \times (0.1125 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) = (\text{Povadj})\)
- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is greater than \(d\), and \((\text{Poverty})\) is less than or equal to \(e\), then \(((b-a) \times (0.0375 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student}) + ((c-b) \times (0.075 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + ((d-c) \times (0.1125 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + (((\text{Poverty}) - d) \times (0.15 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) = (\text{Povadj})\)
- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is greater than \(e\), and \((\text{Poverty})\) is less than or equal to \(f\), then \(((b-a) \times (0.0375 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student}) + ((c-b) \times (0.075 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + ((d-c) \times (0.1125 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + ((e-d) \times (0.15 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + (((\text{Poverty}) - e) \times (0.1875 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) = (\text{Povadj})\)
- If \((\text{Poverty})\) is greater than \(f\), then \(((b-a) \times (0.0375 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student}) + ((c-b) \times (0.075 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + ((d-c) \times (0.1125 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + ((e-d) \times (0.15 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) + ((f-e) \times (0.225 \times \text{Statewide Average GFOE per formula student})) = (\text{Povadj})\)

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) ALLOWANCE**

The lesser of:

- Maximum Limited English Proficiency Allowance designated by the school district

OR

- 25% of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student (2,200.01) multiplied by the number of limited English proficient students + (limited English proficient students – 3 year average of limited English proficient students) if greater than 0.

If the number of limited English proficient students is greater than or equal to 1 but less than 12, the number of limited English proficient students used in the calculation is 12.

**DATA SOURCES:**

- 2008 School Enrollment Template in the NSSRS.
DISTANCE EDUCATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLOWANCE

Is equal to eighty-five percent of the difference of the costs for (a) telecommunications services, (b) access to data transmission networks that transmit data to and from the school district, and (c) the transmission of data on such networks paid by the school districts in the local system minus the receipts from the Federal Universal Service Fund.

DATA SOURCES:

ELEMENTARY SITE ALLOWANCE

For school fiscal year 2009/10 and each school fiscal year thereafter, Elementary Site Allowance is calculated for any district that has at least one qualifying elementary site, which submits an application.

A qualifying elementary attendance site:
1. Is in a District with multiple elementary attendance sites
2. Does not have another elementary attendance site within 7 miles in the same school district OR
3. Is the only public elementary attendance site located in an incorporated city or village
4. Each District determines which grades are elementary grades
5. Building where majority of formula students are = primary elementary site
6. The primary elementary site shall not be a qualifying elementary attendance site
7. All grades designated as elementary grades shall be offered in each elementary attendance site
8. Elementary grades shall not include, grades 9, 10, 11 or 12

The Elementary Site Allowance = Sum of Elementary Site Allowances for each qualifying elementary attendance site in the district.

(Statewide Average General Fund Operating Expenditure per Formula Student X 500% (44,000.27)) X Fall membership per building divided by 8 (result is rounded up to a whole number)

If the whole number is greater than the number of elementary grades offered in the building, the whole number is equal to the grades offered in the building.

ELEMENTARY CLASS SIZE ALLOWANCE

For school fiscal years 2009/10 – 2012/13

Is equal to 20% of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student (1,760.01) multiplied by the total number of students in grades K through 3 who spend at least 50% of the school day in one or more classrooms with a minimum of 10 students and a maximum of 20 students.

DATA SOURCES:
✓ 2008 Consolidated Data Collection for Elementary Class Size based on fall membership.
SUMMER SCHOOL ALLOWANCE

\[(0.025 \times \text{Summer School Student Units}) \times (0.85 \times \text{Statewide Average General Fund Operating Expenditure per Formula Student}) \times (7,480.05)\]

Summer School Student Units = each student enrolled in summer school for at least 12 days, whether or not the student is in the membership of the school district.

The initial number of units for each student =

\[
\text{Sum of the ratios, each rounded down to the nearest whole number, number of days the student attended summer school for at least 3 hours and less than 6 hours per day} + \frac{\text{the number of days the student attended summer school classes for 6 or more hours per day}}{12}
\]

Additional Summer School Units for each summer school student attributed to a remedial math or reading programs, and for each summer school student attributed to a free lunch or free milk.

Summer school student units shall not be calculated for school districts which collect fees for summer school from students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME ALLOWANCE

\[(\text{Formula Students} \times \text{Instructional Time Factor}) \times (0.85 \times \text{Statewide Average General Fund Operating Expenditures per formula student}) \times (7,480.05)\]

Instructional Time Factor =

\[
\frac{\text{District Average Hours of Instruction per full-time Student}}{\text{Comparison Group Average Hours of Instruction per full-time student}} - 1
\]

Except that if the result is less than 0, the instructional time factor = 0

The comparison group average hours of instruction for each full-time student shall be an average of the averages for the school districts in the comparison group.

BASIC FUNDING

A comparison group is established for each District consisting of:

(i) The 5 larger districts that are closest in size to the District, measured by formula students, and
(ii) The 5 smaller districts that are closest in size to the District, measured by formula students

- If there are not 5 Districts that are larger than the District for which basic funding is being calculated or if there are not 5 Districts that are smaller than the District, the comparison group would consist of only as many districts as fit the criteria.
- If more than 1 District has exactly the same number of formula students as the largest or smallest District in the comparison group, all of the Districts with exactly the same number of formula students as the largest or smallest District in the comparison group shall be included in the comparison group.
- If 1 or more Districts have exactly the same number of formula students as the District for which basic funding is being calculated, all such Districts would be included in the comparison group in addition to the 5 larger and the 5 smaller Districts.
• The comparison group remains the same for the final calculation of State Aid.
• School Districts with less than 900 formula students:
  Basic Funding = Average of Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures for each District in the comparison group excluding both the District with the highest Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures and the District with the lowest Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures in the comparison group.
• School Districts with 900 or more formula students:
  Basic Funding = District formula students X Average Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures per formula student excluding both the District with the highest Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures per formula student and the District with the lowest Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures per formula student.

**TEACHER EDUCATION ADJUSTMENT**

The Teacher Education Adjustment equals 10% of the District’s Basic Funding X the District’s Teacher Education Index – 1. If the result is less than 0, the Teacher Education Adjustment is equal to 0.

- **Teacher Education Points:**
  - (i) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teacher with Master Degree or Education Specialist’s Degree = 1 point
  - (ii) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teacher with Doctorate Degree = 2 points
- **Teacher Education Index:**
  
  \[
  \text{District Teacher Education Points} = \frac{\text{Statewide Teacher Education Points}}{\text{District FTE Teachers}}
  \]

- The “Teacher” must have the following position codes on the 2008-09 Fall Personnel Report that equal 1 FTE in any combination:
  1150 Head Teacher, 1160 Teacher, 1161 SPED Teacher Teaching Core Academic Subjects/Grading, 1162 SPED Teacher Teaching Core Academic Subjects/Alternate Standards/Assessment, 1163 SPED Teacher Collaborating/Co-teaching, 1164 SPED Teacher – Facilitator, 1170 Teacher – Facilitator, 1180 Teacher – Collaborator.

**LOCAL CHOICE ADJUSTMENT**

Applies to Districts whose Basic Funding per formula student is greater than the Basic Funding per formula student for the District that has the closest to 390 formula students (8,541.53) that:

- (i) Has fewer than 390 formula students
- (ii) Is not Sparse or Very Sparse
- (iii) Did not receive federal funds in excess of 25% of its general fund budget of expenditures in the most recently available complete data year or in either of the two school fiscal years preceding the most recently available complete data year
Local Choice Adjustment =
\[(0.50 \times (\text{District Basic Funding per formula student} - \text{Basic Funding per formula student for the District that has the closest to 390 formula students (8,541.53)}) \times \text{District formula students})\]

- If more than 1 District has the closest to 390 formula students, the Basic Funding representing the District that has the closest to 390 formula students shall equal the average of the Basic Funding per formula student for each District.
- The closest to 390 formula students is measured using the absolute value of the difference of 390 formula students minus the District formula students with the difference rounded to the nearest whole number.

**SYSTEM AVERAGING ADJUSTMENT**

Applies to Districts whose Basic Funding per formula student is less than the averaging adjustment threshold (7,442.01) with a General Fund Levy of at least $1.00.

Averaging Adjustment = (District formula students \times \text{percentage (specified below)} \times \text{the difference between the averaging adjustment threshold} - \text{District Basic Funding per formula student})

- The percentage to be used in the calculation of the Averaging Adjustment is based on the General Fund Levy for the school fiscal year immediately preceding the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated as follows:
  - (i) If the Levy was at least $1.00 but less than $1.01 50%
  - (ii) If the Levy was at least $1.01 but less than $1.02 60%
  - (iii) If the Levy was at least $1.02 but less than $1.03 70%
  - (iv) If the Levy was at least $1.03 but less than $1.04 80%
  - (v) If the Levy was at least $1.04 90%

**STUDENT GROWTH ADJUSTMENT**

For school fiscal year 2009/10 and each school fiscal year thereafter.

District Basic Funding per formula student \times (\text{Approved Student Growth - (greater of 25 or 1% X Fall Membership)}) + 0.5 \times (\text{District Basic Funding per formula student X greater of 25 or 1% of the Fall Membership})

**TWO-YEAR NEW SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT**

**Beginning in 2009/10**

1st year
District Basic Funding per formula student \times (0.20 \times \text{Estimated Student Capacity})

2nd year
District Basic Funding per formula student \times (0.10 \times \text{Estimated Student Capacity})
POVERTY CORRECTION
Beginning in 2009/10 and each school fiscal year thereafter,

If poverty allowance expenditures do not equal 117.65% or more of the poverty allowance for the most recently available complete data year (2007/08), a correction will be calculated as follows:

\[
\text{Poverty Allowance Correction} = \text{Poverty Allowance for 2007/08} - 85\% \times \text{Poverty Allowance Expenditures}
\]

For fiscal year 2010/11,

If school district does not meet the required elements (as stated above) of the poverty plan for the most recently available complete data year (2008/09), the poverty allowance correction will be equal to 50% of the poverty allowance for such school fiscal year and the school district shall also be disqualified from receiving a poverty allowance for the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated.

Any correction calculated pursuant to this requirement shall be added to any poverty correction calculated pursuant to requirements stated for 2009/10 to arrive at the total poverty correction.

NON QUALIFYING POVERTY
Beginning in 2009/10 and each school fiscal year thereafter,

If the poverty allowance expenditures do not equal 50% or more of the allowance for school fiscal year, the school district shall be disqualified from receiving a poverty allowance for the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) CORRECTION
Beginning in 2009/10 and each school fiscal year thereafter,
If the LEP poverty allowance expenditures do not equal 117.65% or more of the LEP allowance for the most recently available complete data year (2007/08) a correction will be calculated as follows:

\[
\text{LEP Allowance Correction} = \text{LEP Allowance for 2007/08} - 85\% \times \text{LEP Allowance Expenditures}
\]

For fiscal year 2010/11,

If school district does not meet the required elements (as stated above) of the LEP plan for the most recently available complete data year (2008/09), the LEP allowance correction will be equal to 50% of the LEP allowance for such school fiscal year and the school district shall also be disqualified from receiving an LEP allowance for the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated.

Any correction calculated pursuant to this requirement shall be added to any LEP correction calculated pursuant to requirements stated for 2009/10 to arrive at the total LEP correction.
NON QUALIFYING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)
Beginning in 2009/10 and each school fiscal year thereafter,

If the LEP allowance expenditures do not equal 50% or more of the allowance for school fiscal year, the school district shall be disqualified from receiving an LEP allowance for the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated.

