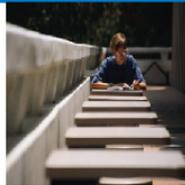


Industry-leading technology skills to help bridge the skills gap



Teach and learn the latest Microsoft technology through an online solution

## The Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative

Forty Nebraska high schools and six community colleges are participating in the first Nebraska Microsoft Information Technology (IT) Initiative. The Initiative is a partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Career and Technical Education, Microsoft and Certiport.

Through this Initiative, Nebraska high school and community college students can earn certification in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access at the specialist and expert levels. The Nebraska focus for the 2014-2015 school year is Word and Excel certifications. Becoming certified validates that Nebraska students have the information technology skills they will need for college and career in today's technology-centered job market.

The Nebraska State Legislature appropriated \$250,000 in funds to support the implementation of the Microsoft IT Initiative in Nebraska high schools and community colleges during the 2014-2015 school year. From these funds, each participating school/campus received 500 Certiport MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) exams and 30 teacher vouchers plus access to Microsoft online teaching resources.

Nebraska's Microsoft IT Initiative is connecting students and teachers through leading-edge technology skills development. This program will bridge the skills gap by providing the curriculum, the training foundation and the validation of information technology skills.

One of the students participating quoted that "This is a great opportunity for someone from such a small school to be able to get an industry certification."



**Certification Success**

A benchmark was set for schools to begin testing second semester. However, after the November teacher training, several teachers immediately started testing students. The following data is based on testing results as of December 20.

High School Certification Results Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)								
High School Results	Word 2010 or 2013	Excel 2010 or 2013	PowerPoint 2013	Access 2013	Outlook 2013	Excel Expert*	Word Expert*	Total
Students*	65	24	13					102
Teachers	12	3	2		1			18

Notes: 330 MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) exams have been taken/attempted by either a student or teacher.  
 \*High School student results based on nine (9) schools testing.  
 \*Expert level test is an advanced skill level

Community College Certification Results Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)								
Community College Results	Word 2010 or 2013	Excel 2013	PowerPoint 2013	Access 2013	Outlook 2013	Excel Expert*	Word Expert*	Total
Students*	24	1	5					30
Teachers	20	9	8	8		1	1	47

Notes: 121 MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) or Expert exams have been taken/attempted by either a student or teacher.  
 \*Community College student results based on four (4) campuses testing.  
 \*Expert level test is an advanced skill level

At the secondary level, students in Information Technology Applications I and/or II will be using the MOS resources and certifying.



Seward students who earned MOS in Excel



Aurora High School student and her MOS Certification

## In their own words (students):

“Passing the Microsoft Certification test will help me in the future when applying for jobs because it will give me a step up from the competition. It gives me the confidence I need to be successful in my life after high school.”

“I am beyond ecstatic that I received the opportunity to take and pass the Microsoft Certification exam for Excel. More and more careers require the use of technology and having “Excel User Specialist” on my résumé will help me stand out from the rest and excel in my future career.”

“I believe this certification will put me ahead of others when applying for jobs in the future.”

“Passing the Microsoft Certification exam will help me if a company is looking for someone they know has the necessary skill level in Microsoft Office programs. I’m grateful that I have had the opportunity to take this exam now rather than later.”

“With technology and computers becoming more and more important, I think that having Microsoft certification will help me later on when I am trying to get a job.”

“In the age of technology, I believe that being specialized in computer programs such as Excel, Word, Access, etc. will become more useful in the workplace. In the future, technology will be a key to success in the workplace; and with a Microsoft Certification it can give you an upper hand on employment.”

“I was overjoyed to see that I had been one of the few to pass the certification test on the first try. Being certified will help so much with college and future jobs. I can now use these skills that I have learned and been tested over to my advantage when making Excel spreadsheets.”

“I can really see the Microsoft Certification helping a lot in the future especially as I hope to enter the business field someday.”

“I feel that with Microsoft certifications, I will be able to set out on a great career path because people have to have a certain understanding or skill level with Excel and Word. Even to graduate from some colleges, you have to take classes on Excel and Word. With a Microsoft certification, you can bypass some of those classes.”

“In my opinion being an Excel specialist will be very beneficial in my future. While it looks good on resumes and applications, I think having the ability to use and manipulate the Excel program will make my life in school and work much easier. Due to the Excel program that I took part in, I feel very confident in my abilities within Excel. The use of computers in work and school is growing at an incredible rate and being a specialist will put me a step ahead of my classmates and peers.”



**Bruning Davenport students stand in front of their MOS Wall of Fame**



**Cozad students who have earned a MOS Certification**

### Schools Participating in the Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative

During the summer of 2014, Nebraska high schools and the six community colleges were invited to participate. Acceptance into the Initiative was contingent upon schools meeting and committing to the below requirements.

