

Committee of Practitioners Meeting
Tuesday, June 22, 2021 - via ZOOM - 9:00 am

The June 2021 meeting of the Nebraska Department of Education Federal Programs Committee of Practitioners was held on June 22, 2021 at 9:00 am, pursuant to LB83 State Statue, by a combination of videoconferencing/teleconferencing and on-site at 500 S. 84th St., 2nd Floor Lincoln, NE 68510. 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 Tuesday June 22, 2021, via Zoom.

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

Welcome & Introductions:

This COP meeting was held via Zoom on June 22, 2021 due to Covid19 outbreak. Tina Forté, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the Zoom session. Beth Wooster, ESEA Federal Programs Administrator and Kirk Russell, Assistant Administrator/Title I Director welcomed Hillary Bentley, ESU 10 accepted to stay on the committee for Susan Evans who will be retiring this month.

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 January 27th meeting:

Deb Ross made a motion to approve the January 27, 2021 minutes. Ann Nickerson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

NDE Move Update

Beth shared NDE made the move to the new building at 500 S 84th St. 2nd Floor Lincoln, NE 68510-2611 in March. Most NDE staff will continue to work remotely during the remodel of the new offices. December is the expected completion date.

EMERGENCY RELIEF GRANTS

Dottie Heusman, Education Specialist III recapped what Federal Government has given to each state in the three rounds of Emergency Relief Funds. Each fund has a different time period and each round had increased amounts given to the states. The amounts allocated to the State of Nebraska for each of these are: CARES ESSER I \$65 million, CRRSA ESSER II \$243 million, and ARP ESSER III \$546 million.

- **CARES Act ESSER I Funds** - (*Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund*)
 - State Portion for 2019-20 ([here](#))
 - Time period for spending: March 13, 2020 to September 30, 2022.

- **CRRSA Act ESSER II Funds** - (*Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund*)
 - FAQ Sheet - ([here](#))
 - Use of Funds - ([here](#))
 - ESSER Fast Facts Comparison - ([here](#))
 - Time period for spending: March 13, 2020 to September 30, 2023.

- **ARP Act ESSER III Funds** - (*American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund*)
 - American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 ([here](#))
 - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) ([here](#))
 - Nebraska Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration, ([here](#))
 - LEA ESSER III Allocations, ([here](#))

- ESSER III Funding Overview for LEAs, [\(here\)](#)
 - Guidance from the federal government is to, “break out of the mold”. SEA’s are asked to give districts a chance to frame their arguments for the use of the money.
 - 20% Learning Loss
 - Mandated that districts spend this percentage of their total on Learning Loss.
 - Nebraska is helping to define what Learning Loss means.
 - Nebraska’s State Plan was submitted on June 21, 2021
 - The Plan will be reviewed by the USDE and then required changes will be sent or the plan approved. Once it is approved, the state will receive all the funds.
 - CCSSO has been supportive in helping to navigate the requirements for this grant, but it seems to be a moving target regarding what is and isn’t allowable.
 - Time Period for Spending: March 13, 2020 to September 30, 2024.
 - Administrator Days will have sessions from various departments within the NDE for support with ESSER. The Federal Programs Team will have a room set up for supporting districts with questions about the grant.
 - HQIM – If districts are purchasing curriculum materials, they must be a match to the Nebraska State Standards. The link to find that list is: <https://nematerialsmatter.org/>.
- **EANS I - (Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools)**
 Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported our first foray into having a third-party vendor provide services to nonpublic schools and the timeline/FAQ [\(here\)](#) All but one submitted grant has been approved. NDE and FACTS are working out the details of how payments will be handled. NDE will pay FACTS, FACTS will reimburse schools for what is reimbursable for allowable uses [\(here\)](#) or pay vendors for allowable services [\(here\)](#) and material things or pay contracted staff.
 - **EANS II - Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools)**
 Jim stated the original timeline from USDE was that the Governor would have the ability to apply on or about May 21. There would be a 6-week window for him to complete that and then a set of deadlines for us would kick in. As of this week, he does not have the application. In April a survey was sent out about allocations with the intent on limiting the funding to the schools with the highest poverty rates. There has been no news on that either.
 - **Head Start COVID-19 CARES Act Funds [\(handout\)](#)**
 Joan Luebbers, Early Childhood Program Specialist III reported on Head Start/Early Childhood and the funding was based on enrollment numbers which comes out to approximately \$1500 per child. It has a broad use to fit the needs of specific programs and therefore comes with needed accountabilities. Some of the items that the funds can be used on are facilities, ventilators, outdoor learning and play areas, additional space, staff professional development and mental wellness. Homeless children’s enrollment has dropped across the country with the pandemic. Nebraska’s Early Head Start was at full enrollment. 48% of the programs are providing summer services. They encourage to partner with other programs to get the most out of this funding. [Head Start/ECLKC](#)

- ARP-HCY- (American Rescue Plan for Homeless Children and Youth)**
 Cathy Mohnike, McKinney-Vento Coordinator shared the ARP-Homeless funds in the total amount of \$3,575,993 will be coming to Nebraska.
 Part 1 Competitive -The first round is for \$893,998 which NDE has. This portion of the funding may be granted to the existing McKinney-Vento grantees or the state can use a new, abbreviated competition or do a combination of the two.
 Part 2 Formula Based - The remaining amount of \$2,681,995 will be coming later. This part of the funding is a formula grant and allocations will be based partly on Title I funding and partly on homeless numbers. Districts that have never received this money will be receiving an allocation. Both grant timelines are the same. Districts will have until September of 2024 to obligate the funds and until January 31 of 2025 to draw down the funds.
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)**
 Jan Handa, CCLC Coordinator reported on the 21st CCLC grant that is also a part of the Emergency Relief Fund. Part of the statute for the ARP funding has pointed out that 1% of the funds is required to be set aside for afterschool program and an additional 1% for summer learning which is approximately \$11 million for the two programs. The State Board approved to contract with BSB network ([here](#)) to help with the administration of grant competitions to award those dollars out and provide the technical support that is needed. The intent is a portion of those dollars will be available to sites that have a high rate of free and reduced lunches and the student's needs of mobility and EL. Communities that were most affected by Covid and may have been remote for most of the school year. One portion will be allotted to new sites who have never had a 21st Community Learning Center grant. Opportunities for the 21st CC programs who can apply for funding from this source to improve or expand their programs they offer.

Federal Programs Information

Preliminary Allocations:

Beth covered the 2021-2022 ESEA Federal Program Preliminary Allocations - ([here](#)). There is a small loss in some of the programs including Title I-A, I-D, and McKinney Vento. However, the ESSER funds can be used in any of these programs to help support.

Waivers:

Beth listed the previous waivers, 2019-20 Accountability, 2020-21 Fiscal, 2020-21 Title IV-A waiver and the newest waiver being the 2020-21 Accountability-School Identification & Related Reporting Requirements waiver. The CSI, TSI or ATSI schools will stay as is for one more year and will get another round of money. The CSI schools will get a SFI grant which is about \$5 million and will be distributed based on a formula. Those grants will be opening soon. New schools will be named in the fall of 21-22 and continue for the following 3 years. There has not been information of any more waivers coming out. A reminder that the current funds can be carried over and the 18-19 and 19-20 funds cannot be carried over again. Waivers can be found ([here](#)).

Nonpublic

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported consultations have concluded. Title I and Nonpublic within boundaries are both in and closed. There is one school (public) that needs to add some

information. Due date in 2022 will move to the original date of May 1. There will be some changes to the form for next year. New Lease Agreement Sample posted on [Nonpublic Information webpage](#).

Multi-District Agreements for 2021-22 - ([here](#))

Beth discussed the future changes for multi-district agreements that will affect Title I cooperatives. We have four ESUs that will have Title I cooperatives: ESU #2, #7, #10 and #16 for 2021-22. She explained when there is a Title I cooperative, the ESUs serve as a “pass-through” with funds being passed onto the schools. Beth also shared that the monitoring portion of these Cooperatives will be changing during the 2022-2023 school year.

ESU Grant Cooperative Accounting and Monitoring Guidance ([here](#))

Consolidated Application for 2021-22

The Consolidated Application will be opening sometime between September 15th – October 1st.

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Kim Larson, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator provided a few updates on the School, Family & Community Engagement Framework, ([here](#)). Currently writing teams are considering input received over the past year and are creating a draft document that will be taken to school administrators for feedback this summer. As part of that feedback, we will ask for their recommendations regarding potential audiences and how the resource can be used to improve communication with all stakeholders.

The Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) program is a federally funded grant project that provides support to diverse families. This SFEC program is currently being implemented in 9 Nebraska districts including 12 school buildings with high numbers of diverse families. Nebraska ESSER funds will be used to expand the existing program next fall.