FOCUS SCHOOL ALLOWANCE
Applies to school districts in a learning community;

(Statewide Average General Fund Operating Expenditures per Formula Student X .10) X Number of Students in Focus School

NEW LEARNING COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ADJUSTMENT
Beginning in 2010/11

STUDENT GROWTH ADJUSTMENT CORRECTION
2011-12 and each school fiscal year thereafter,

Student Growth Adjustment Correction = (ADM - (formula students + approved student growth)) X district’s basic funding per formula student

The absolute value of negative correction shall not exceed the original adjustment.

RESOURCES
The sum of the Yield from Local Effort Rate + Net Option Funding + Allocated Income Tax Funds + Minimum Levy Adjustment + Retirement Aid + Other Receipts actually received by the District.

YIELD FROM LOCAL EFFORT RATE
Adjusted Valuation divided by 100 multiplied by the Local Effort Rate of $1.00. Each district's adjusted valuation for tax year 2008 is provided by the Property Tax Administrator (certified October 2008). Real property was adjusted to 98% of actual value and agricultural land was adjusted to 72% of actual value.

LOCAL EFFORT RATE
Set at $.05 below the maximum levy per §77-3442.
NET OPTION FUNDING

Net Enrollment Option students (students opting in minus students opting out) as of the day of the fall membership count, multiplied by the statewide average Basic Funding per formula student (7,442.01).

DATA SOURCES:
√ 2008 School Enrollment Template in the NSSRS.

Net Option Funding is equal to each Local System's:
Net Enrollment Option Students X Statewide Average Basic Funding per formula student

Except that a Local System's Net Option Funding cannot be less than zero.

ALLOCATED INCOME TAX FUNDS

A percent calculated annually of the net Nebraska income tax liability of each school district's resident individuals in tax year 2008 provided by the Department of Revenue (certified November 15, 2008). The percentage is calculated annually based on the 1992-93 appropriation to the School District Income Tax Fund, the Net Option Funding, and the statewide income tax liability of resident individuals.

MINIMUM LEVY ADJUSTMENT

The minimum levy adjustment is calculated and applied to any system that has a General Fund levy that is less than $0.95. The adjustment is calculated by subtracting the system levy from $0.95, and multiplying the result by the adjusted valuation divided by 100.

The minimum levy adjustment is added to the formula resources for the determination of Equalization Aid. If the minimum levy adjustment is greater than or equal to the allocated income tax funds, the system shall not receive allocated income tax funds.

DATA SOURCES:
√ 2008 General Fund Levy 2008 Consolidated Data Collection
√ 2008 Adjusted Valuation (certified October 2008).

RETIREMENT AID

Retirement Aid is calculated based on the School District's salary percentage multiplied by $15,000,000. The School District's salary percentage is the total salary reported by the School District on the 2007/08 AFR, divided by the total salary reported by all school districts in the State on the 2007/08 AFR.
OTHER RECEIPTS ACTUALLY RECEIVED BY THE DISTRICT

Each Local System's other actual receipts for the most recently available complete data year.

Other Actual Receipts are taken from the 2007/08 Annual Financial Report as follows:

Public Power District Sales Tax.................................................................................................................. 1-1-1120-000
Fines and License Fees............................................................................................................................... 1-1-1610-000, 1-1-1620-000 & 1-1-2110-000
Tuition Receipts......................................................................................................................................... 1-1-1210-000, 1-1-1220-000, 1-1-1230-000 & 1-1-1240-000
Transportation Receipts............................................................................................................................. 1-1-1310-000, 1-1-1320-000, 1-1-1330-000 & 1-1-1340-000
Interest...................................................................................................................................................... 1-1-1410-000
Other Miscellaneous Local/County Receipts.............................................................................................. 1-1-1115-000, 1-1-1910-000, 1-1-1990-000, 1-1-2130-000 & 1-1-2210-000
Special Education School Age.................................................................................................................... 1-1-3120-000 & 1-1-3125-000
Payments for Wards of the State/Wards of the Court............................................................................... 1-1-3160-000 & 1-1-3161-000
Receipts from the Temporary School Fund for State Apportionment and Property leased for a Public Purpose....................................................................................................................... 1-1-3200-000 & 1-1-3300-000
Motor Vehicle Receipts Received on or After January 1, 1998................................................................. 1-1-1125-000
Pro-Rate Motor Vehicle............................................................................................................................ 1-1-3180-000
Other State Receipts................................................................................................................................ 1-1-3990-000
Federal Impact Aid included to the extent allowed by Federal Law........................................................... (taken from federal source documents)
Other Non-Categorical Federal Receipts.................................................................................................... 1-1-4620-000, 1-1-4640-000 & 1-1-4690-000
Enrollment Option Transportation.............................................................................................................. 1-1-3145-000
Receipts from Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988-to the extent the district would have received payment pursuant to the Special Education Act........................................... (taken from NDE records)
Receipts for Accelerated or Differentiated Curriculum Programs................................................................. 1-1-3135-000

For the final calculation of State Aid, other actual receipts shall be as reported in the 2007/08 Annual Financial Report.

EQUALIZATION AID

Formula Needs – Formula Resources = Equalization Aid

AID STABILIZATION

A local system shall not receive State Aid which is less than an amount equal to the difference of the prior year's State Aid minus 5% of the current year's calculated Formula Needs.
Part II.
2009/10 CONCEPT SUMMARY

2009/10 Calculated State Aid to Nebraska's Public Schools:

Consists of one or a combination of the following items:

- Retirement Aid
- Net Option Funding
- Allocated Income Tax Funds
- Equalization Aid
- Aid Stabilization

Nebraska Equalization Aid Formula Concept:

Calculated Needs - Calculated Resources = State Equalization Aid

SYSTEM FORMULA NEED

Is the sum of:

(Basic Funding + Poverty Allowance + Limited English Proficiency Allowance + Elementary Class Size Allowance + Focus School & Program Allowance + Summer School Allowance + Special Receipts Allowance + Transportation Allowance + Elementary Site Allowance + Distance Education & Telecommunications Allowance + Instructional Time Allowance + Averaging Adjustment + Teacher Education Adjustment + New School Adjustment + Student Growth Adjustment + Learning Community Transportation Adjustment) - (Limited English Proficiency Allowance Correction + Poverty Allowance Correction + Local Choice Adjustment - Negative Student Growth Adjustment Correction)

✓ Formula Needs Stabilization:

District Formula Need that is less than 100% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need is increased to 100% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need

AND

District Formula Need that is greater than 112% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need is decreased to 112% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need, except that the Formula Need for Districts receiving a student growth adjustment is not decreased.
FORMULA STUDENTS
- Students educated by the district and students for which the district pays tuition.
- The Fall Membership count adjusted by the average ratio of ADM to Fall Membership from three prior years for the certification of State Aid; and ADM for the final calculation of State Aid.
- Students in Qualified Early Childhood Programs multiplied by the ratio of planned instructional hours of the program divided by 1,032 then multiplied by .6.

GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENDITURES
Each district's General Fund Operating Expenditures for the most recently available complete data year. Calculated from the 2007/08 Annual Financial Report (AFR) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total General Fund Expenditures</td>
<td>1-2-20400-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>1-2-7000-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers from Other Funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>1-2-3000-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemption of General Fund Debt Service Principal</td>
<td>1-2-5000-605 &amp; 610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Paid to Other Districts</td>
<td>1-2-2750-333 &amp; 1-2-2760-333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Categorical Programs</td>
<td>1-2-3500-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Incentive Plan</td>
<td>1-2-2200-281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development Assistance</td>
<td>1-2-2200-282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers to Bond Fund</td>
<td>1-2-8000-754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Received from Other Educational Entities (Distance Education)</td>
<td>1-1-1215-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer School Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>1-1-1250-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>1-1-1270-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and Donations</td>
<td>1-1-1920-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook Loan</td>
<td>1-1-3155-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid Administrative Activities (MAAPS)</td>
<td>1-1-4455-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Aid</td>
<td>1-1-4500-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson O'Malley</td>
<td>1-1-4600-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Categorical Federal</td>
<td>1-1-4690-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services (in excess of .0015 of the 2007/08 formula need)</td>
<td>1-2-2310-317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADJUSTED GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENDITURES
- 1.055 multiplied by general fund operating expenditures minus (transportation allowance + special receipts allowance + poverty allowance + limited English proficiency allowance + distance education and telecommunications allowance + elementary site allowance + elementary class size allowance + summer school allowance + focus school and program allowance + instructional time allowance).
SPECIAL RECEIPTS ALLOWANCE
- District specific special education receipts reported on the Annual Financial Report, and receipts from the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988, to the extent the district would have received payment pursuant to the Special Education Act (taken from NDE records).
- Each district's special education receipts for the most recently available complete data year.

TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCE
- The lesser of:
  - Actual specific transportation costs or a calculated amount based on the miles transported (excluding activities) plus in lieu of transportation for the most recently available complete data year.

POVERTY ALLOWANCE
- The lesser of:
  - District designated poverty expenditures for the 2009/10 school year or the sum of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per student multiplied by graduated percentages and then multiplied by student weightings based on free lunch/milk students or students under 19 residing in homes with adjusted gross income in 2007/08 equal to or less than the maximum household income that would allow a student from a family of four people to be a free lunch or free milk student during the 2008/09 school year.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) ALLOWANCE
- The lesser of:
  - District designated limited English proficiency expenditures for 2009/10 or 25% of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per student (2,200.01) multiplied by the number of limited English proficiency students.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLOWANCE
- Eighty-five percent of district specific distance education and telecommunication costs reported on the Annual Financial Report minus receipts from Federal Universal Service Fee Fund (E-Rate).

ELEMENTARY SITE ALLOWANCE
- Five hundred percent of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student (44,000.27) multiplied by the number of students per qualified building divided by eight (rounded up to a whole number). If the whole number is greater than the elementary grades offered in the building, the whole number is equal to the grades offered in the building.

ELEMENTARY CLASS SIZE ALLOWANCE
- Twenty percent of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student (1,750.01) multiplied by the number of students in grades K-3 who spend at least 50% of the school day in one or more classrooms with a minimum of 10 students and a maximum of 20 students (taken from NDE records).
**SUMMER SCHOOL ALLOWANCE**
- Eighty-five percent of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student ($7,480.05) multiplied by two and half percent of the summer school student units.

**INSTRUCTIONAL TIME ALLOWANCE**
- The product of formula students multiplied by the instructional time factor multiplied by eighty-five percent of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student ($7,480.05).

**BASIC FUNDING**
- School Districts with less than 900 formula students:
  
  Basic Funding = Average of adjusted general fund operating expenditures for each District in the comparison group excluding both the District with the highest adjusted general fund operating expenditures and the District with the lowest adjusted general fund operating expenditures in the comparison group.

- School Districts with 900 or more formula students:
  
  Basic Funding = District formula students multiplied by average of adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student excluding both the District with the highest adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student and the District with the lowest adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student in the comparison group.

**TEACHER EDUCATION ADJUSTMENT**
- Ten percent of the District’s Basic Funding multiplied by the District’s Teacher Education Index minus one. The Adjustment applies to full time equivalent teachers with a master’s degree or above. To qualify, Districts must have more full time equivalent teachers with a master’s degree or above than the statewide average number of full time equivalent teachers with a master’s degree or above.

**LOCAL CHOICE ADJUSTMENT**
- Fifty percent of District Basic Funding per formula student minus the basic funding per formula student of the District with the closest to 390 formula students multiplied by District formula students. The Adjustment applies to Districts with less than 390 formula students that are not classified as sparse or very sparse, whose Basic Funding per formula student is greater than the basic funding per formula student of the District with the closest to 390 formula students.

**SYSTEM AVERAGING ADJUSTMENT**
- District formula students multiplied by the difference between averaging adjustment threshold ($7,442.01) and the District Basic Funding per formula student, multiplied by graduated percentages based on General Fund Levies. Applies to Districts that have a General Fund Levy of $1.00 or above, whose Basic Funding per formula student is less than the averaging adjustment threshold.
STUDENT GROWTH ADJUSTMENT
- For each approved district is equal to the sum of the product of the district's basic funding per formula student multiplied by the difference of the approved student growth minus the greater of twenty-five students or one percent of fall membership, plus the product of fifty percent of the district's basic funding per formula student multiplied by the greater of twenty-five students or one percent of fall membership.

TWO-YEAR NEW SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT
- The first year new school adjustment for each approved district is equal to the district's basic funding per formula student multiplied by twenty percent of the approved estimated additional student capacity. The second year new school year adjustment for each approved district is equal to the school district's basic funding per formula student multiplied by ten percent of the approved estimated additional student capacity.

POVERTY CORRECTION
- Correction is equal to the poverty allowance minus eighty-five percent of the poverty allowance expenditures if expenditures do not equal at least 117.65% of the Poverty allowance for the most recently available complete data year.
  Also, if district did not meet requirements of the plan an amount equal to 50% of the poverty allowance for such school fiscal year will be added to the above correction. Any correction calculated pursuant to this requirement shall be added to any poverty correction calculated pursuant to requirements above to arrive at the total poverty correction.

NON QUALIFYING POVERTY
- If the poverty allowance expenditures do not equal 50% or more of the allowance for school fiscal year, the school district shall be disqualified from receiving a poverty allowance for the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) CORRECTION
- Correction is equal to the LEP allowance minus eighty-five percent of the LEP allowance expenditures if expenditures do not equal at least 117.65% of the LEP allowance for the most recently available complete data year.
  Also, if district did not meet requirements of the plan an amount equal to 50% of the LEP allowance for such school fiscal year will be added to the above correction.
  Any correction calculated pursuant to this requirement shall be added to any LEP correction calculated pursuant to requirements above to arrive at the total LEP correction.

NON QUALIFYING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)
- If the LEP allowance expenditures do not equal 50% or more of the allowance for school fiscal year, the school district shall be disqualified from receiving an LEP allowance for the school fiscal year for which aid is being calculated.

FOCUS SCHOOL & PROGRAM ALLOWANCE
- Ten percent of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student (880) multiplied by the number of students participating in a focus school or program. Applies only to school districts in a learning community.
NEW LEARNING COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ADJUSTMENT
□ The new learning community transportation adjustment is equal to the approved estimate of increased transportation costs.

STUDENT GROWTH ADJUSTMENT CORRECTION
□ Student Growth Adjustment Correction = (ADM – (formula students + approved student growth)) X district’s basic funding per formula student
□ The absolute value of negative correction shall not exceed the original adjustment.

CALCULATED RESOURCES

THE SUM OF:
□ Yield from Local Effort Rate (a calculated measure of Local Property Resources)
□ Net Option Funding
□ Allocated Income Tax Funds
□ Minimum Levy Adjustment
□ Retirement Aid
□ Other Receipts Actually Received by the District

YIELD FROM LOCAL EFFORT RATE (LOCAL PROPERTY RESOURCES)
□ Adjusted Property Valuation divided by 100 X Local Effort Rate
□ Local Effort Rate (LER) is $1.00.

NET OPTION FUNDING
□ The positive net number of Enrollment Option students (students opting in minus students opting out), as of the day of the Fall Membership count, is multiplied by the statewide average Basic Funding per formula student (7,442.01).
□ Net Option Funding cannot be less than zero.

ALLOCATED INCOME TAX FUNDS (MEASURE OF LOCAL INCOME)
□ A percentage determined annually, based on the 1992-93 appropriation to the School District Income Tax Fund, net option funding, and the statewide income tax liability of resident individuals.

MINIMUM LEVY ADJUSTMENT
□ The minimum levy adjustment is calculated and applied to any system that has a General Fund Common Levy that is less than $0.95. The adjustment is calculated by subtracting the system levy from $0.95, and multiplying the result by the adjusted valuation divided by 100.
RETIRED MENT AID

- Retirement Aid is based on the School District's salary percentage multiplied by $15,000,000. The School District's salary percentage is the total salary reported by the School District on the 2007/08 AFR, divided by the total salary reported by all school districts in the State on the 2007/08 AFR.

OTHER RECEIPTS ACTUALLY RECEIVED BY THE DISTRICT

(As Reported on the Annual Financial Report; see page 10 of this document for a complete listing):
- Examples:
  - Fines and License Fees
  - Interest
  - Special Education School Age
  - Pro-Rate Motor Vehicle

EQUALIZATION AID

- Needs - Resources = Equalization Aid

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS OF STATE AID

AID STABILIZATION

- A Local System cannot receive less than an amount equal to the prior year's State Aid less 5% of 2008/09 formula needs.

2009/10 STATE AID FUNDING

- On or before June 1, 2009 the Department must determine the amounts to be distributed to each Local System pursuant to the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act based on $1.00 Local Effort Rate.
Part III.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATED TO THE STATE AID CONCEPT AND THE 2009/10 STATE AID CALCULATION

NEEDS

How are Needs determined?

The Needs of a Local System are determined based on:

- The sum of the District’s Basic Funding + Poverty Allowance + Limited English Proficiency Allowance + Elementary Class Size Allowance + Focus School & Program Allowance + Summer School Allowance + Transportation Allowance + Special Receipts Allowance + Elementary Site Allowance + Distance Education & Telecommunications Allowance + Instructional Time Allowance + Averaging Adjustment + Teacher Education Adjustment + New School Adjustment + Student Growth Adjustment + Learning Community Transportation Adjustment – (Local Choice Adjustment + Limited English Proficiency Allowance Correction + Poverty Allowance Correction).

- Formula Needs Stabilization:
  - District Formula Need that is less than 100% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need is increased to 100% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need
  - District Formula Need that is greater than 112% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need is decreased to 112% of 2008/09 Year End Recalculated Formula Need, except that the Formula Need for Districts receiving a student growth adjustment is not decreased.

What are Formula Students?

- Formula Students include students educated by the district and those for which the district is paying tuition.

- Formula Students are grouped in the following manner: Qualified Early Childhood programs, Kindergarten (KDG = programs under 1,032 instructional hours), Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK = programs of 1,032 or more instructional hours) through Grade 6, Grades 7-8, and 9-12.
What source data was used to determine the Formula Students for the 2009/10 State Aid calculation?

- K-12 Fall Membership from the 2008 Student Snapshot Template in the NSSRS adjusted by an ADM to Fall Membership ratio using the average of the ratios from 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08.

+ 4 year-olds in Qualified Early Childhood Education Fall Membership multiplied by the ratio of planned instructional hours of the program divided by 1,032 then multiplied by .6.

+ K-12 Contracted Out Students from the 2008 School Enrollment Template in the NSSRS.

- Kindergarten students in programs under 1,032 instructional hours multiplied by .5.

How is the Transportation Allowance determined?

- The transportation allowance is the lesser of:
  - The actual transportation expenditures from the most recently available complete data year.
  - Regular route miles traveled multiplied by 400% of the mileage rate established by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) as of January 1 of the most recently available complete data year (.505) plus in lieu of transportation.

How is the Special Receipts Allowance determined?

- Special Receipts are from the most recently available complete data year.
  - Special Receipts Include:
  - State Receipts for School-Age Special Education
  - State Receipts for School-Age Special Education Transportation
  - Payments for Wards of the State/Wards of the Court
  - Receipts for Accelerated or Differentiated Curriculum Programs
  - Special Education Tuition Received from other Districts
  - Special Education Tuition Received from Individuals
  - Special Education Transportation Receipts from other Districts
  - Special Education Transportation Receipts from Individuals
  - Receipts from Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 to the extent the district would have received payment pursuant to the Special Education Act.

How is the Distance Education and Telecommunications Allowance determined?

- Distance Education and Telecommunications is equal to 85% the difference of:
  - Actual expenditures for distance education and telecommunications from the most recently available complete data year minus receipts from the Universal Service Fee Fund (E-Rate) from the most recently available complete data year.
How is the Poverty Allowance determined?

- The Poverty Allowance is the lesser of:
  - The amount the District designates they will spend on poverty for the 2009/10 school year.
  - The sum of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per student multiplied by graduated percentages then multiplied by student weightings based on free lunch/milk students or students under 19 residing in homes with adjusted gross income in 2007/08 equal to or less than the maximum household income that would allow a student from a family of four people to be a free lunch or free milk student during the 2008/09 school year.

How is the Limited English Proficiency Allowance determined?

- The Limited English Proficiency Allowance is the lesser of:
  - The amount the District designates they will spend on students with limited English proficiency for the 2009/10 school year.
  - 25% of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per student multiplied by the number of limited English proficiency students.

How is the Elementary Class Size Allowance determined?

- The statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student multiplied by 20% is then multiplied by the number of free and reduced price lunch students in grades kindergarten through eight who spend 50% of the school day in one or more classrooms with a minimum of 10 students and a maximum of 20 students.

How is the Elementary Site Allowance determined?

- The statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student multiplied by 500% is then multiplied by the number formula students in buildings that qualify for the Allowance divided by 8. An Elementary Site Allowance is provided if a District:
  - Is in a District with multiple elementary attendance sites
  - Does not have another elementary attendance site within 7 miles in the same school district OR
  - Is the only public elementary attendance site located in an incorporated city or village
  - Each District determines which grades are elementary grades
  - Building where majority of formula students are = primary elementary site
  - The primary elementary site shall not be a qualifying elementary attendance site
  - All grades designated as elementary grades shall be offered in each elementary attendance site
  - Elementary grades shall not include, grades 9, 10, 11 or 12

How is the Summer School Allowance determined?

- 85% of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student is multiplied by 2.5% of summer school student units. Summer school student units equal to the sum of the ratios of:
  1) Number of days the student attended summer school for at least 3 hours and less than 6 hours per day divided by 12
  2) Two times the number of days the student attended summer school for 6 or more hours per day divided by 12
How Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures determined?
- General Fund Operating Expenditures multiplied by the cost growth factor (1.06) minus Allowances (Transportation Allowance + Special Receipts Allowance + Poverty Allowance + Limited English Proficiency Allowance + Distance Education & Telecommunications Allowance + Elementary Site Allowance + Elementary Class Size Allowance + Summer School Allowance + Instructional Time Allowance + Focus School & Program Allowance)

How is Basic Funding determined?
- A comparison group is established for each District consisting of the 5 larger districts that are closest in size to the District, measured by formula students and the 5 smaller districts that are closest in size to the District, measured by formula students.
  - For School Districts with less than 900 formula students, Basic Funding is the average of adjusted general fund operating expenditures for each District in the comparison group, excluding both the District with the highest adjusted general fund operating expenditures and the District with the lowest adjusted general fund operating expenditures in the comparison group.
  - For School Districts with 900 or more formula students, Basic Funding is the average of adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student for each District in the comparison group, excluding both the District with the highest adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student and the District with the lowest adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student in the comparison group, multiplied by the District's formula students.

How is the Local Choice Adjustment determined?
- The Adjustment applies to Districts whose Basic Funding per formula student is greater than the Basic Funding per formula student for the District with the closest to 390 formula students that:
  - Has fewer than 390 formula students
  - Is not sparse or very sparse
  - Did not receive federal funds in excess of 25% of its general fund budget of expenditures

How is the Averaging Adjustment determined?
- The Adjustment applies to Districts whose Basic Funding per formula student is less than the averaging adjustment threshold with a General Fund Levy of at least $1.00. The Adjustment is District formula students multiplied by the difference between the statewide average Basic Funding per formula student and the District Basic Funding per formula student, multiplied by graduated percentages based on the General Fund Levy.