- PC platform
- Windows 7 or 8
- Microsoft Office 2010 or 2013 Professional Version (Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint)
- Teacher training support

**Forty high schools and six community college campuses were accepted into the Initiative.**

Aurora  
*Julie Jensen and Dana Thompson*

Bayard  
*Stephanie Barker*

Boone Central  
*Lisa Carder*

Bruning-Davenport  
*Shawna Garland*

Central Community College  
- Columbus Campus  
*Janis DeHaven*

Cody-Kilgore  
*Rocky Richards*

Cozad  
*Keely Reinert*

Creek Valley  
*Janet Hill*

Crete  
*Scott Johnson*

Dundy County Stratton  
*Lisa Fox*

Elkhorn Valley Schools  
*Laura Newton*

Hastings  
*Darci Karr and Joyce Sadd*

Johnson-Brock  
*Nick Krenk and Sylvia Smith*

Kearney  
*Tennille Gifford*

Lakeview  
*Jan Went*

Lincoln North Star  
*Shannon Quible and Nick Wiehn*

Lincoln Northeast  
*Jeff Fagler*

Lincoln Southeast  
*Matt Maw*

Loup County  
*Amy Sabatka*

Metropolitan Community College  
- Fort Campus  
*Candice Otterpohl, Steve Boutin, Becky Connor,  
Lonnie Lentsch, Pamela McCloskey, April Hurley,  
Julie Ashley and Diane Kerwin-Kubr*

Mid-Plains Community College  
- North Platte Campus  
*Angie Chittick, Amber Cochran, Jean Condon,  
Crystal Evans, Spring Landfried, Emmanuel  
Luke, Kathleen McCune and Cathy Nutt*

Millard North  
*Jeff Gustafson, Connor O'Neill and Tim Richt*

Millard West  
*Melissa Schram, Rhonda Chomos, Kendra Person,  
Lydia Swanson and Seth White*

Minden  
*Jane Blum*

Mullen  
*Melissa Cochran*

Neligh-Oakdale  
*Lisa Hanson*

Niobrara  
*Tami Heiser*

*Schools continued on page 5*

**Schools** *continued*

Norfolk

*Eric Brandl and Lance Kosch*

Northeast Community College

- Norfolk Campus

*Kirk Christian, Diane Hanel and Brad Vogt*

Omaha Bryan

*Barry Branson and Matthew Tigani*

Omaha North

*Cindy Fleming*

Omaha South

*Charnella Mims and Karla Renn*

Palmyra

*Andrew Conn*

Papillion

*Kathy Moore*

Papillion-La Vista South

*KT Luebbe*

Scottsbluff

*Justin Gipe and Mark Land*

Seward

*Tom Widler and Russ Wissing*

Southeast Community College

- Lincoln Campus

*Beth Deinert, Susan Holland, Debra Kay,  
Marguerite LaCross, Bonnie Malcolm, Kathy Reiter,  
Janet Scott, Beth Stutzmaan and Terri Tiedeman*

Superior

*Bob Cook and Sara Fuller*

Syracuse

*JeanAnn Watermeier*

Verdigre

*Jaime Camden*

West Boyd

*Melanie Black*

West Point-Beemer

*Andy Boell and Matt Hinkel*

Western Nebraska Community College

- Scottsbluff Campus

*Tom Robinson*

Other leaders/site administrators involved in the Initiative include:

- *Peyton Lewis, Johnson-Brock Public Schools;*
- *Carol Andringa, Lincoln Public Schools;*
- *Mickie Mueller, Norfolk Public Schools;*
- *Barb Waller and Diane Reiners, Millard Public Schools;*
- *Mary Miller, Dan Stizmann and DeLayne Havlovic, Omaha Public Schools;*
- *Missy Jabens, Papillion Public Schools;*
- *Justin Shaddick, Scottsbluff Public Schools;*
- *Deb Brennan, Central Community College;*
- *Jody Tomanek, Mid-Plains Community College;*
- *John Blaylock, Wade Hurley and Wayne Sager, Northeast Community College;*
- *Kathleen Curphy and Tom Pensabene, Metropolitan Community College;*
- *Dennis Headrick and Kathryn Eitzmann, Southeast Community College; and*
- *Terry Gaalsnyk, Western Nebraska Community College.*

**In their own words (teachers):**

“Even though she is not a Nebraskan, I am excited to have a foreign exchange student from Germany pass. This is exciting that she will be certified internationally!”

“As business teachers, we’ve been teaching many of these technology application skills for years. However, certification adds a heightened sense of rigor and relevance to the entire process. Students now know there is a measure to achieve. Certification provides proof that students know the skills. Employers see the certification as validation of the skills learned which gives students a competitive edge in college and career readiness.”

“The Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative has my students excited about learning MS Office and being able to add the certification to their resume has been a great motivator. Having MS Office in our curriculum prepares our students for college and the workforce.”

### Professional Development for the Teachers

One of the Initiative objectives is to train teachers at each participating school using the Microsoft and Certiport online resources and setting up for testing and certifying students. A total of 93 teachers received face-to-face training at one of the four site locations:

- November 10, 30 teachers, Southeast Community College, Lincoln
- November 11, 19 teachers, Mid-Plains Community College, North Platte
- November 12, 18 teachers, Northeast Community College, Norfolk
- November 13, 26 teachers, Metro Community College, Fort Omaha.

Trainers for the face-to-face training included Helen Maness, Microsoft trainer and former high school business teacher; Kimberlee Thayne, Certiport; and Veronique Beier, Nebraska Microsoft Deployment Manager. Prior to the face-to-face training, the teachers attended a webinar sponsored by the Microsoft IT Academy.

Teachers attending November training at Metropolitan Community College



Teachers attending training in Lincoln



Nebraska teachers participating in face-to-face training at Mid Plains Community College.



### In their own words (teachers) regarding the Initiative training:

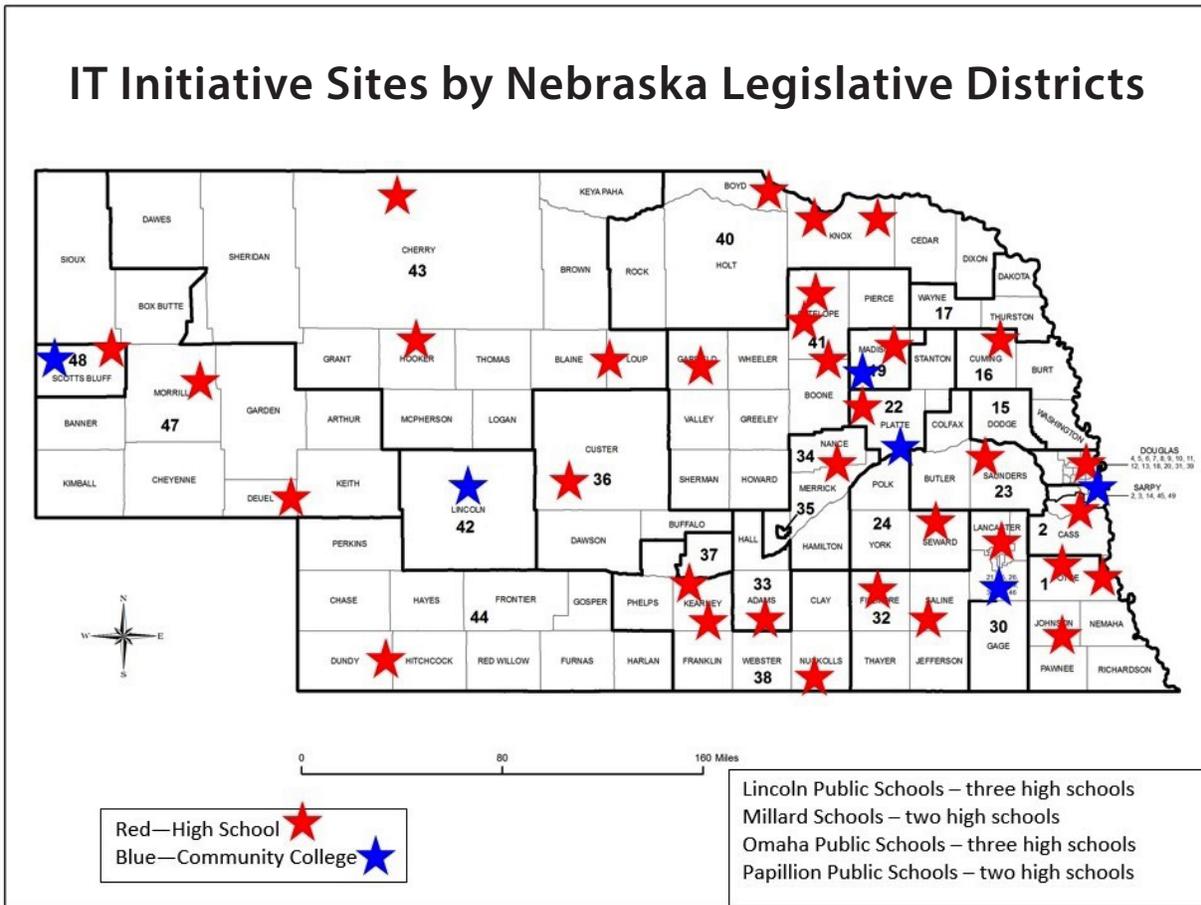
"Am excited to get going."

