



Important Update Regarding COVID-19

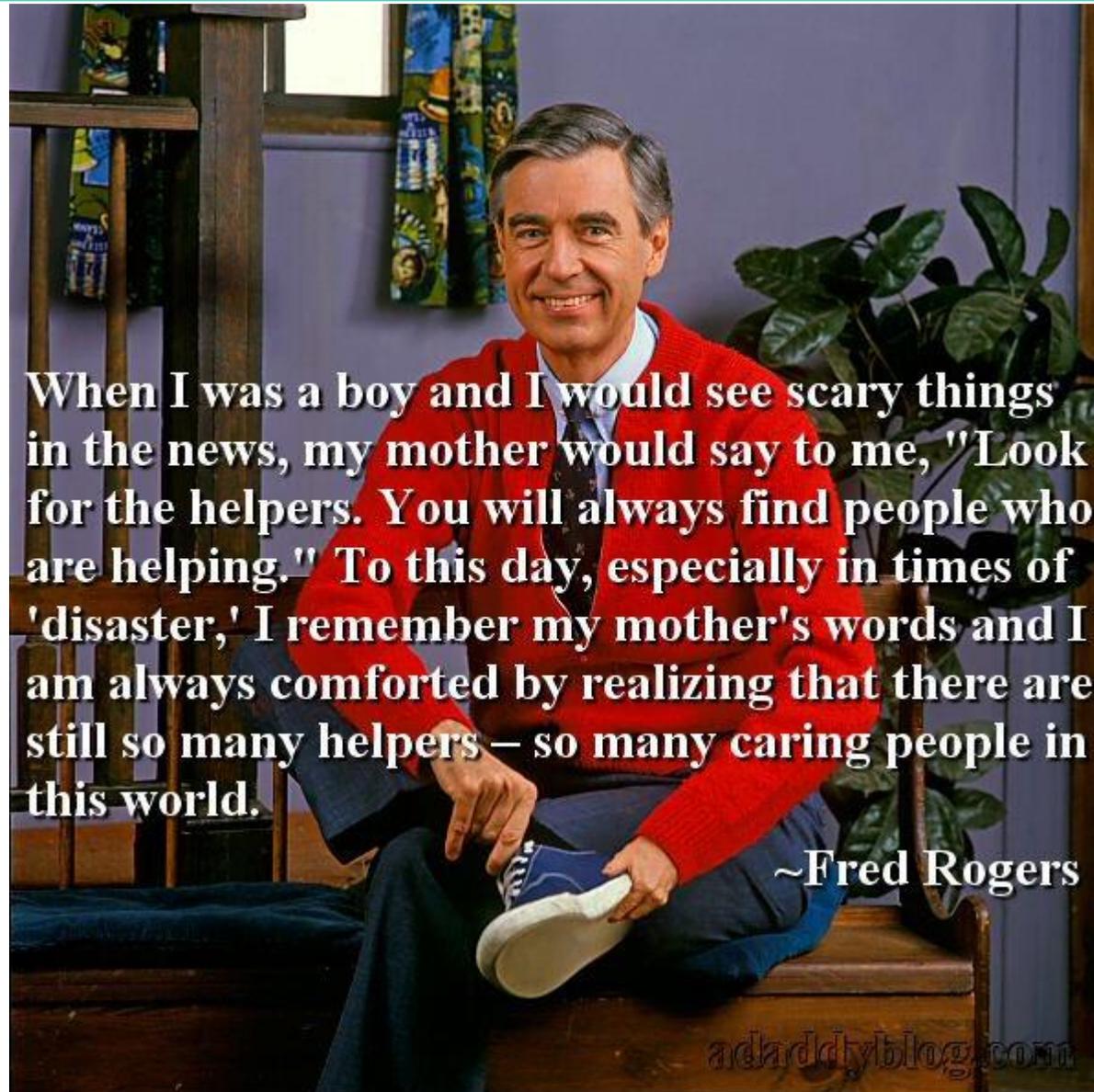
Date: March 22nd, 2020

Time: 2:00 pm CT

Agenda

- ❖ **Welcome by Commissioner**
- ❖ Initial Comments by Governor
- ❖ Comments by Dr. Gary Anthone
- ❖ Presentation by Commissioner
 - ❖ Priorities

