



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: July 27, 2020

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

FROM: Dr. Dean Folkers, Information Systems Officer
Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

Grant the Commissioner authority to enter to contracts using CARES Act (ESSER and GEER resources) to address the COVID 19 impact on Nebraska Education and schools.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law, a \$2 trillion package of assistance measures, including \$30.75 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund. The Education Stabilization Fund allocates \$151.3 million to Nebraska:

- \$69.8 million to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund
- \$65.1 million to the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund
- \$16.4 million to the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund

To assist in identifying priorities for uses of the resources, NDE conducted a survey of stakeholders and identified five primary priorities.

1. Enhance technology infrastructure (e.g., broadband, devices, platforms, data privacy, etc.) for students and families (16%, n = 3,434).
2. Build supports for planning for possible interruptions upon returning to school and student and staff reentry (14%, n = 2,991).
3. Ensure student nutritional needs are met (10%, n = 2,253).
4. Provide professional learning to support an inclusive remote learning environment and engagement, along with best practices for different student groups (10%, n = 2,099).
5. Create or expand mental, behavioral, and social emotional supports (e.g., telehealth) (8.14%, n = 1,764).

To accomplish a part of these priorities a series of initial contract efforts are listed below. More will be added in coming months.

Educational Service Unit 2 – up to \$2,400,000

Creating the Canvas Consortium providing access to a Learning Management System (LMS), professional development, digital coaching and supports.

Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council – up to \$16,700,000

Infrastructure and Device Supports up to 16,400,000

Using resources from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief fund, providing infrastructure and devices to public and nonpublic schools to close the digital gap and ensure continuity of learning.

Academic Advancement Plan up to \$300,000:

Modernization to the information management system of students at Interim Program Schools to ensure interconnectivity of information between schools. Increases likelihood of continuity of learning among schools and program.

Monterrey Institute – National Repository of Online Curriculum (NROC) up to \$145,000

The membership fee provides access to online curriculum content for all schools in Nebraska including HippoCampus and EdReady resources.

Kuder, Inc. – Nebraska Career Connections up to \$284,500

Ensures continuity of access to the Nebraska Career Connections resource for all students in Nebraska. The resource is a comprehensive Career Guidance and Development site that supports online exploration and management of a personal portfolio on career and college information.

Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) – \$365,000

Online and digital COVID staffing capacity up to \$150,000

Utilizing the Covendis and OCIO staffing capacity allows for accessing short term staff augmentation to assist with multiple short term projects necessary for communicating and providing supports for schools during the pandemic.

Graphical Information Systems (GIS) up to \$150,000

The use of GIS and integration with the NebraskaMap efforts across agencies allows for NDE to build capacity and connect with critical data sets for analysis and tracking during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resources provide licensing, training, and staff augmentation.

EduRoam (Identify Management and Supports) up to \$65,000

EduRoam is a higher education based identity and authentication that allows students, staff, and faculty to access wireless network services. Internet 2 based and InCommon led the opportunity to work with Network Nebraska, the University of Nebraska, and the OCIO to facilitate this identity and access approach or accessing wireless services is great.

Gartner Organization up to \$100,000

Information Technology supports, design, and coaching. Providing yearlong engagement and support in strategic decision making and IT support decisions, including COVID 19 impacted decisions for NDE staff and schools.

New Signature up to \$80,000

Updating the application development cycle to increase responsiveness, yet focus on sustainability is part of the DevOps approach. Implementation, training and coaching create a unique opportunity to increase NDE capacity and establish new processes for the future during this pandemic and beyond around DevOps.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): August, 2020

ESTIMATED COST: Up to \$20,000,000 provided from CARES Act resources (including the ESSER and GEER funds).