"This is an exciting opportunity for our students and our schools."

"Great day! Left very excited and ready to implement as soon as everything is in place."

"The trainers did a great job of helping us to understand how helpful the program can be."

## IT Initiative Sites by Nebraska Legislative Districts



### Next Steps for the Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative

#### For students...

Students will receive instruction using the online resources.

Students will continue to be tested and certified in Microsoft Office. Nebraska's focus is Word and Excel certifications.

#### For teachers...

Teachers will continue to participate in webinars hosted by Microsoft and Certiport.

Teachers will be invited to attend additional professional development training:

- Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative Planning Workshop, Monday, June 1, 2015, NCE Conference, facilitated by Mona Schoenrock
- Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative Office 2013 Training, Tuesday, June 2, 2015, NCE Conference. Training provided by Corinne Hoisington
- Microsoft Office Certification, Wednesday, June 3, 2015, NCE Conference, facilitated by Mona Schoenrock

## Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative Is Preparing Students to be College and Career-Ready

The Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative is a perfect example of how Nebraska Career and Technical Education is leading the way in preparing high school students for college and a career. Every career requires Microsoft Office skills (see diagram on page 9).

A study by International Data Corporation examined 14.6 million job postings between April and September 2013 from 25,000 job boards and staffing companies' corporate Web sites. The most required skills across all occupations include oral and written communication skills, attention to detail, customer service focus, organizational skills and problem-solving skills. It is notable that the **only software package called out within the top 20 skills across all occupations is Microsoft Office**: Microsoft Office is number 3 on the list of most required skills.

The IT Initiative curriculum and certification aligns with the technology skills and training and the needs of Nebraska businesses and industries.

### The Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative will...

- prepare students who are trained and certified with college and workforce ready skills.
- contribute and strengthen Nebraska's economic growth by preparing students to become productive members of the workforce.
- prepare students by providing real-world skills.
- help students achieve skills and certification, in turn, become more confident and motivated to reach personal goals.
- offer professional development opportunities for educators to better prepare them to teach skill development and certifications to their students so they become employable and successful in college or career.

## Individuals Guiding the Initiative

Mona Schoenrock is the manager of the Nebraska Microsoft IT Initiative. She taught 34 years at Columbus High School teaching a variety of subjects including Information Technology Applications. Mona is also a part-time BMIT methods lecturer for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Other individuals helping guide the Initiative include:

- Veronique Beier, Nebraska Microsoft Deployment Manager
- Sara Cox, Nebraska Certiport Project Coordinator
- Rich Katt, Director of Career and Technical Education, Nebraska Department of Education
- Beverly Newton, Communication and Information Systems Career Field Specialist, Nebraska Department of Education
- Bonnie Sibert, BMIT Career Field Specialist, Nebraska Department of Education

# Career Clusters and MOS Certification

● denotes Expert Certification

CAREER CLUSTERS ↓	MOS (Application Skills)				
	Word	Excel	PowerPoint	Outlook	Access
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	✓	✓	✓		✓
Architecture & Construction	✓	✓	✓		✓
Arts, A/V Tech & Communications	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Business Management & Administration	● ✓	● ✓	✓	✓	✓
Education & Training	● ✓	● ✓	✓	✓	✓
Finance	✓	● ✓	✓	✓	✓
Government & Public Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospitality & Tourism	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Human Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Information Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Law, Public Safety, Corrections	● ✓	✓		✓	✓
Manufacturing	✓	✓		✓	✓
Marketing	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Science, Technology, Engineering & Math	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Calendars

#### Business, Marketing and Information Technology

[www.education.ne.gov/BMIT/conferences-workshops.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/BMIT/conferences-workshops.html)

#### Nebraska DECA

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

#### Nebraska FBLA

[nebraskafbla.org](http://nebraskafbla.org)

#### Nebraska Career Education Calendar

[www.education.ne.gov/NCE/Calendar.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/NCE/Calendar.html)

#### Nebraska Department of Education Master Calendar

<http://ndecalendar.mhsoftware.com/>

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1. Oral and written communication skills
2. Detail oriented
3. Microsoft Office
4. Problem solving
5. Self-starting/Self-motivated
6. Organizational Skills
7. Work Independently
8. Microsoft PowerPoint
9. Project management
10. Sales experience

Microsoft Office Ranked  
**#3**   
On the list of 'top 20 skills in demand for tomorrow's jobs!'

\*IDC Study 2013

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