



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

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

FROM: Cory Epler, Ph.D.
Academic Officer

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Grant the Commissioner the authority obligate up to \$475,000 from the Education Improvement lottery Fund to create the “Instructional Materials-Professional Learning Fellowship & Innovation Network” and enact related contracts.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

An *Innovation Grant Program* was initially created with the passage of Legislative Bill (LB) 519 (2015) and codified in Nebraska Revised Statute (NRS) §79-1054. The competitive grant program provided resources and opportunities to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and consortiums to support the development, expansion and investment in innovative best practices. The projects and efforts ranged from personalized learning, career academies, afterschool design network, and digital ecosystem development.

Building from these initial grant projects, NDE seeks to establish a set of *Education Innovation Networks* to support the statewide access, feature development, and ultimately access to districts. This Innovation Network supports NDE’s Commitment to Equity of “ensuring equity of access by supporting quality instructional materials.” Additionally, this Network aligns to the goals and strategies outline in the State Board of Education’s Strategic Plan.

This *Education Innovation Networks* will provide an opportunity for interested districts to apply for future competitive grants pursuant to §79-1054 for participation in the established Networks and become involved in building, supporting, and scaling innovations, as well as statewide implementation strategies, and enabling policy recommendations to support systemic improvement.

The goal of the “Instructional Materials-Professional Learning Fellowship & Innovation Network” is to provide a cohort of districts and ESUs with the role-specific knowledge, skills, and tools to plan for and effectively execute the three phases of adoption and implementation of high-quality instructional materials—select great materials, prepare to launch, teach and learn. The network leverages a combination of in-person trainings, school visits, and virtual PLCs over the course of 19 months (October 2019 through May 2021). It is designed to equip districts and ESUs with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets that they each need to effectively execute their roles as it relates to the review, adoption, and implementation of high-quality instructional materials. It is also designed to build a strong cohort experience among LEAs and ESUs that they can continue to leverage after the Fellowship ends. The network also includes a rigorous evaluation in order to determine if proposed outcomes are met.

A part of this specific Network would include districts and ESUs working with Teaching Labs, whose mission is to fundamentally shift the paradigm of teacher professional learning to achieve educational equity. The services, consulting, training, facilitating, and managing of the Network

would be a part of the estimated costs. Additional resources for participating districts ESUs are included in the budget estimates for the Network.

ESTIMATED COST: To accomplish this Education Innovation Network, \$475,000 would be obligated for contracts and competitive grant supports for the Network.