How is the Teacher Education Adjustment determined?
- The Adjustment applies to Districts who have more full-time equivalent teachers with a master's degree or above than the statewide average number of full-time equivalent teachers with a master's degree or above. The "Teacher" must have the following position codes on the 2008/09 Fall Personnel Report: 1150 Head Teacher, 1160 Teacher, 1161 SPED Teacher Teaching Core Academic Subjects/Grading, 1162 SPED Teacher Teaching Core Academic Subjects/Alternate Standards/Assessment, 1163 SPED Teacher Collaborating/Co-Teaching, 1164 SPED Teacher - Facilitator, 1170 Teacher - Facilitator, 1180 Teacher - Collaborator.
RESOURCES

How are Resources determined?

- Resources = Yield from Local Effort Rate + Net Option Funding + Allocated Income Tax Funds + Other Actual Receipts + Minimum Levy Adjustment + Retirement Aid.

How is the Yield from Local Effort Rate determined?

- Yield from Local Effort Rate = Adjusted Valuation divided by 100 x Local Effort Rate of $1.00.

- The Local Effort Rate is determined by statute as part of the State Aid calculation process.

- The statewide Needs for all Local Systems as determined above can be funded from six sources:
  1) Net Option Funding
  2) Allocated Income Tax Funds
  3) Other Actual Receipts
  4) Yield from Local Effort Rate
  5) Equalization Aid (provided through the calculation process)
  6) Retirement Aid

What source data was used to determine the Adjusted Valuation for the 2009/10 State Aid Calculation?

- For 2009/10 State Aid, the adjusted valuation reflects 2008 levels. The Property Tax Administrator adjusts the values to assure that for State Aid purposes:
  - real property other than agricultural land is at 96% of market value;
  - agricultural land is at 72% of market value as provided by statute; and
  - personal property other than motor vehicles is at net book value as defined by statute.

- The State Aid appropriation is the “balancing factor” in funding the statewide Needs. All of the Needs that are not funded by items 1 through 4 must be funded by the State Aid appropriation.

- As statewide Needs increase, unless the amount provided from items 1 through 4 increase, the State Aid appropriation must increase. Once the Adjusted Valuation is provided by the Property Tax Administrator, the Yield from Local Effort Rate is a known amount. The Local Effort Rate applied against the Adjusted Valuation is the component which cannot vary to produce a Yield from Local Effort Rate amount.
How is the Net Option Funding determined?

- For each district, the students opting out are subtracted from the students opting in at each grade level (KDG, FDK-6, 7-8, and 9-12). The positive net number of students are then multiplied by the statewide average Basic Funding per formula student.
  - It is possible for the result at a given grade range to be negative since there may be more students opting out than opting in. However, the total for the district cannot be less than zero.

- Since option students are included in the ADM counts of students used to determine a Local System's Needs, the inclusion of the amount as a Resource prevents a Local System which generates Equalization Aid from receiving both Equalization Aid and Net Option Funding based on the impact the students have on Needs.

- The funding for Net Option reduces the total amount available for distribution as Allocated Income Tax Funds (discussed below).

What source data was used to determine Net Option Funding?

- The 2008/09 net enrollment option students, as reported to the Department of Education on the 2008 School Enrollment Template in the NSSRS, was used to determine the net number of students.

How are the Allocated Income Tax Funds determined?

- The Allocated Income Tax Funds provide a mechanism through which the income tax base of the local system is included in the Resources of the Local System. Therefore, the distribution of Equalization Aid responds to the income tax base as well as the potential property tax base of the Local System.

- A varying percentage of the Nebraska income tax liability of residents of the Local System is provided to the Local System as Allocated Income Tax Funds. The income tax liability information is provided by the Department of Revenue based on data submitted on Nebraska income tax forms. (The Nebraska Income Tax Form requests each filer to indicate the high school district in which they reside.) The percentage is based on the 1992-93 appropriation to the School District Income Tax Fund, net option funding, and the statewide income tax liability of resident individuals.


What are Other Actual Receipts?

- Other Actual Receipts are calculated using information reported on the Annual Financial Report for the most recently available complete data year.

How are Other Actual Receipts determined?

- Other Actual Receipts are taken primarily from the Annual Financial Report submitted by the each district. Receipt information related to the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 and Impact Aid, if applicable, are taken from other source documents on file with the Department of Education. Other Actual Receipts include various local, state, and noncategorical federal receipts.
What is the Minimum Levy Adjustment?
- Any Local System that has a general fund common levy that is less than 10 cents below the maximum levy:
- The adjustment is calculated by subtracting the system levy from $0.95, and multiplying the result by the adjusted valuation divided by 100.
- The Minimum Levy Adjustment is added to the formula resources for the determination of equalization aid. For non-equalized Local Systems, if the Minimum Levy Adjustment is greater than or equal to the allocated income tax funds, the System does not receive allocated income tax funds.

What is Retirement Aid?
- Retirement Aid for school fiscal years 2009/10 through 2013/14 is the result of multiplying the School District’s salary percentage by $15,000,000.
- Retirement Aid is added to the formula resources for the determination of equalization aid.

What is Equalization Aid?
- The amount that the total formula needs exceed total formula resources:
- A Local System will not receive State Aid that is less than the amount of Aid certified in the preceding school fiscal year, less 5% of the current year formula need.

CORRECTIONS FOR THE PRIOR YEAR’S STATE AID CALCULATION

In addition to the items that make up a Local System’s calculated State Aid for a given year, each year’s actual State Aid payments may include adjustments to the prior year’s State Aid calculations in accordance with statutory provisions. The corrections to the 2009/10 payments primarily reflect the recalculation of 2008/09 State Aid based on the incorporation of 2007/08 ADM data in place of 2007/08 Fall Membership and allowing the local effort rate to “float” during the recalculation process.

NDE:SFOS:mi:June 16, 2009
Appendix K

Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal
Imagine a system of 21st century education that fuses the expertise of college and secondary educators and pushes the boundaries of P-16 opportunities—a system that supports students through high school and beyond, tapping into the rich human capital of the state and helping Nebraska become more competitive on a national and global scale. All students and school districts experience parity in curricular offerings, quality, and rigor. Master teachers focus on mastery of core concepts, guiding student learning, providing feedback and student engagement. Students reach their full potential with self-directed learning. This is the vision of the Nebraska Virtual School.

Building on the solid curricular foundation of Nebraska’s only state- and regionally accredited distance high school, the Nebraska Virtual School (NVS) exploits the full potential of online education and the groundwork already laid in distance education excellence throughout the state of Nebraska to develop a statewide, coordinated approach. Employing a multitude of technologies to teach, assess, and interact with students, it allows for a personalized learning program and high level of engagement.

The Nebraska Virtual School helps transition students beyond high school with opportunities for more autonomous learning. NVS supports students through synchronous and asynchronous interactions with their teachers and other students, access to tutoring services, and connections to local mentors/learning coaches.

NVS STEM Academy
The Nebraska Virtual School partners with local school districts to provide the most effective learning environment for their students by strengthening the depth and breadth of the schools’ science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum offerings at the 7th through 12th grade level, thereby providing Nebraska schools with a means of meeting the state’s increased science and mathematics graduation requirements. NVS helps schools become learning communities by placing master teachers, rigorous STEM curriculum, standard-based digital
resources, a support structure of tutors and learning coaches, connections to a global student body, and a world of knowledge just a mouse click away.

The Nebraska Virtual School (NVS) STEM Academy addresses challenges faced by Nebraska's schools with the highest needs and lowest performance by offering otherwise unavailable highly effective college preparatory STEM tracks including core, advanced placement, and college credit courses. NVS also provides a new STEM-focused tool for closing the achievement gap among all groups within urban and suburban schools. Open to ALL 7th through 12th grade Nebraska students, the Nebraska Virtual School is focused particularly on addressing the unique needs of low achieving students, historically underperforming subgroups, and those underrepresented in the STEM areas.

Through the NVS STEM Academy, Nebraska students have access to a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum that is aligned with national and Nebraska content standards and focused on the development of 21st Century knowledge and skills. Students have the opportunity to work with highly effective teachers and tutors, utilize an extensive library of online resources, participate in supplemental enrichment activities involving research and exploration, and engage in opportunities for information exchange with a national and international student body.

The increased curricular opportunities of the NVS result in students who are more fully prepared for college admission, advanced post-secondary study, and careers. By ensuring student access to a college-preparatory sequence and advanced placement courses in the STEM areas, students meet standard college admissions requirements in mathematics and science. In addition, NVS students benefit from opportunities to earn college credit while in high school, allowing them to begin college with a number of credits already completed. This opportunity enables students not only to accelerate their college degree plan, but also to enter college as a full-time student with the benefit of early experience and pre-adjustment to college-level work.

The NVS allows for a level of STEM industry and research connections not currently available to many students in Nebraska. Through University and industry partnerships, mentors, and the
infusion of career connections into the curriculum, students have the opportunity to experience and consider possible career paths in STEM areas, as well as the educational foundation it takes to achieve such goals.

**Goals**

The two major goals of the Nebraska Virtual School: STEM Academy are to:

- Improve achievement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by 7th to 12th grade students from Nebraska’s lowest performing and highest need schools.
- Close the gap in access to high-quality, rigorous STEM education among Nebraska schools and among subgroups within a school.

**Objectives**

1. Increase access to high-quality, rigorous STEM education for all Nebraska 7th through 12th grade students by
   - Offering a complete high-quality, online college preparatory STEM track including core and foundation STEM courses; advanced placement courses in mathematics, science, technology and engineering focused courses and learning modules.
   - Providing access to online STEM-related college credit courses for which credit is accepted by all Nebraska community colleges, state colleges, and universities.
   - Insuring that all NVS teachers are highly qualified and effective master teachers—experts in their content areas, skilled at distance teaching, excellent at online classroom teaching, outstanding at engaging and motivating students in STEM course work, highly capable of designing instruction that meets the specific demands of high need students, and effective at using data to inform their teaching.
   - Establishing a fully categorized STEM digital resource library, accessible to students and tutors as well as all NVS and state school teachers.

2. Provide access to a caring and supportive learning community through
   - Identifying local learning coaches/mentors for schools that have students involved in the NVS STEM Academy.
   - Providing a tutoring center for all students enrolled in the NVS STEM Academy.
✓ Facilitating access to the equipment and software as well as providing the technology support necessary for students taking courses through the NVS STEM Academy.
✓ Connecting the STEM Academy academic advisor to counselors at all NVS STEM Academy schools and to college admission and recruitment personnel.

3. Increase STEM capability, and therefore college and career readiness, of Nebraska students by

✓ Matching NVS STEM Academy student career aspirations to appropriate upper-level STEM course work through the development of individualized learning plans.
✓ Linking NVS STEM Academy students to enrichment activities that expose them to new experiences, provide choices for personal development, and reinforce career and college connections.
✓ Establishing a specialized series of college preparatory services to ensure NVS STEM Academy students will be prepared for entry to any Nebraska college of their choice.
✓ Connecting NVS STEM Academy students and teachers with business and industry, non-profit and community associations, or government agencies to provide opportunities to learn about careers in a variety of fields through applied learning opportunities and to assist teachers with the integration of STEM instruction across grades and disciplines.

4. Increase content knowledge, pedagogy and instructional skills, technology integration capabilities, data and standards alignment and implementation abilities, as well as engagement and motivational skills of STEM teachers by

✓ Establishing a Professional Learning Community consisting of all NVS teachers and teachers and administrators in NVS STEM Academy schools.
✓ Providing professional development workshops, access to graduate level courses, and special events for teachers in NVS STEM Academy schools.
✓ Creating opportunities for pre-service teachers and STEM majors to serve as tutors and to complete student teaching assignments, apprenticeships, and internships under the guidance of NVS STEM Academy master teachers.
Background

All but two of the public high school districts in Nebraska are rural and/or small by definition, by geographical location, and/or size of the school population. For example, Valentine Rural High School, the only high school in Cherry County, is as large in land area as Connecticut. The Wauneta-Palisade District is so large that it spans two time zones. Although the geographic area of these districts is large, the number of students in these schools is less than 400. Overall, immense distances between schools inhibit further consolidations.

