



# NEBRASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 21, 2020

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve awards for continuation of the Early Learning Connection Partnership Grants

**RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The professional development system for early childhood education and care providers in Nebraska is based on dissemination of training through seven Early Learning Connection (ELCs) Partnerships. These ELCs are located in selected Educational Service Units across Nebraska. Early Learning Connection Coordinators lead partnership efforts at local levels to form networks of early childhood education and care providers, private and public agencies, planning region teams, representatives from Nebraska Extension, school districts and institutions of higher education to provide professional development opportunities for adults working with young children across Nebraska. The funding for these grants comes from quality rating and improvement “set aside” dollars from the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant for which the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the lead agency. The Nebraska Department of Education enters into an agreement annually with DHHS for the use of a portion of the federal grant money.

The NDE monitors the ELC grants in multiple ways.

1. The NDE staff periodically visit each ELC coordinator and the ESU administrator.
2. Three to four face-to-face meetings are held with all ELC Coordinators annually.
3. Zoom calls are scheduled throughout the year to share information and provide technical assistance to ELCs.

4. Quarterly reports are submitted by ELCs
5. Financial reimbursement requests are scrutinized.

The grants to the seven ESUs are non-competitive. However, each year the grantees are required to complete a continuation grant application. In this application, the ESU reports:

1. The number, variety, and engagement of local partners and the value of partner contributions (leveraged funds).
1. The regional training needs, based on an annual assessment, and the strategies to meet those needs.
2. The plan for meeting the requirements of the NDE and the US Department of Health and Human Services (the originator of the Child Care and Development Block Grant).

Grants are reviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the NDE. Strengths are noted. Areas for additional information are recorded, and all feedback is sent to the ESU.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** May, 2020

**Grantees:**

Educational Service Unit 1,	\$150,364
Educational Service Unit 3,	\$177,091
Educational Service Unit 6,	\$162,364
Educational Service Unit 7,	\$150,364
Educational Service Unit 10,	\$148,727
Educational Service Unit 13,	\$148,727
Educational Service Unit 16,	\$148,727

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$1,086,364

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Funding comes from the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant.
- Grants are non-competitive Renewals: