

**NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
2021-2022 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PRIORITIES
ADOPTED 10/2/2020**

The foundation for the Nebraska State Board of Education 2021-2022 Legislative and Regulatory Priorities aligns with the Nebraska State Board of Education's Strategic Vision and Direction.

The 2017-2026 Nebraska State Board of Education's Strategic Vision and Direction describes multiple roles assumed by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) in carrying out the complex work of supporting a state education system. These roles include Champion, Regulator, Capacity Builder, Connector, and Change Agent. NDE will lead for educational equity through intentional and data-informed operationalization of these agency roles. Because of the NDE commitment to leading educational equity intentionally and through multiple agency roles, districts and educational partners will be better equipped to advance educational equity, and increase the number of Nebraskans who are ready for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life. The following themes frame the Legislative Priorities.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Behavioral and Mental Health

The State Board supports policy that ensures there are sufficient and equitable services for behavioral and mental health needs for all Nebraskans. The State Board supports and advocates for efforts to ensure a solid system of care is developed statewide and will support legislation and appropriations for:

- Investment and coordination of behavioral and mental health supports through DHHS, regional public health districts, school districts, ESUs, and non-profit organizations
- Incentives for entry into fields of counseling and social work for children and families
- School districts in professional development for trauma informed practices
- Systems of support for teachers and practitioners as they deal with trauma
- Coordinate behavioral and mental health efforts between and among partners and break down barriers to information and resources sharing
- Coordinated school health including a specialist at the NDE to provide assistance to schools and communities
- Investment and coordination of social and emotional supports for youth that have been impacted by isolation and other traumas during the COVID-19 pandemic

Early Childhood Education

The State Board supports policy that promotes high quality early childhood experiences. The Board supports legislation that changes statutes that would address the equitable access to early childhood opportunities that:

- Allow flexibility in PreK early childhood laws to allow 5 year olds to attend PreK if it is determined by parents, school officials, program funding, based on the best developmental interest of the child
- Establish and ensure local funding is allowed to expand capacity of local programs through laws and regulation that allow local school districts to meet full requirements under the law

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Equitable and Value Added and Alignment of Services and Supports

The State Board supports policy that scales certain services and supports at the regional and statewide levels that will equitably serve schools across the state. The value-added proposition of such services and supports should be in alignment with partner entities including ESUs, school districts, and other educational and human services partners. The Board supports legislation that:

- Secures appropriations to create a digital content repository to provide equitable access to high quality digital content efficiently and effectively to all Nebraska students
- Secures state resource investment in personal learning plans, student engagement, and climate surveys
- Ensures ESU core services meet the needs of member school districts in an efficient and effective manner
- Supports implementation of the Reading Improvement Act, secures appropriations for a specialist at the NDE and to scale up evidence-based assessments, interventions, and strategies on early literacy to ensure students are on grade level in reading
- Secures appropriations for specialists at the NDE to scale up improvement and turnaround efforts to ensure priority schools are increasing student achievement

School Finance and School Organization

The State Board supports policy that promotes a stable, reliable, and equitable system of funding that addresses both the equity of available funding for schools, as well as the equity of burden on taxpayers.

School Safety

The State Board supports policy that sets standards and promotes partnerships with other state and local level organizations for safe school environments. The Board supports legislation that:

- Addresses coordination and sharing of information and resources that address issues pertaining to school security and safety
- Dedicates resources to school safety

Workforce Development

The State Board supports policy that promotes workforce development activities within the PK-12 school system. The State Board supports legislation and appropriations for:

- Expanded resources for reVision to further develop business, community and school linkages at a local level and support statewide efforts with Economic Development, Labor, and other agencies
- Resources for Nebraska Career Connections as part of the personal learning plan and scaled services for college, career, and civic readiness
- Expanded use of the ACT and assessment products that would better inform and prepare students about career opportunities
- Expanded access to dual credit with colleges and efforts that improve the number of career and technical educational opportunities for students in elementary, middle, and high school
- Expand value added resources to support Career Academies

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REGULATORY PRIORITIES

Accountability and Accreditation

The State Board supports policy that continues to connect a well-aligned accountability and accreditation system for schools in Nebraska. The State Board respects the Legislature's support for the development of a well-aligned system of accountability and accreditation. The State Board continues to review and refine accreditation strategies to better identify and support the schools most in need of improvement. Areas of Regulatory focus by the Board include:

- Defining the role of the State Board and the NDE when priority schools are not making progress
- Expanding a level of flexibility and innovation in processes for accreditation

College, Career, and Civic Readiness

The State Board supports policy that promotes civic engagement to ensure that students are prepared for postsecondary education, career, and civic opportunities. The State Board supports regulations that includes a comprehensive approach to defining and measuring civic readiness aligned to Social Studies Standards adopted under Quality Education Accountability Act.

Educator Preparation and Certification

The State Board supports policy that ensures students have access to qualified, credentialed, and effective educators throughout their learning experiences. As such, the State Board of Education is engaged in regulatory changes in the following areas:

- Alternate and non-traditional certification paths for educators consistent with Nebraska's high expectation for effective educators
- Consideration of reciprocity with and between states that remove barriers for educators entering the State of Nebraska to teach with minimal additional requirements
- Eliminating barriers for individuals entering the education profession that represent racial, cultural, economic, and social diversity consistent with Nebraska's high expectations for effective educators
- Shifting from multicultural content minimums to capacity for respect of the multiple cultures with an equity perspective