



**OPPORTUNITY**  
OF A LIFETIME



# Covid Impacts and Nebraska's Opportunity

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# Living in the present with an eye to the future:

Covid impacts on Nebraska  
education system and NDE

What I hear from administrators

Key work and progress



Source:

<https://static.politico.com/1d/82/7b7964c64815951954325c39c408/main-recovery/ab-lede-ericpetersen2.jpg>

# General Observations

- Nebraska returned to school sooner and more consistently than most other states in the nation.
- Though we see impacts, without the thoughtful and intentional work to return to school, our impacts would have been more severe.
- Nebraska assessed nearly 95% of all students statewide in the 2020-21 school year
- Anticipate detailed covid impact data releases on academic, attendance, participation and enrollment in the next few weeks – This a preview...

# What we see...

## Preliminary Observation 1:

- Nebraska's assessment participation rate (normally over 99%) was over 94%
- State assessment data can not be readily compared between years (especially as the results of the last assessment year was 2018-2019) BUT there are several analytics that will help local, regional, and state understanding of impacts on students.
- Participation in actual numbers means that approximately 8,000 students were not assessed
- Nebraska's assessment system though is unique in the pairing of interim (throughout the year) and summative (end of year)
- Ultimately, this data provides a baseline for understanding growth out of the pandemic

# What we see...

## **Preliminary Observation 2:**

- Disparate impacts across the state in participation and performance
- Disparate impacts for student groups by race/ethnicity, English Learner, special needs, income etc. Though the impacts were across all student groups, the “achievement gap” was likely widened in the case of the pandemic
- Though not definitive, the impacts point at needs to respond and further understand and track growth for students most impacted in the midst of the pandemic

# What we see...

## **Preliminary Observation 3:**

- Overall enrollment in schools in public and non-public schools decreased from 2019-20 to 2020-2021 but likely began a significant rebound in 2021-22
- This tracks with home school enrollment that increased substantially in 2020-21 but decreased from a high of 14,780 to about 10,500 in 2021
- Youngest learners have a substantial impact in the overall percentage of their schooling in the midst of the disruption with the longest window of time to address recovery.

# What we see...

## **Preliminary Observation 4:**

- Chronic absenteeism increased substantially from pre pandemic 2018-19 to 2020-21.
- 2018-19: Number of students chronically absent – 45,244 (14.7%)
- 2020-21: Number of students chronically absent – 68,802 (22.44%)
- Previous NDE/UNO research on impacts on absenteeism shows that as few as 4 days absence has a measurable impact on student achievement.

Note: Chronic absence is missing 10% of days of school



# What I hear from schools...

## **In-School Challenges:**

- Teacher shortages/burnout
- Non-certified workforce shortages – bus drivers, paras, etc.
- Need for more early childhood capacity
- Need for partnerships for student engagement (including work-based learning)
- Supports for students with disabilities, English learners, highly mobile and systems involved youth
- Need for regulatory relief/flexibility

## **Community Factors:**

- Access to childcare
- Affordable housing
- Mental health of students, families, staff

## **Agency Considerations:**

- Operational Improvement
- Communication
- Assessment and Accountability



# What I hear from Community Partners...

- Desire to help and align community response to student needs
- Program supports that leverage before and after school capacities to address student and family engagement
- Address disparate impacts on communities based on poverty, mobility, race/ethnicity, and other factors
- Encourage school community collaboration
- Willingness to pull in the same direction to address inequities for those in need with broad partnerships
- Build strategies to strengthen educator diversity and quality and quantity
- Career and workforce development

# How we are responding...

- NDE and Schools are addressing challenges with a mix of federal resources aligned with local plans and needs
  - Several examples of seeking to address staff shortages, renewal and acceleration, and allowable uses for covid-related impacts
- NDE Priority Areas for State Funds:
  - Comprehensive Mental Health Services
  - Family and Community Engagement
  - Professional Learning & Teacher Pipeline
  - Accelerated Learning
  - Data, Infrastructure and Systems

*Note: Other details in ARP testimony provided to legislature on 10-5-2021 and to the State Board on 10-8-2021*