Of the public and non-public school (7-12) programs in Nebraska, 156 of them have fewer than 400 students; 67.5% of the high schools have an enrollment of less than 200 students. These small districts face decreasing populations and tax bases, resulting in limited resources and significant challenges drawing qualified teachers to small, isolated towns: However, the schools are important not only to their students’ success but also to their communities’ (and the state’s) economic development.
The cultural diversity of the state student population has changed significantly in the past 20 years with a growing number of minority students attending schools in the rural areas as well as the urban centers. From 1987-1988 to 2007-2008, the percentage of minority students in the school population has increased from 10% to 25%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underresourced Populations (7-12)</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian, Pacific Islanders</th>
<th>Native Americans, Alaskan Natives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130,914</td>
<td>10,479</td>
<td>17,677</td>
<td>2,757</td>
<td>2,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The economic impacts experienced by many districts have significantly limited the resources available to schools. The farm economy in Nebraska has experienced a decline over the last 10 years. The job growth rate in Nebraska counties between 1990 and 2008 is among the lowest within the Great Plains region. Much of the sluggish job market rates can be attributed to limited growth in wage and salary jobs, also among the lowest in the region. Rural farm counties experienced one-fifth the total job growth rate of metropolitan counties. Those families who do choose to stay in rural and small districts are seeing a radical decline in income.

In addition, the populations of low-income and economically distressed families have continued to increase within Nebraska in both rural and urban areas. Figures from recognized standard indicators of individuals in need of financial assistance show 76% of the schools offering lunch programs in Nebraska have 25% or more of the student population participating in the free or reduced lunch subsidized program. In addition, 33.93% of Nebraska schools have 40% or more of the student population participating in the free or reduced lunch subsidized program. Urban, suburban, and rural schools in both large and small districts are affected by the increase in poverty rates within Nebraska.
### Nebraska Schools Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th># of Schools</th>
<th># of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Performing</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54,500+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Need</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>15,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Poverty</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13,600+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
<td><strong>83,600+</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Schools with 50% or more students performing below proficiency on state mathematics assessments
2. Schools of fewer than 400 students, schools that are geographically isolated with small tax bases, or schools that have 30% or greater of high need students
3. Schools with 50% or more receiving free or reduced lunch

### ELI Nebraska Schools Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range up to 33.7%</th>
<th># of Schools</th>
<th># of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4% to 9%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% to 19%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,600+</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic opportunities that are necessary for college and career readiness are not fully being met due to the constraints on local school budgets, low population, geographic location, and/or small numbers of faculty. One teacher may serve as an entire academic department in a seventh-grade through twelfth-grade attendance center. Schools offer upper level courses every other year on a rotating basis—if at all. Because only one section of a course can be offered, honors or differentiated courses are often not available at either the middle or the high school levels.

Research has shown that it is in the STEM fields where it has historically been most difficult to find highly qualified educators. According to the Teacher Shortage Area data published by the U.S. Department of Education for the 2009-2010 reporting period, Nebraska is experiencing teacher
shortages in both mathematics and sciences. This teacher shortage has made the hiring of highly qualified STEM teachers even more challenging for Nebraska’s geographically isolated and highest need schools as well as for difficult-to-staff urban schools. Such staffing problems place all students in low performing and highest need schools at a distinct disadvantage.

Even larger urban districts experience the economic impact of tight budgets, difficult-to-staff schools in high crime or high poverty areas, and school districts with particular recruitment challenges for mathematics, science, and technology teachers.

In its report, *The Opportunity Equation: Transforming Mathematics and Science Education for Citizenship and the Global Economy*, the Commission on Mathematics and Science Education calls for the United States to “mobilize for excellence in mathematics and science education so that all students—not just a select few, or those fortunate enough to attend certain schools—achieve much higher levels of math and science learning.” The report goes on to say that all students should be “educated to be STEM-capable no matter where they live, what educational path they pursue, or in which field they choose to work.” The Nebraska Virtual School is a new STEM-focused tool that will level the playing field for Nebraska students—whether they live in a geographically isolated region or in a larger urban area, whether they are students in highest need or low performing school districts, or whether they are low achieving or among the most successful.

**STEM Curriculum and Instruction**

A review of the literature on research into student achievement in science and mathematics outlines a number of factors in both curriculum and instruction that can have a positive impact, particularly on the achievement of low achieving or high-need students and students in historically underachieving groups:

- A culture of high expectations.
- Effort focused on teaching and learning.
- Positive student culture and family engagement.
- Engaging activities where there are opportunities to practice skills and correct errors.
- Opportunities to make contributions to a group.
- Personalized and flexible instruction.
- Connections to career aspirations with relevance of work in upper level mathematics
and science.

- The use of multiple approaches to problem solving.
- Tying lessons to real world applications.

NVS provides students with three keys to successful learning: interaction with content, interaction with teachers, and interaction with other students.

Interactive learning opportunities provide the possibility of a dialog between the learner and the course content. Research shows that creating a learning environment that consists of scaffolded learning activities, active exploration, and self assessment enhances a student's ability to learn. Video, audio, and interactive learning activities engage students and help them expand their knowledge of familiar concepts and experiences to more abstract concepts.

Consistent and frequent student to instructor interaction is one of the most important factors in motivating students. Frequent feedback and encouragement from master teachers using best practices provide a learning environment in which students can flourish.

Creating a friendly, social environment is also essential for promoting learning. As students become part of a community, they find that other students motivate them and push them to work harder. Discussions, blogs, and other interactive tools give students time to reflect on their thoughts before contributing their ideas. Students do not have to struggle for a turn to speak, and are thus more likely to participate.

Curriculum
NVS's curriculum expands educational opportunities for students while increasing their 21st Century Skills through technology, global awareness, and problem solving. Developed according to national and Nebraska state academic standards, the college-preparatory curriculum of the Nebraska Virtual School contains rigorous content, engaging multimedia, teaching strategies based on best practices, interactive elements, opportunities for review, self-evaluation activities, and meaningful standards-based assessments.
Course design is based on national course development and instructional design standards for online curriculum: iNACOL’s and NEA’s online course development standards; Achieve’s America Diploma Project in mathematics benchmarks; PISA, TIMSS, and NAEP benchmarks; ACT’s College Readiness Standards and its Quality Core end-of-course models; and College Board’s pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement course criteria. Curriculum audits are conducted prior to course release, ensuring course content reflects course expectations.

NVS’s curriculum scope and sequence is designed to engage disconnected, low achieving students in academically rigorous STEM curriculum placing them on pathways to graduation (meeting Nebraska’s increased mathematics and science graduation requirements), post-secondary education, and careers. It also provides opportunities for the most successful students to accelerate beyond what is traditionally available in Nebraska’s geographically isolated and highest need schools.

Based on national and state academic standards, the NVS math and science college-preparatory curriculum begins with foundational courses and builds strategically through advanced placement and college level courses, using sound scaffolding principles and best practices to lead to student success. Skill checks, guided practice sections, and reviews help ensure that students gain proficiency in the core concepts before moving on to more complex topics. Science courses include virtual, as well as hands-on, “kitchen,” and wet laboratory components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core College Preparatory Mathematics and Science Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math Curriculum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-calculus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the core college preparatory mathematics and science courses listed above, other high school math and science electives, such as Business Mathematics, Science of Health, and Science of Nutrition are available through NVS. (For additional science elective courses, see
sections below on course development, advanced placement, and college credit courses.)

NVS’s current technology curriculum includes a series of courses in Microsoft Office Suite and Creative Suite Applications (web design, graphics creation, video and audio editing, multimedia creation, etc.), Introduction to Technology, Internet Gaming, and Introduction to Computer Science. In addition, college credit courses are available in this subject area. (See College Credit course section below.)

All NVS STEM Academy courses would be included in a statewide distance education course clearinghouse system. Funds for support of this system are included as part of the sub-grants to participating schools.

**Course Development**

The Nebraska Virtual School will expand its curriculum by developing new NVS online courses and by adopting online courses that are currently offered by Nebraska schools. Specifically, new NVS course development (or adoption) could include such courses as Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, Principles of Biomedical Sciences, or Engineering: The Digital Future (which is focused on engineering and design concepts in wireless and telecommunications), the Internet, electronic music, and other multimedia technologies.

In addition, new science and technology courses—such as Principles of Biomedical Sciences, Human Body Systems, Scientific Research, the Science of Technology, or Biotechnology—would be considered for development or adoption.

Nebraska has been recognized by Wainhouse research as one of the leaders in its use of two-way interactive videoconferencing in education. Several Nebraska schools are already innovators in the use of this technology, sharing classes with other districts through mobile videoconferencing technologies. Nebraska schools have also pioneered the development of hybrid/blended courses integrating online instruction with two-way interactive videoconferencing. Some Nebraska schools are also offering fully online courses to their students. NVS will build on these areas of excellence by adopting online courses currently offered by Nebraska schools. An application process would include review by a panel of educators evaluating the courses both for rigorous academic content
based on national and state standards and benchmarks and on standards based instructional course design and development criteria. This adoption process not only expands the NVS curriculum but also provides schools and teachers with support for their continued course development efforts and professional training activities.

Additional learning objects, particularly those focused on engineering concepts, will be developed for use in all NVS STEM courses in partnership with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET), the ninth-oldest public station in the nation. NET has a long history of producing high-quality educational materials in television, radio, and interactive media for both a Nebraska and national audience. NET is currently developing five learning objects at the high school level, funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to explore the interconnections between global earth systems influenced by Antarctica. Titled *Antarctica's Climate Secrets*, the project supplements ANDRILL, an NSF-funded Antarctic drilling initiative at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

*Advanced Placement*

Within the State of Nebraska, access to advanced placement instruction is limited. Currently, advanced placement courses are available in twelve communities. Only in the two larger metropolitan districts is advanced placement available in many subject matter areas or on a consistent basis. In addition, advanced placement courses can be scheduled through the Nebraska-based synchronous two-way interactive videoconferencing system.

Smaller districts and rural areas currently have limited access to and flexibility in scheduling for advanced placement STEM courses. According to College Board, only 0.29% of Nebraska students took Advanced Placement STEM course examinations in 2009. This number has not changed significantly over the past five years. (See the chart at the top of the next page.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE NAME</th>
<th>NATIONAL</th>
<th>NEBRASKA</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>155,553</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculus AB</td>
<td>222,534</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculus BC</td>
<td>70,088</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>100,510</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science A</td>
<td>16,061</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science AB</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics B</td>
<td>59,797</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics C: Elec. &amp; Magnet.</td>
<td>11,907</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics C: Mechanics</td>
<td>28,051</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>114,498</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>783,899</td>
<td>2,290</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NVS STEM Academy will increase the number of students with access to STEM Advanced Placement courses. NVS Advanced Placement courses, which have been approved by the College Board, meet higher-education expectations of college-level courses and prepare students to demonstrate success on the Advanced Placement examinations. Low-income NVS students who complete an NVS advanced placement course can apply to have their Advanced Placement exam fees paid through the state Advanced Placement Test Fee grant program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AP Math Curriculum</th>
<th>AP Science Curriculum*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP Statistics and Probability</td>
<td>AP Environmental Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Calculus AB</td>
<td>AP Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AP Technology Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>AP Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Computer Science A</td>
<td>AP Physics B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calculus BC and Physics C will be developed as warranted.
According to Gonzalez et al (2000), AP courses expose college-bound students to “the amounts of homework, study skills, and habits of mind essential for success in college courses.” Their research found that students who take AP Exams and score a 3 or higher typically experience greater academic success and college graduation rates than non-AP students do. Data reported by Gonzalez et al showed that students enrolled in AP Calculus courses earned the highest average scores on the TIMSS Advanced Mathematics tests, significantly outperforming students in all other countries, including U.S. students who did not take AP Calculus. Their study also found that students enrolled in AP Physics performed well, scoring significantly above the international average on the TIMSS Physics test; whereas U.S. students not taking AP scored significantly below the international average.

