

Committee of Practitioners Meeting  
Wednesday, January 27, 2021 - via ZOOM - 9:00 am

The January 2021 meeting of the Nebraska Committee of Practitioners was held, pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order 20-03, by a combination of videoconferencing and teleconferencing on January 27, 2021 at 9:00 am. Access to the meeting was made available to the Committee members, members of the public and members of the media via Zoom.

Contact information below to connect:

Zoom address: <https://zoom.us/j/4024712452> Meeting ID: 402 471 2452

Or via Telephone: +1 346 248 7799 Meeting ID: 402 471 2452

Tina Forté, Committee Chair, called the Committee of Practitioners meeting to order at 9:00 AM on Wednesday January 27, 2021, via Zoom.

Members in Attendance	NDE Staff in Attendance	Not in Attendance
Anne Caruso	Dean Folkers	Cheryl Burrell
Brent Cudly	Pat Frost	Andy DeFreece
Tina Forté	Jan Handa	Susan Evans
Michelle Hensley	Sue Henry	Bill Heimann
Linda Hix	Dottie Heusman	Joan Luebbers
Tara James	Anne Hubbell	Ita Mendoza
Tracey Kovar	Jim Kent	Kristin Schultz
Ann Nickerson	Kim Larson	Monica Shipman
Deb Ross	Cathy Mohnike	Bob Ziegler
Kris Schneider	Allyson Olson	
	Amy Rhone	Guests
	Kirk Russell	Hillary Bentley
	Kim Snyder	Jane Byers
	Beth Wooster	Kate Crowe
	Rhonda Wredt	Lindsey Luly
	Benjamin Zink	Rodrigo Mataloun
		Matt Rohlfen

#### Welcome & Introductions:

This COP meeting was held via Zoom on January 21, 2021 due to Covid19 outbreak. Tina Forté, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the Zoom session. Beth Wooster, ESEA Federal Programs Administrator, introduced new staff that have joined the team. Anne Hubbell joined the team in August and Rhonda Wredt joined in November as our Office Assistant.

#### Nebraska Open Meeting Acts (NOMA) Reminder:

Tina issued a general reminder about the NOMA. A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available.

#### Open for public comments:

Tina asked if there was any public comment. None was requested.

#### Approval of Minutes for June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting:

Kris Schneider made a motion to approve the June 23, 2020 minutes. Ann Nickerson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

#### NDE Location Move:

Beth Wooster shared with the committee that NDE is moving from the State of Building to 500 S. 84<sup>th</sup> St. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor by mid-March. All NDE staff will be working remote during this move and several teams will remain working remotely after the move.

#### 2021-2022 Preliminary Allocations:

Beth covered the 2021-2022 ESEA Federal Program Preliminary Allocations – ([here](#)). Most programs appear to have a loss. There is an increase with Title II-A, Title IV-A and Title IV-B. There are no reports on Migrant, Title III and RLIS funds at this time.

#### CARES Act:

Beth updated the committee on the 2019-20 CARES Act – [Web page](#) and went over the Accountability Fiscal Waivers ([here](#)). A complete description of both accountability and fiscal waiver guidance can be found on the NDE link. All ESSA grants were allowed to carry over funds for an additional year. This included the 2018-19 funds that were extended for a year. Our accountability was waived which allowed us to not have to name the new schools.

#### ESSER I Funds Grant:

Beth stated that all ESSER I grants have been approved and we have received a number of amendments from schools. Kirk Russell shared the 2019-20 state portion link ([here](#)).

#### New ESSER II Funds:

Kirk Russell, Assistant Administrator/Title I Director mentioned that Dean Folkers will share and answer questions regarding ESSER II. Beth said they are working on the grant and would expect it to open in the next few weeks. The districts will have the 45-day window to complete the application. Kirk added the federal program team, grants management and MTW Solutions are working together on this again. Dottie Heusman shared the FAQ sheet ([here](#)), Use of funds ([here](#)) and ESSER Fast facts ([here](#)). There will be a few additional allowable uses that will occur with ESSER II including; addressing learning loss among students, school facility repairs and improvements, and projects to improve the indoor air quality in the buildings.

Dean Folkers, NDE Chief Information Officer, reported on the state's use of ESSER and GEER funds.