Commissioner's Welcome

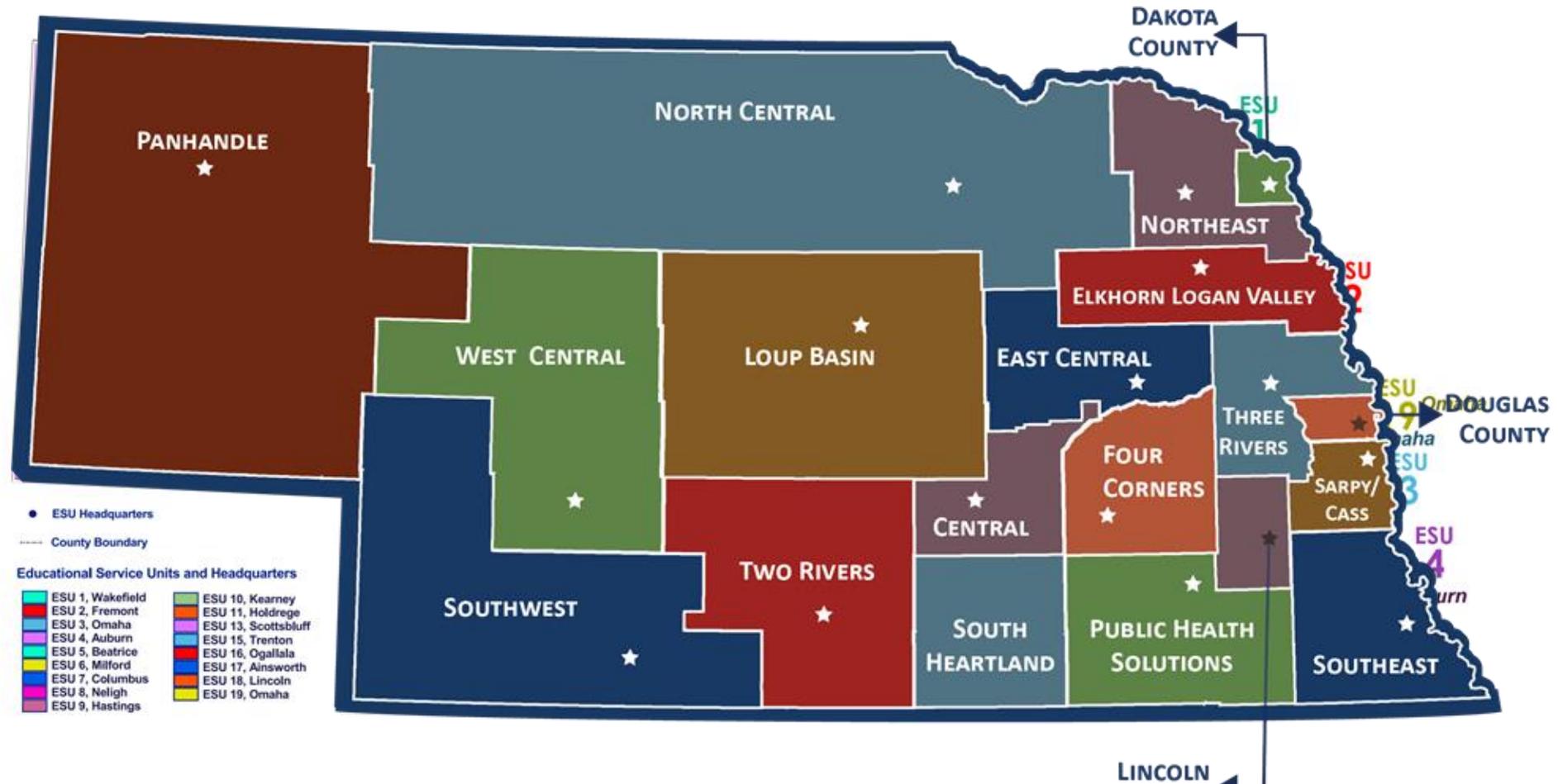


When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." To this day, especially in times of 'disaster,' I remember my mother's words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers – so many caring people in this world.