Morgan and Klaric (2007) found that female, African-American, and Hispanic students who had taken AP courses in mathematics, science, or computer science selected a STEM discipline as a major in significantly higher percentages that those students who did not take AP courses. Hargrove, Godin, and Dodd (2008) found that students who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam were more likely than other students to earn a bachelor’s degree within 4 years. This was true even when measured against students who had completed dual enrollment courses. Nevertheless, students who either completed concurrent (dual) enrollment or took the AP exam were more likely to graduate from college than students who had taken neither.

**Foundation Courses**

Foundation courses in mathematics and science are targeted at both high school students and transitioning middle school students who are not prepared for grade-level academic challenges. These courses are designed to assist students in mastering required content before they move into the core college preparatory sequences. Carefully paced instruction, complemented by interactive and engaging practice focused on improving problem-solving skills, is designed specifically to quickly move students towards academically challenging grade-level coursework.
**College Credit Courses**

Research has shown that access to concurrent (dual) enrollment opportunities complements and enhances a rigorous high school STEM curriculum. Adelman (2006) reports that concurrent (dual) enrollment enhanced the benefits of a rigorous high school curriculum. Swanson’s (2008) findings indicate that concurrent (dual) enrollment students gained “academic momentum” by entering college already having earned credits—that is, students were more likely to persist towards acquiring a degree. Swanson found that concurrent (dual) enrollment “students were more likely to enter college within seven months of high school graduation, to persist through their second year of college, and to have better attitudes toward attending college.”

In fulfillment of its goals, NVS STEM Academy, therefore, offers students the opportunity to earn college credit from state and community colleges and universities in Nebraska with courses such as College Algebra and Trigonometry, Multimedia Approach to Computing, Introduction to Computer Science (based on the 3-D graphical Alice programming environment), Astronomy, Earth’s Natural Resources, Oceanography, Plant Science, Insect Biology, Biotechnology, Food Science, etc.

The credit must be accepted at all Nebraska colleges and universities for a college course to be listed as an NVS recommended course—only recommended courses would qualify for support through the NVS scholarship pool established as part of the funds sub-granted to STEM Academy participating schools. (See college preparatory services in the next section for information about the development of learning plans for each NVS student.)

**Access to other courses and subject areas**

With approval from their local schools and through an application process, NVS students would be eligible to apply for scholarships (funds which would be included as part of the funds sub-granted to STEM Academy participating schools) to cover the cost of enrolling in non-STEM subject matter courses if, for whatever reason, they cannot enroll in those courses through their local school. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Independent Study High School offers a full curriculum of core and elective online courses in the following subject areas: World Language, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, Career and Technical Education, English and
Language Arts, and Health and Physical Fitness.

**Instructional Resources**

With excellent content at their disposal, teachers guide students, expanding and clarifying course materials with extra multimedia and interactive games, maps, simulations, videos, etc., from the online resources available to them. In addition, teachers help students visualize challenging concepts using technology such as whiteboards or GeoGebra. Being able to select the most appropriate resource allows teachers to meet the diverse and unique needs of low-achieving students as well as to personalize instruction for ELL, minority, remote, or other student groups.

Research has shown that significant gains in improving teacher quality and student performance have been achieved with careful integration of learning technologies. When aligned with state standards and accompanied by best practices, technologies delivering high-quality digital media (video segments, interactive activities, simulations, audio segments, images, and readings) are powerful tools. Best practices involve media with full educational rights cleared. In addition, this media must be produced explicitly for use by teachers, tutors, and students as well as delivered on-demand over the Internet.

Through its digital resource library, NVS STEM Academy provides all Nebraska teachers, tutors, and students with high quality, teacher-tested, digitally formatted video and audio segments, and interactive games and simulations. The Nebraska Virtual School library of online resources is accessible to teachers, students, and tutors. This online library might include such educational media-on-demand as PowerMedia Plus, National Geographic Education, FREE (Federal Resources for Educational Excellence), the National Science Foundation, SAS Curriculum Pathways, Google Earth, PBS Digital Learning Library through partnership with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET), Discovery Education, and Nebraska Virtual School Hippocampus, NET and statewide curriculum content collection projects, etc.

These digital resources include learning objects such as the following (examples provided are taken from the NET's Public Broadcasting PBS Digital Learning Library):
• **Videos** – Short video clips generally ranging from 30 seconds to five minutes created to convey key concepts. Contextual materials, vocabulary, discussion questions, and other teacher support materials are provided with videos.

• **Interactives** – Flash animations that allow teachers to address content with interactive elements or variables. Students can frequently manipulate the variables and achieve different results, thus helping them understand the inter-relationships of the content. More advanced concepts are covered using an interactive instead of a video clip. Contextual materials, instructions, vocabulary, discussion questions, and other teacher support materials are provided with the interactives.

• **Games** – Educational games have been used in the classroom since the early 1800s, with the spelling bee being one of the most widely known. Today’s educational games are much more sophisticated and interactive. Games are used to help teach or reinforce concepts or to provide skills practice for students.

The online resource library will be fully categorized and searchable so that teachers, tutors, and students can easily navigate the site and search for needed resources. The Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy provides training for teachers, students, and tutors on the use of these resources. The support for the online resource library comes, in part, from the funds sub-granted to STEM Academy participating schools.

**Teachers**

The emphasis in the majority of the literature on improving student achievement in all subject areas—but particularly in the STEM areas—is on training and retaining highly effective teachers. In addition, the literature indicates that one of the major keys to increasing achievement of low achieving students and students in historically underperforming groups (such as Native American, Hispanic, and other minorities, as well as ELL students) is engagement by highly qualified, caring teachers in more academically challenging courses.
To retain highly effective and skilled teachers, the research suggests that teachers be provided better professional development in content, pedagogy, and technology integration; more support and guidance; and better working conditions. In addition, the literature indicates that schools should do a better job of aligning highly effective teachers with lower performing schools as well as in support of low achieving students within higher performing schools. This is exactly what the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy accomplishes for Nebraska’s geographically isolated, highest need, and lower performing schools and for urban schools with low achieving and high-need students: it provides access to a STEM curriculum taught by highly effective master teachers from across the state. NVS’s teachers are provided with the infrastructure, professional development opportunities, instructional focus, resources, and support not easily generated by Nebraska’s highest need or lower performing schools.

Student engagement, learning outcomes, and student/teacher interaction are key elements of the Nebraska Virtual School.

In the NVS STEM Academy, communication among teachers and students provides a collaborative learning environment where questions can be answered and ideas exchanged. In this environment, students gain insight into international issues and expand their knowledge of the world. Projects produce meaningful cultural exchanges and allow students to share problem-solving techniques while developing global citizenship skills.

Teachers for the Nebraska Virtual School are endorsed in their subject areas and hold valid Nebraska certificates. Drawn from across the state, NVS teachers are highly effective master teachers, experts in their teaching areas. NVS STEM Academy makes a special effort to recruit bilingual teachers and teachers knowledgeable in working with groups underrepresented in the STEM areas. NVS teachers could be full time teachers with the STEM Academy, or local school districts may elect to release a teacher part time to NVS to develop and/or instruct a particular course. This method not only provides NVS with content expertise and access to highly effective teachers but also keeps those teachers in their local schools, building capacity within the school through a “train” the trainer approach.
Nebraska Virtual School teachers are knowledgeable about the wide variety of instructional resources they can call upon to make a positive difference in student learning. Teachers use a variety of technologies to interact with their classes. They are proficient at managing an online class, building learning communities, creating instructor presence, providing guidance and feedback, and developing rapport with students in an online environment. In addition, NVS STEM teachers are proficient at using data to determine student achievement, modifying and supplementing instruction as needed. Teachers establish assignment deadlines; set office hours; develop discussion forums, group projects, or class blogs; and bring in expert speakers through desktop online conferencing. They will also have access to Nebraska’s extensive interactive two-way video conferencing system and Nebraska’s robust statewide network.

Teachers enhance student-learning experiences using multimedia and other digital resources. For example, NVS teachers use multimedia, podcasts, or other resources to integrate engineering concepts into the curriculum through focused projects and supplemental enrichment activities that emphasize the interrelatedness of mathematics, science, technology, and engineering.

The Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy provides professional development and training for NVS teachers. Training includes best practices and national standards for online teaching, new educational and instructional information, and the use of technology. NVS works closely with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Education and Human Sciences, the Nebraska Department of Education, and Nebraska’s Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council to provide professional development for NVS teachers in effective STEM instructional strategies as well as STEM content knowledge that enhances their ability to offer students challenging and engaging courses.

The Nebraska Virtual School assists the state in meeting its goals and performance measures to improve the effectiveness of teacher preparation by providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to gain experience in online teaching, in the integration of technology to ensure student engagement and in-depth learning, and in best practices in STEM education through serving internships and apprenticeships at NVS, shadowing NVS teachers, or serving as NVS tutors. The NVS STEM Academy also provides student teaching opportunities for Nebraska’s pre-service
teachers.

Supportive Learning Community
According to the Carnegie-IAS Commission on Mathematics and Science and Education (2007), research has shown that students can overcome the challenges resulting from poverty, family issues, peer pressures, second-language learning barriers, and other stresses through building relationships with adults who demonstrate caring and interest in their achievements and have high expectations of them. In addition, the report emphasizes the importance to low-achieving students of access to instruction that is engaging, that provides opportunities to practice skills, and that includes group and interactive activities.

How NVS’s STEM curriculum and teachers meet these unique needs has already been outlined above; however, the STEM Academy also provides the supportive relationships within NVS and within the local schools that are so key to resilience and success of all students including low achieving students, particularly the state’s high-poverty, ELL, Native American, Black, Hispanic, and other minority students as well as students from groups underrepresented in the STEM disciplines and careers.

Local School Learning Coaches
The Nebraska Virtual School (NVS) STEM Academy is a resource for local schools as they seek to expand the educational opportunities available to their students. Active involvement by local schools with the Nebraska Virtual School is vital to the success of students enrolled in virtual classes. Participating schools appoint a local learning coach to work with their students and serve as liaison between the school and the NVS.

Key responsibilities of the local school learning coach, who is a certificated teacher, include:

- Acting as liaison between the local school and the virtual school
- Encouraging and supporting students
- Facilitating logistics and communications between the virtual school and the students/local school
- Assisting students to access virtual school courses and other resources
• Monitoring student progress
• Proctoring closed-book exams
• Reporting progress on student work to local school
• Facilitating and monitoring wet labs associated with NVS science courses
• Working with NVS teachers and academic advisor and local school counselors and administrators to identify high performing STEM students, connecting them with relevant enrichment activities and career connections. (See college preparatory services section below.)

The Nebraska Virtual School provides training and on-going support for local learning coaches in:
• Effective use of technology to access and communicate with the virtual school
• Required testing procedures (proctor responsibilities)
• Skills needed to encourage students
• Skills needed to supervise students in a variety of subject areas

Stipends for local learning coaches are included as part of the funds sub-granted to the participating STEM Academy schools.

**Tutoring Services**
The Nebraska Virtual School provides tutoring services to students needing additional help with concepts or skills.