**ESSER Funds** - The initial resources that came from the NDE and the Federal Government split the money to give 90% to districts and 10% were held for statewide activities. At the state level there were approximately \$6 million dollars that were associated with the resources for the initial community crisis and the remaining dollars of \$58 million to the districts. A portion of the dollars went to support the non-publics. A March survey identified the priorities of need were for technology and infrastructure; help students transition back to school; support social, emotional and mental health; and efforts with nutrition. NDE worked with ESU 2 and subsidized access to the Canvas Course program to allow the districts to use this learning management system.

**GEERS Funds** - The Geer funds were allocated for the governor. The governor narrowed the focus to K-12 and prioritized devices and support for broadband access especially for the remote learning areas. In the Fall of 2019, there were 142,000 students that did not have a device. In July of 2020 districts surveyed the need of devices amongst students. NDE worked with ESUCC to procure another 30,000 devices for students and an additional 8,000 devices provided to the non-public students. On the broadband side we implemented a notion of digital equity. A data collection captured student level information to their access to the internet and devices. The data itself was a two-fold; the data will be part of the Cares Act reporting expectations from districts. NDE will use this information to target the resources for the \$3.2 million allocated for broadband support.

**CARES II Act** – This is approximately four times more of CARES I Act dollars that will be distributed to districts. EANS will be allocated to the Nonpublic schools and will have approximately \$17 million. CARES II details are in process and is moving quickly. A key focus is on the unfinished learning that occurred from the pandemic and how we can accelerate the resources to provide support. The EANS timeline for nonpublic schools can be found ([here](#)).

#### Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Presentation:

Amy Rhone, Office of SPED Administrator/State Director and Jane Byers, NeMTSS State Coordinator presented the newly revised NeMTSS slides.

MTSS is a framework that integrates academics, social, emotional and behavioral support. Amy described the objectives of the MTSS. Jane Byers discussed the Identify, Analyze, Implement and Reflect model. She discussed the Interventions of Increasing Intensity toolshed and the impact of all students they are working with. She gave an overview of the history of RtI and the key differences between MTSS and common views of RtI.

- MTSS is broader in scope
- Integrates academic, social, emotional and behavioral.
- Emphasis on capacity building for educators
- Strong emphasis on prevention
- Emphasis on the examination of systems-level

Why MTSS? It includes the Reading Improvement Act, improve student outcomes, ESSA, potential reauthorization of IDEA; reduce SLD verification and significant amount of MTSS research. It is the strong core instruction which is the first intervention for all students and is our opportunity to have the largest impact on student achievement. It does not focus on the problem but the solution.

Amy said they are in partnership with UNL and developed a shared website <https://nemtss.unl.edu/>. She discussed the Research and Evaluation tool for districts to make the best decisions for their

districts. Jane summarized the NeMTSS training and the building system they use when they meet with the districts over a period of four days. They ended their presentation with the NeMTSS Implementation Support team and the Regional Leads for each region. The NeMTSS website can be found here ([Web-page](#)).

#### Nonpublic:

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported that we are working with DRE on the nonpublic consultation lists for the spring collection. We are also verifying numbers in the nonpublic membership reports. The nonpublic consultation collection is scheduled to open March 1, 2021. The new Lease Agreement Sample can be found on our website [Nonpublic Information webpage](#).

#### Consolidated Application for 2020-21:

Beth reported the team is reviewing and finalizing the applications.

#### Consolidated Application for 2021-22:

Beth explained we are moving to Central Data system by March 1<sup>st</sup>, where districts will enter contact information one time and this information will feed into all the different grants. There will also be a risk assessment page which will be fed from the fiscal and monitoring reviews. This is moving towards a risk-based management where the school will do a self-assessment and all of NDE departments will do their assessment. If a school has less risks, the goal is to get reimbursements approved faster. There will be a team of 5 to do the fiscal monitoring and this will improve reimbursements faster. The assurances tab will be agreed to at one time rather than on every grant. An allocations summary page will show all grants on one page. This is the first phase to consolidate information provided by the districts. Another phase will be the staff reporting and completed in the next two years. There will be more phases to come in the near future.

#### Year 3 SFI Application for SCI Schools:

Beth reported Nebraska applied for the Accountability Waiver and the addendum was sent in to the USDE for their review. This addendum will freeze all the TSI, ATSI, CSI for the 20-21 would remain the same. No new schools will be named until the Fall of 2022 since there was no assessments done in 2020-2021. We will share more information as it comes in.