The Nebraska Parent Advisory Committee was required by the SFEC project and needed by NDE, so the decision was made to collaborate. SFEC requires that at least 50% of the committee members are parents to have an active voice.

We are completing our first year for the Nebraska Café. The program leadership team consists of Kim, the Migrant Education parent engagement specialist, the Statewide Family Engagement assistant director, the parent liaison from the special education Parents Encouraging Parents conference, and the Lincoln CAFE implementation leader. We ultimately plan to create resources for school districts to implement their own CAFEs to bring families together and give educators the chance to listen to families directly regarding their experiences and support they need.

ESEA Program Updates

Title I-A: Educationally Disadvantaged

Kirk Russell, Title I Director recapped there was one hundred ten Schoolwide Plans submitted and PEER Reviewed. They were all completed through SharePoint and Zoom sessions. There was also one hundred thirty-three Self-Reviews reviewed. He felt it was a great success and thanked all the districts for their participation in this new format. We plan on using this process for next year.

Title I-A: School Improvement Grant (SIG)

Dottie Heusman, SIG Coordinator reported that two districts; Walthill Elementary School and Schuyler Central High School are wrapping up their SIP grant. Throughout this year they have been working with the SFI/CSI Schools for training and support. 2020-2021 is the end of year 5 of the School Improvement grant and this grant will end.

Title I-A: School Improvement (1003a)

Kirk reviewed the process of the Title I-A SFI grant for the CSI schools. We had received the Accountability waiver ([here](#)) from USDE. The 21-22 grant will be opening in late June/July and grant funds are being configured on 14 separate data points (formula basis). A few of the NDE offices have worked together to offer the Communities of Practice and used a third party SchoolKit in providing professional development ([here](#)) to assist these SFI buildings.

Title I-C: Migrant

Sue Henry, Migrant Coordinator and Benjamin Zink, Migrant Program Specialist updated on Title I-C. On an annual basis the state Migrant Education Program (MEP) evaluates the statewide needs of the program to ensure services for migrant children and families. Due to an increase of migrant children and families residing in the MEP central region, in the 2021-2022 year the Nebraska MEP will increase instructional and support services by hiring additional staff in the Central region (designated on the MEP map) through the ESU 9 project. Nebraska Migrant Regional Map ([here](#))

Title I-D: Neglected At-Risk Delinquent

Pat Frost, Federal Programs Title I, Part D Specialist shared the Title I NDTAC presented a virtual conference this year in May. Information was shared from officials from USOE. The areas of transition, special education services, and student achievement were key elements of the conference this year. Also, the State Facility meeting was held virtually this year. The Rule 18 schools and the Special Purpose Schools were in attendance. Departments from NDE presented information to the group. The Geneva North School will now be located at the Hastings Regional Center as part of the HHS education program. Craig McClay is the principal of the school. Another location in Lincoln is for the schooling of boys and girls with more involved needs from the campus at West Kearney and Hastings of the HHS education system, Special Purpose Schools.

Title II-A: Improving Teacher Quality

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported that the past year plus with COVID has certainly made it difficult in some cases to spend funds. There are no more special carryover rules after this year. 18-19 and 19-20 funds should be spent by September 30 of this year. Professional Development activities are sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom focused.

Title III: Language Acquisition

Alllyson Olson, Title III Director and Anne Hubbell, Title III Specialist gave the following report:

1. ELPA21 Summative update: With no remote administration option for ELPA21, districts with remote English Learners were asked to contact families and encourage them to bring students into buildings for testing. Overall, the efforts were very successful with completed tests for 21,062 students. For reference, in 2020, there were 22,667 students tested. For 2021, there were 2,317 students with various reasons not tested.
2. The NDE Data team has created a report for districts, the ELPA On Track report that breaks down the numbers of ELs tested on the ELPA21 Summative, their proficiency level, domain scores, and whether or not they are “on track” to the goal of English Proficiency within six years as per AQuESTT. The report can be found in ADVISER and we have received positive feedback.
3. For many years, the NDE has contracted with TransACT Parent Notices to provide parent notification letters required by Federal Programs, IDEA, etc. In addition to required parent notices, there are a plethora

of school resources such as health forms and notices, lunch forms, field trip permission forms, signage, etc. that can be accessed in English and/or 21 other languages at no charge to districts. The NDE added a new feature to this year's contract, SIS integration, which allows documents to be sent to parents' cell phones or email addresses and provides a receipt that the document was received. The NDE is providing the initial setup and the first year of [SIS Integration](#) for all Nebraska districts.