The Nebraska Virtual School tutors are drawn from secondary education student teachers, practicum students, subject majors, or others who are knowledgeable in subject content and possess good communication skills. Serving as a tutor provides pre-service teachers with experiences in using electronic communications to support students, selecting appropriate online resources to assist student’s struggling to understand concepts, and understanding the structures and design of online teaching and course development.
Training for tutors includes:

- Effective use of distance education technologies
- Appropriate communication with students
- Best practices to support student learning
- Use of instructional resources to promote understanding

Technology Support

The Nebraska Virtual School makes available technology support for students, teachers, tutors, local mentors, and others involved with its curriculum. In addition, the Nebraska Virtual School facilitates the provision of necessary computers and applications for its students through partnerships with school districts and Nebraska Educational Service Units.

College and Career Readiness

In releasing its report, *Measures that Matter – Making College and Career Readiness the Mission for America’s High Schools* (2008), Achieve and the Education Trust stated, “America's young people are being woefully underprepared for life after high school. While the importance of postsecondary education and training has never been greater, four of every 10 college students need to take remedial courses. Among African-American and Latino students, that number rises to six out of 10. And sadly, students who take remedial courses in college are much more likely to drop out. This preparation gap is taking a real toll on our high school graduates, and on our economy and society as a whole.”

In addition to offering high-quality, online STEM-focused curriculum and instruction and a supportive learning community, NVS also partners with the local schools to provide additional services to ensure that NVS STEM Academy students are being prepared for advanced study and chosen careers.

College Preparatory Services

Basing their approach, in part, on the highly successful Grand Island (Nebraska) College Preparatory Academy, the NVS academic advisor will work with local school counselors and learning coaches to help guide NVS students towards college and preparation for a career. In
addition, the NVS academic advisor and local school counselors will collaborate to identify students from underrepresented groups in the STEM disciplines and to draw these students into the STEM Academy. With assistance from their local school counselors and the NVS academic advisor, NVS STEM Academy students will develop individualized educational plans using the Nebraska Department of Education online educational and career planning database system. These individualized educational plans will outline the coursework necessary for college and career readiness.

NVS will work with the admissions offices of Nebraska community colleges, state colleges, and universities to identify NVS STEM students who are meeting college entrance requirements and to ensure that NVS STEM Academy students are drawn into campus recruitment activities. The NVS academic advisor will also work closely with local school counselors and learning coaches to ensure that NVS STEM Academy students are provided information on college choices and scholarships and financial aid as well as support and help in navigating these choices and applications.

The NVS academic advisor, together with NVS teachers and local school counselors, will also identify promising STEM students in order to help them form connections with teacher education programs and STEM departments in universities and colleges statewide. The NVS academic advisor will coordinate with local counselors and state college and university teacher education program recruitment advisors to draw promising NVS STEM students into campus-sponsored career and enrichment activities. A special effort will be made to draw girls and other students from groups underrepresented in the STEM disciplines into these types of activities through direct one-on-one discussions, parent meetings, and/or other designated activities.

**Enrichment Activities**

In addition to its high quality, rigorous curriculum, the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy facilitates involvement of its students in experiential activities. The intent of these enrichment activities is to expose students to new experiences, provide choices for personal development, and reinforce career and college connections. Included as part of the sub-grants to participating schools, scholarship funds will be available to students through an application process. The STEM
Academy Academic Advisor works closely with local school administrators, counselors, and teachers to reach out to girls and students from other underrepresented groups, encouraging and supporting their participation in experiential and enrichment activities, connecting them to activities designed specifically to address their needs, and following up with them throughout their participation in the STEM Academy.

Enrichment activities might include:

- Research opportunities and camps located across Nebraska (examples: Cedar Point Biological Station in Ogallala, Nebraska; Ashfall Fossil Beds in Antelope County, Nebraska; Nebraska Agricultural Research and Development Center in Mead, Nebraska; Medical Center in Chadron, Nebraska)
- Internships or shadowing opportunities with partners from Nebraska business and industry, museums, and research centers
- Robotics projects through 4-H clubs
- Virtual school clubs
- Study abroad
- E-pals
- Field trips
- Virtual college and career fairs
- School-wide projects (e.g. sister school interactions, service learning opportunities)
- STEM Campus Days

**Professional Learning for Teachers**

Research suggests that the solution to closing the gap in student mathematics and science achievement is not just the development of more STEM teachers (although, of course, having more highly qualified STEM teachers is still very much a critical part of the solution). Another critical part of the solution is maintaining the skills and commitment of teachers who are knowledgeable, motivating, inspiring, and flexible—teachers who can differentiate strategies for varying situations, students, and content. Highly effective STEM teachers need to:

- have access to the tools necessary to meet diverse student needs,
- know what excellent teaching looks like,
✓ encounter emerging content in the rapidly changing STEM fields,
✓ have access to methods of sharing teacher-tested resources,
✓ be open to the use of new and emerging strategies and tools, and
✓ implement the use of data effectively in designing learning experiences, assessing student achievement, and modifying instruction to meet needs of individual students and groups.

The section on curriculum and instruction outlined NVS and its partner schools commitment to providing access to the tools necessary to meet diverse student needs was outlined. NVS, however, is also committed to partnering with others, to provide professional development opportunities for both NVS teachers and for the teachers whose schools partner with NVS. These agencies may include the Nebraska’s Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council, local schools, Nebraska’s colleges and universities, and the Nebraska Department of Education. It is through these professional development activities that the NVS STEM Academy assists the state in meeting its goals and performance measures to support

1. the transition to new STEM standards,
2. the dissemination of best practices for the use of assessment to inform online and classroom teaching, and
3. the communication of instructional strategies that increase achievement of high-need students and students underrepresented in the STEM areas.

Professional Learning Communities
The Nebraska Virtual School sponsors Professional Learning Communities for all NVS online teachers as well as teachers from local schools whose students are enrolled in NVS courses. These PLCs serve to increase teacher expertise in STEM disciplines as well as support the integration of technology resources to enhance teaching and learning by

✓ bringing colleagues together to share best instructional practices,
✓ establishing a base for incorporating online resources into classes,
✓ reviewing current literature on best practices in integrating technology in support of teaching and learning,
✓ increasing teacher knowledge and skills in STEM disciplines
✓ increasing teacher skill in using data to improve their instruction and impact student achievement, and
✓ increasing teacher abilities to identify and implement instructional strategies that effectively address the needs of girls and other underrepresented groups in the STEM areas.

Communication within the PLC is maintained through electronic applications and communications systems such as blog and wiki websites, interactive two-way video sessions, targeted tracks at statewide conferences, or desktop conferencing events. These activities will be coordinated by the NVS STEM Academy and supported through the funds sub-granted to participating STEM Academy schools.

Additional Training Activities and Graduate Course Work
NVS will leverage already existing Educational Service Unit (ESU), Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), and University/College efforts to enhance the ability of both NVS and partner school teachers to offer their students challenging and engaging STEM curricula. NVS will facilitate, in partnership with ESU staff developers and NDE curriculum coordinators and others, special workshops and/or a webinar series presented by college/university faculty for members of the NVS Professional Learning Community. (These activities will be supported through the funds sub-granted to participating STEM Academy schools, and will also be open to all non-NVS PLC Nebraska Teachers on a fee basis.)

These workshops will focus on what excellence in STEM teaching looks like as well as on how to integrate the tools available in the online resource library to meet the unique needs of low-performing students from diverse groups and locations. In addition, these events will target effective gathering, analyzing of data to inform classroom practice for all students, including high-need students and those underrepresented in the STEM disciplines. Finally, the PLC along with the special workshops and/or webinar series will target the alignment of internationally benchmarked STEM standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation.
In addition, tuition support will be offered as part of the sub-grants to STEM Academy Schools to NVS STEM teachers and partner school teachers to participate in college level graduate coursework, which stresses both content knowledge and pedagogical issues in the STEM disciplines. For example, through the scholarship program, NVS teachers and partner school teachers could access Teach Nebraska, a program developed by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) to provide opportunities for teachers to enroll in master’s and doctoral level courses in a variety of areas through one simple process. As part of Teach Nebraska, UNL’s Nebraska Math & Science Summer Institutes and the Science for Educators program offer “intellectually rich graduate coursework that enhances a teacher’s ability to offer their students challenging courses and curricula” in mathematics, science, and technology. These online, and in some cases blended, courses were originally created as part of the NSF-funded master’s program, Math in the Middle, and the USA Toyota Foundation grant-funded Science for Educators program.

These programs offer a wide array of courses for both middle and secondary school teachers.

- Math courses include Experimentation, Conjecture, and Reasoning; Functions, Algebra & Geometry; Number Theory and Cryptology; Discrete Math; Statistics; Complex Analysis; and Problems and Complex Numbers.
- Technology courses include Special Topics in Computer Science: Alice, a Gateway to Computer Science, and Geospatial Technology Applications.
- Science courses include four Laboratory Earth courses; Objectives and Methods of Science Teaching: Inquiry and the Nature of Science; courses in Teaching Biotechnology, Plant Science, Food Science; Insects as Educational Tools; and Insect Ecology.

Advisory Board
An NVS Advisory Board consisting of business, industry, and community leaders; educators from the Nebraska Department of Education, Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council, the Nebraska school districts served, and state universities and colleges; representatives from government and non-profit agencies, such as museums and research centers; and national experts on STEM education will meet quarterly to
provide advice to NVS administration,
review future plans for NVS,
evaluate progress towards expressed goals,
provide a forum for collection and expression of recommendations for change,
promote communication and establish connections among representative groups, and
strengthen the services offered for students and schools.

In addition to providing counsel, Advisory Board members serve as an advocacy body in support of NVS activities. For example, members might develop career days for NVS students, involve NVS students in industry research experiences as part of an enrichment or applied learning activity, serve as (or assist in identifying) guest lecturers for a class or PLC workshop, participate in developing an engineering curriculum, assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, promote effective and relevant content, or assume leadership in developing sustainable funding.

School Governance
The NVS STEM Academy has the flexibility to define its own instructional models and associated curriculum to meet the highest academic standards, select and replace staff based on performance measures, implement new structures and formats, and control its budget. Through curriculum audits; teacher and administrator evaluations; on-going and embedded data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning; and collaborative time for its teachers and principals; NVS continuously measures and evaluates its support systems in order to improve the school’s effectiveness in impacting student performance.

The Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy is under the governance of, and is supported by, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Independent Study High School (ISHS). Respected as a leader in distance education, ISHS has offered since 1929 a complete high school curriculum along with the administration and certificated faculty to meet the needs of distance learners. Today the school reaches students throughout the United States and overseas. ISHS is Nebraska’s only special purpose, distance education public school (Rule 10, Section 013.04) that is fully accredited by the
Nebraska Department of Education (1968), the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (1978), and the Commission on International and Trans-regional Accreditation (2003).

**Evaluation**

The Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy includes a data analysis and research component to measure outcomes. This evaluation will measure student learning against state and national standards, course development and teaching against national instructional design and online teaching standards, and course academic rigor against national benchmarks (such as those developed by Achieve in the American Diploma Project, the College Board, or ACT end of course assessments).

The evaluation will measure the results of the project against target goals in terms of school and student involvement in the NVS STEM Academy, an increase in the number of students prepared for advanced study and careers in the STEM fields through involvement with the STEM Academy, overall improvement in NVS students’ achievement in the STEM subjects, and overall decrease in the achievement gap between lower achieving and higher achieving schools and between lower achieving subgroups and higher achieving subgroups in Nebraska’s targeted lower performing, highest need, and geographically isolated schools.

The evaluation will outline lessons learned and provide data demonstrating successful strategies and models that can be shared with other schools, teachers, and districts. The evaluation will be coordinated by the NVS STEM Academy principal and master lead teachers. Lessons learned will be disseminated through professional association presentations, journal articles, and the STEM Academy Website.