Kirk shared that the team has connected with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party called Schoolkit to offer four targeted professional development sessions with the next three sessions dates: February 24<sup>th</sup>, March 24<sup>th</sup>, April 21<sup>st</sup>. The schools can choose from 1) K-5 Literacy 2) 6-12 Literacy 3) K-5 Math Coherence and Grade Level Contents 4) 6-12 Math Coherence and Grade Level Contents.

#### Family and Community Engagement:

Kim Larson, NDE Family and Community Engagement Coordinator reported they are resuming the School, Family and Community Engagement Framework writing in March. As a reminder, the framework will align to and address the AQuESTT Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success tenet including the following focus areas:

- Partnerships and support services with local, state, and national organizations
- Business and industry partnerships to enhance student outcomes and experiences
- Active family engagement
- Safe and welcoming school climate and culture
- Student attendance

- Participation in activities before, during and outside of the school day

Several input sessions were held in NE ESUs and information shared will be reflected in document. In addition to the framework, model practices will be shared to assist NE schools in its implementation. If you would like to recommend a person to participate in this work, email Kim Larson.

The next Nebraska CAFE (Community and Family Engagement) gathering is being held February 24<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 to 11:00 AM CT. Target audiences include families, educators, and community partners. Interpreters are available in Spanish, Karen, Arabic, and Portuguese. Information can be found on the CAFE website including project goals, and future meeting dates and times.  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/family/nebraska-cafe/>

## ESEA Program Updates

### Title I-A: Educationally Disadvantaged:

Kirk Russell, Title I Director reported that 2020-21 Schoolwide Peer Review Plans are underway for sixty districts/one-hundred nine buildings to prepare for and submit to NDE by Thursday, April 1, 2021. New this year is a process for buildings to submit their pdf documents into a secure Microsoft/SharePoint landing page. Also, there are fifty-six districts/one-hundred thirty-three buildings that are required to submit their Schoolwide Self Reviews to NDE by Monday, May 3, 2021. Each of these buildings must also plan to participate in Peer Review during the second week in April 2021. Nebraska Consolidated State Performance Reporting, Part II will be opening up shortly. This required annual reporting tool for each State is authorized under Section 8303 of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). Title I-C Migrant, Title I-D Neglected, Title IV-A SSAE and REAP-Rural Low Income Schools are expected to report from SY 2019 data.

### Title I-A School Improvement Grant (SIG):

Dottie Heusman, SIG Coordinator, shared this is the last year of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding. There are two schools that still have grants: Walthill Elementary School and Schuyler Central High School. The schools are working with the SFI/CSI schools and the Department of Education staff to help support their goals. They are participating in the SFI/CSI trainings provided by SchoolKit. The total amount of allocations is \$383,538 and the schools have until August 31, 2021 to spend the dollars.

### Title I-C Migrant:

Sue Henry, Migrant Coordinator and Benjamin Zink, Migrant Program Specialist reported the Nebraska Title I-C, Migrant Education Program (MEP) is experiencing a decrease in the child count of migrant children due to the restrictions of COVID and staff not able to personally contact migrant families to conduct interviews with families to determine if the families meet program eligibility. The program is experiencing a decrease in child counts on a national basis.

Veronica Estevez, MEP Parent Coordinator with the support of Migrant parents has scheduled a virtual MEP Parent Conference on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Registration for the conference is available on the Title I-C, Migrant Education Program website <https://www.education.ne.gov/migrant/>.

Due to the increase of migrant students residing in the central area of the state the MEP will be hiring additional staff to meet the needs of Migrant children and families. Areas of focus are Arapahoe, Beavary City, Holdrege, Broken Bow, Ord, and Gibbon.

Project across the state have been doing their best to provide instructional and support services, despite limitations on home visits, etc. Summer plans remain flexible as projects await definition on what they will be able to do in person.

#### Title I-D Neglected At-Risk Delinquent:

Pat Frost, Federal Programs Title I, Part D Specialist shared the locations of the state agency programs for HHS are Kearney YRTC in Kearney, some of the students are served in special programming in Lincoln at a site rented from Lancaster County, Morton School-Lincoln, NE Youth Academy in Hastings and the Geneva North location will be moved from Kearney YRTC to Hastings Regional Campus.

The Title I Subpart 2 locations for Rule 18 Interim Program Schools remain the same: Douglas County Youth Center, OPS; Northeast NE Center, Madison PS; PJ Thomas Center, Sarpy County, Papillion LaVista PS, and Pathfinder Program, Lancaster County run by Lincoln PS.