## Comprehensive Mental Health Services

<b>Contractor/Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>State Board Approval Date</b>
Mental Health Support Grant	Mental Health Support Staff, Equipment, Training	\$14,577,140	August 2021
Kernals Afterschool SEL Research	Social-emotional learning Supports	\$150,000	September 2021
SEL Framework Development	Social-emotional learning supports	\$100,000	Several contracts less than \$50,000
MOSAIC	Social-emotional learning supports	\$250,000	November 2020

## Family and Community Engagement

<b>Contractor/Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>State Board Approval Date</b>
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	Community Schools Pilot	\$900,000	Amended August 2021
CEDARS	Transitions Supports for Students	\$460,000	June 2021
TransAct	Translation services; add on supports for schools, parents, and students	\$226,650	May 2021
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation/ Nebraska Statewide Family Engagement Center	Nebraska Statewide Family Engagement Center	\$500,000	May 2021
Ready Rosie	Early Childhood Family Engagement Software	\$2.4 million	May 2021; October 2021

## Professional Learning & Teacher Pipeline

<b>Contractor/Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>State Board Approval Date</b>
UNL	Diverse educator pilot project	\$49,828	N/A - Commissioner Approved
Fixed-Term Positions	Educator Certification Capacity	\$1.2 million	Pending
NAESP	Pre-K Leadership Academy	\$350,000	Pending
TBD	Special Education Inclusion Training	\$950,000	Pending

### Accelerated Learning

Contractor/Project	Description	Amount	State Board Approval Date
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	Expanded Learning Collaborative	\$11 million	August 2021
YRTC Supports under DHHS/NDE collaboration	YRTC Academic Investments (Materials and Interventions)	\$501,000	Pending
Funding to Five Districts Ineligible for ESSER funds	ESSER II & III distributed by formula; schools apply using GMS	\$800,000	April 2021; June 2021
Instruction Partners	Learning Acceleration for K-8 Math; Integration of NeMTSS, HQIM, and CIP (3 years)	\$5.6 million	August 2021
TNTP	Statewide Support for Learning Acceleration; Support for CSI Schools (3 years)	\$2.7 million	August 2021
Liber Institute (Cangleska Project)	Professional Learning to Strengthen School-Tribal Partnerships	\$750,000	October 2021
NROC	Digital learning resources	\$25,000	N/A - Commissioner Approved
Supplemental reVISION Funding	Additional coverage for schools applying for reVISION action grants	\$395,000	August 2021

<b>Data, Infrastructure, and Systems</b>			
<b>Contractor/Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>State Board Approval Date</b>
Center for Assessment	Support for Redesigning Accountability System	\$193,000	March 2021
Opportunity Labs	Continued Consultation for COVID-19 Safety Protocols	\$150,000	March 2021
UNL - Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, & Schools	Research on impacts of COVID-19 on educators and students	\$50,000	April 2021
Boys Town (Safe2Help)	School Safety and Security Reporting System	\$1.7 million	August 2021
OCIO; Various Contractors, Fixed Term Positions	Staffing Capacity	\$2.5 million	February 2021
Multiple contracts pending needs per various stakeholder	Reserve for Technology Modernization, Security and Risk Management, and Systems Infrastructure	\$15 million	Pending
Hanover Research	Customized projects for NDE and access to digital library	\$250,000	September 2021
Hanover Research	Digital library access for interested ESUs	\$840,000	October 2021
Children's Hospital and Medical Center	Campaign support for Covid response	\$500,000	October 2021



# Examples of Community Engagement...

As part of the NDE effort, we are working with several key partners across the state including but not limited to:

- Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
- Nebraska State Chamber
- Commission on Indian Affairs
- Hispanic Latino Commission
- Children's Hospital and Medical Center

# What we need...

- Partnerships to expand work-based learning for students to re engage students in career education and community
- Support from business and community for the strategies that engage families and students in a wide variety of efforts
- Support from business and community to manage the challenging climate and the demands on education and for the collective recovery
- Schools/Communities need as much community stability as possible and support for key investments being made in career education, mental health, early childhood, addressing teacher shortage, etc...

# Commissioner's Focus Areas

- Agency supports for schools and school leaders
- Leadership through policy “have to's” in this moment
- Identify and narrow focus on key student academic & engagement indicators

# Questions/Discussion