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

Dottie Heusman, Title IV-A Coordinator reported due to the USED Waiver ([here](#)) districts have been using the Title IV-A dollars in any of the three allowable uses; Safe Learning Environment, Well-Rounded, and Effective Use of Technology. This seems to have worked well for the districts. As the districts that receive \$30,000 or more transition to doing a needs assessment and have to spend the various percentages in each of the allowable uses, there will be additional support and requirements needed. NDE also continues to report to the federal government what percentage of funds are spent in each of the three categories. This is done on a yearly basis.

Title IV-B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

Jan Handa, 21st CCLC Coordinator reported in 2019-2020 they served 22,474 students at 149 sites in 40 Nebraska communities and are in the process of collecting data for 2020-2021. For the upcoming allocation, we are expecting only a slight increase due to the large amount of the ARP funding. For last year's grant competition, only those applying for a continuation grant could apply. Approximately, one million dollars in grants were awarded to 22 sites. The 2021-22 school year will provide the opportunity to recover from the struggles faced due to COVID and learn from those experiences.

The federal government is making some changes with GPRA (Government Performance Reporting Act) which is data reported to Congress. One of the changes will include reporting hourly attendance for after school and summer programs.

The [Nebraska Afterschool Conference](#) is on Sept 10th in Omaha at the CHI Health Center and will be offered in-person as well as a virtual option. The keynote speaker is an expert in Full Service Community Schools and there will be many sessions led by NE experts in afterschool. Conference partners include Nebraska Extension, [Click2SciencePD](#), NDE, Beyond School Bells and 21st CCLC. [StayConnected](#) webinars are on the first and third Thursdays of each month at noon (30 minutes in length). These webinars feature speakers who have expertise in afterschool and incorporate discussion with participants.

The 21st CCLC and Family and Community Engagement programs were moved to the Coordinated Student Support Services (CSSS) team led by Zainab Rida in May.

Title VI: REAP – Rural Education Achievement Program

Dottie Heusman reported the districts have submitted their applications for the REAP grant. As a state agency NDE provides the information about ADA and contact information for each school to the federal government. The federal government then communicates directly to the district contacts. Nebraska has a contact person that helps support the NDE staff and the LEA staff.

The Federal Programs Team Staff will be working this summer on RLIS to determine which districts will qualify for the RLIS funding for the upcoming year.

Title VII-B: Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Cathy Mohnike, State Home Liaison reported the 2021-22 McKinney-Vento grant competition closed on June 16th. Thirteen districts applied for and will be granted funds. They are Grand Island, Kearney, Fremont, Scottsbluff, Lincoln, North Platte, Westside, Hastings, PLV, Lexington, Omaha, Ralston, and Crete. Since a new state homeless liaison will be coming on board with NDE there could be changes in the grant. Most states already run a 3-year grant cycle instead of a 1- year. These are easier to manage and to track and evaluate results. NDE is pursuing the option of contracting with SchoolHouse Connection to provide both short- and long-term support for the SEA and LEAs. The national convention "Education Leads Home" will be held on March 7-8, 2022 in Austin, Texas.

Head Start/Early Childhood

The map for Head Start contacts transitioning from pre-school to kindergarten are being updated as well as an updated list of programs that have converted from Head Start to Early Head Start that have changed in district areas will be out in a couple of weeks.

Other

Kirk discussed the stance on the USDA & NDE Nutritional Services (School Meals Program) and Free/Reduced Lunch numbers. USDA and many states including Nebraska have been offering free lunches for the past year. Parents have stopped completing the F/R applications which is what we have used to collect data for student counts. What does this look like when/if the counts go down for the future? USDE has allowed us to use the 19-20 data for the 20-21 school year. For the 21-22 school year, the 19-20 data can be used again according to the federal government. This is a national problem, so we are seeking USDE guidance for the following year. By December, there should be more answers and will be shared with the districts.

Next Meetings

Beth proposed holding two meetings a year, June and November, as opposed to three. According to the by-laws, we are only required to hold one meeting a year. Beth and Kirk believe it would be an advantage to have an executive committee that can make some of the decisions for the advisory committee. Kirk added COP process rules also need some updating, as LB83 Open Public Meeting statute has changed this last legislative session. The election of new president 2021-2022 will occur at the next meeting. Beth mentioned the use of a google survey being used for our next meeting day/date, input on the number of yearly meetings and if any members would be interested in volunteering for the executive committee. We may have the option of in-person meetings as well as offer virtual. The next meeting dates proposed are November 2nd or 9th.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20.