The following requirements for the grants have been completed:

- Annual Count for year 20-21, Title I-A neglected residential sites, and Part D locations
- Annual Performance Report October 2020 for all Part D schools
- Annual Review of Program October 2020 has been included for all Part D sections of apps for year 20-21.

Results of Annual Count and the Annual Performance Reports Part D have been sent into USDE.

#### Title II-A: Improving Teacher Quality:

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported there are no big changes in Title II-A. The state allocation has increased slightly. There is no waiver in the works for Title II-A this year, however last year's carryover waiver is still in effect. The Title II A program is currently being audited by the Nebraska State Auditors Office, we are collecting and sending them documents.

#### Title III: Language Acquisition:

Allyson Olson, Title III Director shared the changes to Proficiency Determination for Future K. Proficient - Students are Proficient when they demonstrate a level of English language skill necessary to independently produce, interpret, collaborate on, and succeed in grade-level academic tasks in English. This is indicated on the ELPA21 Future Kindergarten Screener by scoring Level 3, Level 4, or Level 5 in all domains. Proficient students are not identified as English Learners and do not receive English language development services. Each state independently determines the use of the Future Kindergarten version of the screener.

Communication and Outreach - One goal that we had for the Nebraska English Language program was to have more clear, consistent communication. With the addition of Anne Hubbell to the team, we have been able to increase communication efforts by updating our website and publishing monthly newsletters that are emailed to over 200 stakeholders.

Alignment Study - In June of 2020, the NDE conducted an independent alignment study of the correspondence between the Nebraska content standards in the areas of English Language Arts, Math, and Science and the Nebraska English Language Proficiency standards. The study was required by the ELPA21 peer review. The work involved a team of 25 educators from across Nebraska led by ACS Ventures. The study determined strong correspondence between the content and ELP standards and the entire study can be found on our website.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/natlorigin/>



#### Title IV-A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE):

Dottie Heusman shared due to the pandemic the USDE allowed States to determine if they wanted to request a waiver of several requirements in Title IV Part A of the ESEA for the 2020-2021 school year. Those requirements were:

1. Section 4106(d) of Title IV, Part A related to LEA's doing a needs assessment for the 2020-2021 school year.
2. Section 4106(e)(2)(C), (D), and (E) of Title IV, Part A with respect to content-area spending requirements.
3. Section 4109(b) of Title IV, Part A with respect to the 15% spending limitation for technology infrastructure.

A survey was sent out to all district superintendents for responses to these three questions. We also posted information on the NDE Website for public comment. There were 129 responses to the survey and no comments were received from the public. 94.6% of respondents supported questions 1 & 2. 95.3% of respondents supported question #3. NDE did request the waiver and it was approved. All districts were notified this week in regard to the waiver and what they will need to do if they need to change their ESEA grant.

#### Title IV-B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC):

Jan Handa reported that the next 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC competition will have an online submission deadline of 11:59 pm, February 1, 2021. This competition is open to Continuation Grant applicants only. Nebraska received a waiver to allow flexibility to provide support to students receiving school-day instruction remotely. She explained that afterschool and summer programming are allowable uses for ESSERS II grant funds.

#### Title VI: REAP – Rural Education Achievement Program:

Dottie Heusman reported there are two components to the REAP: SRSA – Small Rural School Achievement Program and RLIS – Rural Low-Income School Program. Districts that receive this funding have a student ADA of 600 or less. Currently districts are preparing to complete the grant and will receive more guidance prior to the due date. Based on qualifications the RLIS allocations went to two schools: Scottsbluff and Mitchell. The total amount of allocations is \$77,192.00. Districts have until September 30, 2021 to expend these funds.

#### Title VII-B: Education of Homeless Children and Youth:

Cathy Mohnike, State Homeless Liaison, reported they have been revising the grant so it will be easier to complete. The liaison of each district will now complete the 30-minute course annually and fulfills the ESSA requirement. The courses have been moved from Moodle to Canvas

<https://canvas.education.ne.gov/>.

#### Early Childhood:

No current report was given.

#### Other:

Beth shared last year's 2020 Vision: Focus on Data Quality On-Demand Videos ([here](#)). There are recorded sessions to refer to. The 2021 National ESEA Conference in Boston, MA (via Zoom) will be February 8-11, 2021 ([here](#)).

Next Meetings:

Beth asked for input from committee members on Tuesday or Wednesday meetings work better. She suggested a survey will be sent out prior to June's meeting and visit the idea of holding the meeting in person at NDE's new location.