~Fred Rogers



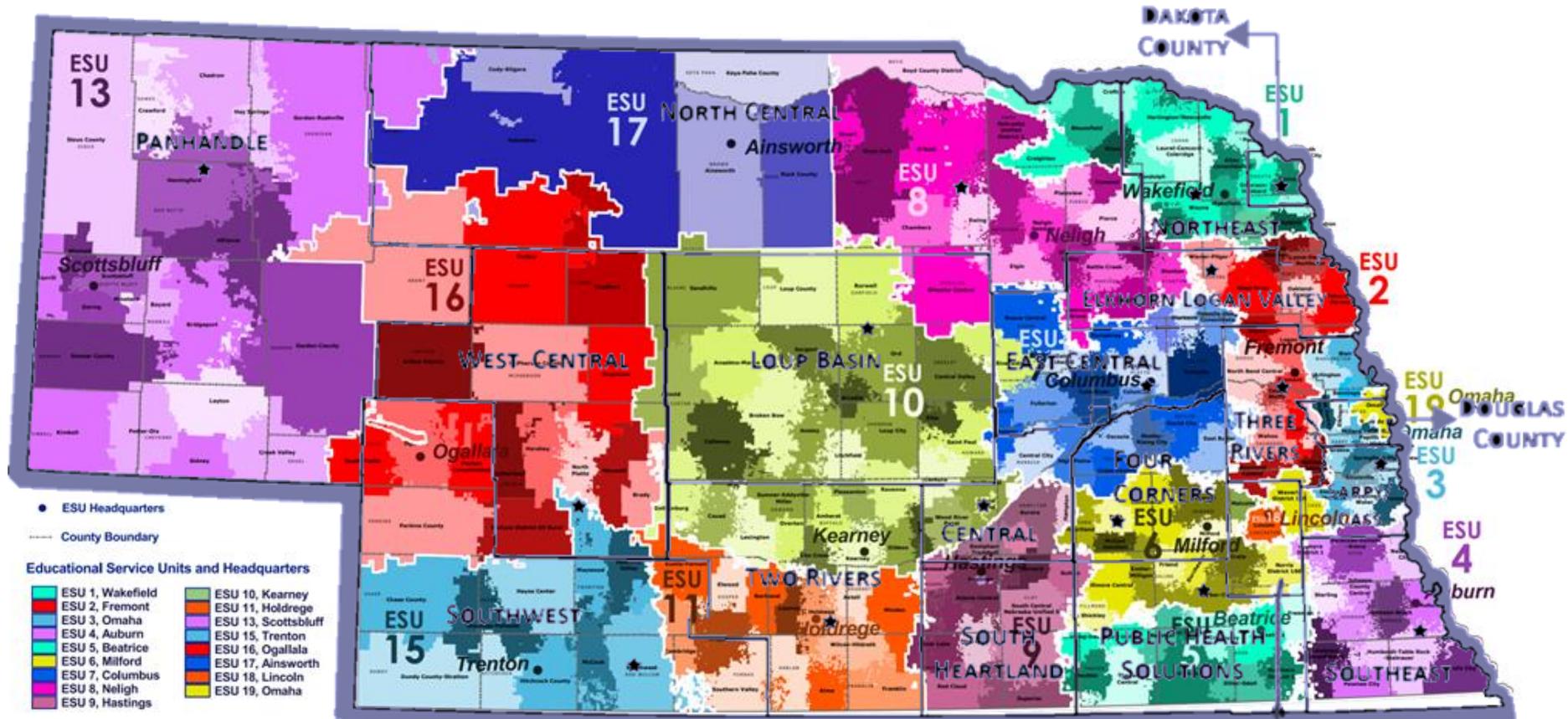
2017-18 Nebraska Public School Districts and Nebraska Educational Service Units





2017-18 Nebraska Public School Districts and Nebraska Educational Service Units


 Also Created by Colby Dunn
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau
 Nebraska Department of Education
 Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer, 138
 14 June 2017



Agenda

- ❖ Welcome by Commissioner
- ❖ Initial Comments by Governor
- ❖ Comments by Dr. Gary Anthone
- ❖ **Presentation by Commissioner**

Topics In This Briefing

- Commissioner's Recommendation on School Operations:
 - Continuity of learning opportunities through the remainder of the school year
 - **Schools must be prepared to operate in this alternate learning environment (without students in schools) through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.**
 - Although, everyone wants to be able to return to normal. Projections and recommendations public health officials suggest that returning to school is unlikely at best AND it is likely that social distancing and restrictions are likely to persist for several weeks/months ahead.
 - Schools must be part of this messaging and approach to address public health
- Learning opportunities for ALL students
 - Awareness of equity issues & implications (Special needs, poverty, English learner, technology gaps, other)
- Food Security – School Meals
- Accountability/Assessment
- Public Gatherings and Workplace Considerations

Continuity of Learning Plans

- NDE will require a brief continuity of learning plan based on the following basic outline:
 - Planning Phase- (*First 2 weeks approximately*)
 - How are you going to serve the educational needs of your students generally?
 - How are you going to address the equity challenges for students based on specific needs? Address, special education, English learner, poverty and other challenges.
 - Implementation Phase – (*Remainder of the year in continuity plan 4-8 weeks*)
 - Return to normal operation? – (*In the unlikely event that school year can be completed under normal operation*). *Final Phase – End of school year “report”*
 - *How did you serve students and address equity needs?*
 - *Affidavit & modified assurance statement that identifies areas that you did not meet, e.g. hours and other provisions of rule in the final weeks/months of the year.*
 - *2020-2021 School Year Planning - It is also not too early to think of possible disruptions through summer and even into the fall that may impact how to prepare.*

Continuity of Learning Plans

- Continuity of learning Zoom tomorrow
- NDE is aware of and building several partnerships to assist as possible. Thanks to all of the partners that are stepping up around the state.
- *This is a moment to share in efforts and share experiences and resources with and among Public/Private/Exempt schools as we all try to meet this challenge together.*

Continuity of Learning!

The Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) are committed to assisting school communities during public health emergencies. Local school systems should be developing plans to support the "continuity of learning" in an alternate learning environment.

Continuity of learning is the continuation of education during a prolonged school closure or student absence. These plans are critical during this time as they outline specific actions that support the continuation of teaching and learning for all students despite the interruption of normal school operations.

Educational opportunities provided to all students during a closure must include the provision of special education and related services as directed per individual education plans. This requirement ensures students with and without disabilities are treated equitably. In such a time of uncertainty, schools should be making reasonable efforts to provide for student needs.

[JOIN US](#) on Monday to network and learn together in providing what Nebraska is known for, providing the best educational opportunities for ALL learners.

Monday, March 23, 2020

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 pm (CT)

To join by Computer: <https://zoom.us/j/129439693>

To join by Phone: 1-346-248-7799

Meeting ID: 129 439 693

Agenda:

- Welcome by Dr. Terry Houlton, NCSA Chair
- Dr. Cory Epler, NDE Academic Officer
- Amy Rhone, NDE Administrator of Office of Special Education
- Shirley Vargas, Ed.L.D., NDE Administrator of Coordinated School/District Support
- Laura Barrett, NASES President
- Dr. Kami Jessop, NASES Legislative Representative
- Questions