**Sustainability**

After the completion of the grant-funded period of four years, funding for the Nebraska Virtual School: STEM Academy will shift to support by the state of Nebraska, possibly through a combination of shifting the designation of certain state incentive funds and/or a fee-based structure. The Nebraska Department of Education together with NVS will work with the Nebraska
legislators, the governor, Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council, school districts, and others to develop an ongoing funding method so that Nebraska schools and students can continue to participate in NVS STEM Academy free of charge or through a nominal fee. A business plan will be developed to expand NVS offerings into other subject areas as well as to move NVS beyond the boundaries of the state using a fee-based structure.

Sources


Rigor at Risk. 2007. ACT.


Appendix L

Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals
Nebraska’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals

What are Core Competencies? What is Core Knowledge?

Core Knowledge and Core Competencies are what all adults who work with children need to know, understand and be able to do to support children’s development and school readiness. They provide a broad categorization of knowledge and skills that apply across all roles in the early care and education field.

Nebraska Core Competencies are Voluntary

The competencies, skills, and levels described are voluntary for those working in the early care and education field. Program directors, teachers, family child care home providers and others are encouraged to use Nebraska’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals as they find helpful.

Relationships between Early Learning Guidelines and Core Competencies

Nebraska developed voluntary Early Learning Guidelines for children ages birth to three and for children ages three to five. The Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines were developed to describe what children need to learn and be able to do and how adults can support that learning. The Early Learning Guidelines is a resource to assist adults working in early childhood in their planning of meaningful learning experiences for young children. The Core Competencies are Nebraska’s description of the knowledge and skills adults, who work with children from birth to age five, need to develop over years of experience and through a course of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Learning Guidelines</th>
<th>are what children should know, understand, and be able to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Competencies</td>
<td>are what adults who work with children should know, understand, and be able to do to support children in reaching desired outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Levels

There are many skilled early care and education professionals in Nebraska. Nebraska’s core competencies describe knowledge and skills based upon six levels of education/experience in the early childhood field. The six levels are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge anyone entering the early childhood field should have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>All skills in level one plus skills and knowledge anyone working in the early childhood field should have after one to two year of employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Skills and Knowledge anyone working in the early childhood field might have, and specifically the skills you would expect to see in someone with a Child Development Associate (CDA), a one year certificate/diploma in early childhood education, or three years experience in early childhood education. (Includes all of the skills in levels 1 and 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge anyone working in the early childhood field might have, and specifically the skills you would expect to see in someone with an Associate’s Degree in early childhood education/child development or a related degree and at least three years experience in early childhood education. (Includes all of the skills in levels 1, 2, and 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge anyone working in the early childhood field might have, and specifically the skills you would expect to see in someone with a Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education, child development, early childhood special education or a related degree and at least three years experience in early childhood education. (Includes all of the skills in levels 1, 2, 3 and 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge anyone working in the early childhood field might have, and specifically the skills and knowledge you would expect to see in someone with an advanced degree in early childhood education, child development, early childhood special education or a related degree and at least three years experience in early childhood education. (Includes all of the skills in levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nebraska’s Core Competencies are divided into nine areas of knowledge and skill. The nine areas are:

A. Child Growth and Development
B. Health, Safety and Nutrition
C. Learning Environments
D. Planning Learning Experiences and Curriculum
E. Interacting with Children and Providing Guidance to Children
F. Observation, Assessment and Documentation
G. Partnerships with Families and Communities
H. Professionalism and Leadership
I. Administration, Program Planning and Development

Nebraska’s Core Competencies Working Document Has Been Completed

Nebraska’s April 2009 working document of the Core Competencies has been posted. Changes made to the March 2008 version are relatively minor. The Early Childhood Training Center encourages use of the Core Competencies in describing the skills needed to work in the early childhood education field, to assess professionals’ current level of skills and competencies, and to plan what future professional development might be needed.

A brief booklet of level one Core Competencies provides people new to the early childhood field with information on the skills and knowledge that need to be developed within the first year in the field. Please note that this booklet contains only level one skills and competencies for all nine knowledge areas.

Suggested Ways for Using Core Competencies

Nebraska’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals can be used in a variety of ways to improve the knowledge and skills of individuals working in early childhood education. Here are some suggested ways that individuals or programs might use Nebraska’s Core Competencies.

Suggested ways for individuals to use the Core Competencies

Suggested ways for programs to use the Core Competencies

Core Competencies Resources

Self Assessments are available to individuals and programs to learn more about current skill strengths and specific areas where further strengths and skills need to be developed.

The Professional Development Plan provides early childhood education professionals with a way to summarize the key skills they want to improve based upon the Core Competencies. A written plan for future professional development can be completed.

The Professional Development Record can be used to track training and continuing education according to Nebraska’s Core Competencies.

For more information about Nebraska’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, contact Terry Rohren, 402-557-6894.
Early Learning Connection (ELC), Nebraska's early childhood professional development system, provides key elements and processes that support both individuals and programs with a commitment to professionalism and quality improvements that result in positive child outcomes. This system is facilitated through Nebraska Department of Education's Early Childhood Training Center in coordination with the Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership and Regional Training Coalitions and state, local, and regional partners. ELC provides a portfolio process that addresses professional/career development planning, program quality planning, and documentation of those activities. Components of the system include:

- An array of focused professional development workshops and community of learners (through the regional Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships and Regional Training Coalitions) – search the statewide training calendar
- Early Learning Connection for Quality Portfolio
- Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals and associated planning tools
  - Self-assessment
  - Professional Development Plan
  - Professional Development Record
- Early Learning Guidelines
- FRIENDS — professional development and other activities to the Teaching Pyramid (promoting social-emotional competence and addressing challenging behaviors)
  - Self-assessment of program practices
  - Workshops and follow-up coaching
- A personal classroom coach/consultant (being piloted)
- Promoting inclusive classroom practices
- Supports for accreditation processes

- Results Matter Curriculum/Assessment/Program Quality training
- Program quality measures by trained observers: Environment Rating Scales (ERS); Early Language and Literacy Classroom Environment (ELLCO); CLASS
- Nature and young children projects
- Resources regarding Health/Safety/Nutrition standards
- A practitioner registry and a program registry – individual transcripts available (in development)
- Scholarships for professional development
- CDA Scholarship assistance
- Incentives and recognition for quality improvements
- Career advising; connections to T.E.A.C.H. * scholarships
- Free-loan access to large multi-media collection
- Telephone consultation for parents seeking child care
- Telephone consultation regarding a wide range of early childhood topics
- Technical assistance regarding state and national early childhood program standards (Licensing, Rule 11, Head Start, etc.)
Appendix M

Results

Matter in Nebraska
Results Matter in Nebraska:

Measuring Results for Young Children and their Families

New to this site:

- Results Matter fidelity plan, 2009-2010 (November 2009)
- Results Matter master list, October 26, 2009 (November 2009)
- Results Matter online manager form 2009-2010 (November 2009)
- Results Matter requirements for child data collection and online reporting of child progress for children birth to age five have been posted. (August 09)
- Early childhood education program evaluation and quality assurance document (August 2009)
- A new training resource is now available for the Results Matter reliability check, a cooperative training for staff facilitated by Sandy Peterson. For more information, contact Sandy at spc08@cox.net, or call 402-658-4563, or read the article that appeared in the November 2008 issue of What’s Up.
- Videos of the fall 2008 Webinars of Online COR training and Online AEPSi.com training have been posted. (December 29, 2008)
- Creative Curriculum answers to your questions. (August 2009)

Results Matter Overview

Results Matter in Nebraska is responsive to the federal mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C (birth to age three) and Part B, 619 (three to five year olds), as well as the state requirements of Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Rule 11, Regulations for Early Childhood Programs.

In March of 2005, the stakeholders from Part C and Part B 619 began working with the national Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center and the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) to develop a child and family outcome system to demonstrate effectiveness of our programs, to make decisions for program improvement and to submit timely and accurate reports to the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP). Information about this process will continue to be added to these Web pages as the initiative unfolds in Nebraska.

Results Matter is a child and family outcomes system designed and implemented in 2005-2005 to improve programs and supports for all young children birth to age five, served by school districts, the Early Development Network and their partners. The family, child, and program outcomes apply to all school-based early childhood programs. The purpose of the system is to:
• improve experiences, learning and development and lives of young children (birth to age five) and their families
• inform program practices
• engages families and primary care providers as active participants
• integrates information gathered across settings
• individualizes to address each child’s unique ways of learning
• informs decisions about day-to-day learning opportunities for children
• reflects that development and learning are rooted in culture supported by the family

Early Childhood Assessment Results Matter in Nebraska, February 2008 update

Results Matter brochure, February 2009

Family and Child Outcomes

Families
• effectively communicate their children’s needs
• help their children develop and learn
• know their rights

Children
• have positive social relationships
• acquire and use knowledge and skills
• take appropriate action to meet their needs
• obtain optimal health

Child Outcome Measurement Tools
• The High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR)
• The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum
• The Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS)

Program Outcomes

Programs
• achieve and maintain overall high quality
• have qualified staff
• are consistent with federal and state guidelines

**Program Quality Measurement Tools**

• Environment Rating Scales (ITERS-R, ECERS-R)
• Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)
• NDE Rule 11 reporting and approval for early childhood education programs

**NDE Fidelity Process**

• [Reliability check tips](#), March 5, 2008
• [Using the Results Matter reliability check Web Site](#), March 5, 2008
• [Reliability video vignettes and practice forms](#), February 27, 2008
• [Fidelity Plan](#), 2009-2010

**Reporting Cycle**

• [AEPSi end-of-year instructions](#)
• [Creative Curriculum.net end-of-year instructions](#)
• [HighScope.net end-of-year instructions](#)

**For additional information on Results Matter in Nebraska Contact one of the following state agency staff:**

**Part C: Early Development Network**

Joan Luebbers  
402-471-2453  
joan.luebbers@nebraska.gov

Carol McClain  
402-471-4323  
carol.mcclain@nebraska.gov

Amy Bunnell  
402-471-9329  
amy.bunnell@dhss.ne.gov

Sarah Briggs

**Part B:**  
Preschool 3-5

Jan Thelen  
402-471-4319  
jan.thelen@nebraska.gov
Sue Bainter
402-471-1860
Sue.bainter@nebraska.gov

NDE Rule 11

Linda Meyers
402-471-2980
Linda.meyers@nebraska.gov

Melody Hobson
402-471-0263
melody.hobson@nebraska.gov

Jen Benson
402-471-8204
jen.benson@nebraska.gov

Diane Kvasnicka
402-471-0951
Diane.kvasnicka@nebraska.gov
Appendix N

Nebraska Department of Education (NDE)

Organization Chart
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LEADER COUNCIL
A Process for Communication, Decision Making and Collaboration
Appendix O

Crosswalk of AdvancEd and Transformation Model
### AdvancED STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

**STANDARD 1: VISION AND PURPOSE**

**STANDARD 2: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

**STANDARD 3: TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**STANDARD 4: DOCUMENTING AND USING RESULTS**

**STANDARD 5: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

**STANDARD 6: STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS**

**STANDARD 7: COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformation Model Requirements</th>
<th>AdvancEd Standards and Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;</td>
<td>5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that--</td>
<td>2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates; and</td>
<td>2.7 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement;</td>
<td>2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;</td>
<td>4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teacher and learning processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction)</td>
<td>2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teacher and learning processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (A) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards; and | 3.3. Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices  
3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovation, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice  
3.7 Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools  
4.4 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student performance |
| (B) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students. | 3.3. Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices  
3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity  
4.2 Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for assessing progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning  
4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes  
4.6 Uses comparison and trend data of student performance in evaluating its effectiveness  
6.5 Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Providing operational flexibility and sustained support.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in this notice); and</td>
<td>(A) Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school</td>
<td>2.1 Establish policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning</td>
<td>5.1 Recruits, employs and mentor qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement</td>
<td>5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning</td>
<td>5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Has formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders</td>
<td>5.5 Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>