Continuity of Educational Services for Students with Special Needs

- NDE will gather appropriate stakeholder input
- NDE will be working to provide guidance on State and Federal requirements
 - Awareness of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), IEP requirements, and service limitations for certain students.
 - Balancing needs of students and families will be a challenge BUT
 - Still gathering initial input based on the most recent information.
- USDE provided additional guidance through a supplemental fact sheet released last night on 3-21-20
 - NDE will be working with partners/stakeholders to provide clear guidance on compliance with IDEA

Continuity of Educational Services for Students with Special Needs



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office for Civil Rights
Office for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

March 21, 2020

Supplemental Fact Sheet

Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities

We recognize that educational institutions are straining to address the challenges of this national emergency. We also know that educators and parents are striving to provide a sense of normalcy while seeking ways to ensure that all students have access to meaningful educational opportunities even under these difficult circumstances. No one wants to have learning coming to a halt across America due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and the U.S. Department of Education (Department) does not want to stand in the way of good faith efforts to educate students on-line.

Continuity of Educational Services for Students with Special Needs



March 21, 2020

Supplemental Fact Sheet
Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools
While Serving Children with Disabilities

At the outset, OCR and OSERS must address a serious misunderstanding that has recently circulated within the educational community. As school districts nationwide take necessary steps to protect the health and safety of their students, many are moving to virtual or online education (distance instruction). Some educators, however, have been reluctant to provide any distance instruction because they believe that federal disability law presents insurmountable barriers to remote education. This is simply not true. We remind schools they should not opt to close or decline to provide distance instruction, at the expense of students, to address matters pertaining to services for students with disabilities. Rather, school systems must make local decisions that take into consideration the health, safety, and well-being of all their students and staff.

To be clear: ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),[†] Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act should not prevent any school from offering educational programs through distance instruction.

School districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. In this unique and ever-changing environment, OCR and OSERS recognize that these exceptional circumstances may affect how all educational and related services and supports are provided, and the Department will offer flexibility where possible. However, school districts must remember that the provision of

Accountability & Assessment

- Pursuing federal waivers for testing, accountability and reporting requirements
 - Suspending summative statewide assessment (NSCAS) for 2019-20
 - Suspending major provisions of accountability system for 2019-20
- Working with ACT and NWEA on allowing assessment for student and local use.
- Still much to consider and address but this should not be an area of concern for local school officials

Creating and Shaping Learning Opportunities

- Modifications to the educational program, calendar, and employee responsibilities
- Address graduation requirements
- Address equity in the delivery of services.
- Online or paper packet supplemental learning materials for students.
- Applicable privacy policy and terms of service and ensuring compliance with FERPA
 - **WARNING:** – This environment is fraught with vendors promising solutions, please vet these vendors through conversations.

Equity: E-Learning & Other Delivery Strategies

- Maintain educational continuity by using a variety of strategies appropriate to your needs including e-learning (or virtual) methods.
- Understand the challenges of equity in e-learning in your communities
- **AGAIN** – Building Continuity of Learning Plans at the local level as best possible is important and continue to work with partners to fill gaps.
- Many possible partnerships are in the works across the state. **BE CREATIVE** at this point to meet your local and regional needs.

Food Security / School Meals

- Approved waiver to allow meals to children during unanticipated school closure
- NDE waivers will enable schools to serve meals in a non-congregate setting
- NDE is asking all school districts to complete nutrition services survey (sent on 3/20) as soon as possible. (to understand school food distribution plans, needs, and barriers to feeding students during school closure)
- Visit NDE website for more information about feeding options including home delivery during closure time

Public Gatherings & Workplace Considerations

- Guidelines issued on March 16, 2020 by the White House
- Limit such gatherings, to 10 people or less for 15 days (March 16-31)
- These recommendations are intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning events with numerous people in attendance (more than 10 people).
- Scheduled events will need to be modified, cancelled, or postponed.
- Childcare centers should also work to follow the 10-person guidance.
- Retailers like pharmacies, grocery stores, and home improvement stores are not expected to limit their establishments to 10 people or less.

Wrap-Up



- Work together to build the infrastructure to serve each student
- Please submit your questions to <https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/contact/>



Thank you!