

**Committee of Practitioners Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 31, 2022**  
**SCC Continuing Ed Center and via Zoom - 9:00 am**

The March 31, 2022 meeting of the Nebraska Committee of Practitioners will be held In Person at 301 S. 68<sup>th</sup> St. Lincoln, NE, 68510, and pursuant to the LB 83--Virtual conferencing means conducting or participating in a meeting electronically or telephonically with interaction among the participants subject to subsection (2) of section 84-141(link). Access to the meeting will be made available to the Committee members, members of the public and members of the media via zoom. 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 Thursday March 31, 2022.

<b>Members in Attendance</b>	<b>NDE Staff in Attendance</b>	<b>NDE Staff in Attendance</b>
Hillary Bentley	Ann Carmoney	Rhonda Wredt
Ann Caruso	Lane Carr	Benjamin Zink
Brent Cudly	Allyson DenBeste	
Cheryl Enyinnaya	Jan Handa	
Tina Forté	Sue Henry	
Bill Heimann	Dottie Heusman	
Linda Hix	Melody Hobson	
Deb Ross	Ken Howard	
Tara James	Anne Hubbell	
Stephanie Knust	Jim Kent	<b>Not in Attendance</b>
Tracy Kovar	Kim Larson	Andy DeFreece
Dao Pham	Deb Romanek	Scott English
Lyndsey Luly	Kirk Russell	Michele Hensley
Matt Rohlfen		Ita Mendoza
Kris Schneider	Kim Snyder	Ann Nickerson
Kristin Schultz	Shirley Vargas	Monica Shipman
Robert Ziegler	Beth Wooster	

### **Welcome & Introductions:**

This COP meeting was held In Person and Zoom on March 31, 2022. Tina Forté, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kirk Russell, Assistant Administrator/Title I Director informed the committee Joan Luebbers, Head Start Early Childhood Systems Director retired in December and introduced Stephanie Knust as the Head Start State Collaboration Office Director. Pat Frost, NDE Reviewer retired in March and Cheryl Enyinnaya announced her retirement in May.

### **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 November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

Bill Heimann made a motion to approve the November 17, 2021 minutes. Tracy Kovar seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

### **NDE COP Process Rules – – Emergency Declaration:**

Ann Caruso moved, and Tara James seconded to extend Title I-A Paraprofessional Flexibility Qualification's for the 2022-2023 school year, motion passed. NDE will ask permission from USDE to move forward permanently.

For the 2022-2023 School Year, Title IA Paraprofessional Flexibility Qualification is Offered by NDE and was unanimously approved on March 31, 2022 by COP committee. **Additionally, this locally approved flexibility method will require an "annual appraisal" for each paraprofessional.**

*[As such, the NDE is temporarily modifying the requirements for instructional paraprofessionals by allowing districts broad authority to use locally determined measures for paras to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and/or mathematics for paraprofessionals funded through Title I-A. Districts may employ paras who have a high school diploma or equivalent and demonstrate knowledge through a locally approved means. "Locally approved" means should include at least one of the following within 30 calendar days of hire or 30 days after this notice (by November 6, 2021):*

**Option 1) At least six hours of in-service and/or training for paras in reading, writing, and/or math instruction and support.**

- Consider working with your ESUs to provide professional learning.
- Include your paras in your already-planned professional development.
- Consider other training or professional development through conferences, online training (Project Para has free para training), etc.
  - Must include an annual appraisal.

**Option 2) At least 12 hours of documented shadowing under the supervision of a certified educator and attestation from that educator of the para's quality and demonstration of knowledge in reading, writing, and/or math.**

- Must include an annual appraisal.

### **NDE COP Process Rule – Recruitment & Committees:**

Kirk briefed the committee on the COP Section 1601 guidance. The Ad-Hoc committee met and discussed the membership list and proposed a brochure with COP goals to help with on-boarding of new members. The committee emphasized they would like a broad member representation across the state including as many

nationalities as possible. Beth added we are also in need of a paraeducator, teacher and a schoolboard member.

### **Coordinated School & District Support-Officer of Coordinated School & District Support:**

Invited guests, Dr. Shirley Vargas, and Lane Carr, presented their slideshow on Accountability and School Improvement 2022 and Beyond. Lane discussed the past, present and future of Accountability. He outlined the 2022 federal accountability requirements and philosophy.

### **USED Monitoring of NDE Federal Programs & Selected School District Report:**

Beth gave an update on the USED Federal Audit that occurred February 28<sup>th</sup> to March 4<sup>th</sup>. The auditors were seeking input and clarity before making their final assessments. Tina Forte responded that it was an extensive process for OPS with 15 staff members participating. She complimented the auditors for being flexible. Linda Hix, LPS was also pleased the auditors sent their questions to them so they could prepare in advance. Tina stated they discussed Parental Engagement Policy and Beth shared the policy will need to be revised. School Improvement process was another important area USED touched on frequently.

### **EMERGENCY RELIEF GRANTS:**

Beth reported all three ESSERS grants were final approved by March 24<sup>th</sup> to avoid any unapproved funds returned to the USED. Dottie Heusman, Education Specialist III shared the next step is working with Tom Goeschel on the fiscal monitoring to help guide districts on capital asset projects and the requirements for items purchased with federal dollars. Davis Bacon requirements will be a challenge for districts but will be important to follow or may result in the return of funding if not followed. CARES Act is coming to an end on September 30, 2022. CRRSA Act will follow with an end date of September 30, 2023, and ARP Act will end September 30, 2024 unless there is an extension from Congress.

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported we are in the application process for the second round of EANS money. There is approximately \$17 million in ARP EANS, \$2.5 million in GEER II supplemental funds which will be additional funding for EANS 2 qualified schools. The Governor has also provided an additional \$1 million in GEER funds for Gap Assistance for schools who took PPP but would have received more had they taken part in the EANS program.

Dr. Ken Howard, Title Consultant, shared the final allocations, over \$2.6 million combined, for HCY I and HCY II. This was shared with over 50 LEAs that qualified and/or were selected as grantees for one or both. The goal is to have all applications submitted by the end of March 31st and have all approved so the funds can be used for students and families in transition. With the 25% state set-aside, NDE, in collaboration, with SchoolHouse Connections and Pearl Strategies have been providing districts with T.A. and PD ranging from how to submit applications to McKinney-Vento 101 to the development of a locally specific needs assessment.

Jan Handa, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Coordinator shared information on the Expanded Learning Collaborative on Lane Carr's behalf. The ARP allocated funding through the ESSER III program had 10 percent set aside for statewide activities, with one percent allocated for high-quality summer school activities, and another one percent for robust afterschool and extended learning activities. In Nebraska, these projects would total nearly \$11 million. To identify highly impacted communities and sites, the NDE triangulated school identification (e.g., CSI, TSI, ATSI) and achievement data, COVID-19 impact, and measures of a community's ability to respond to crisis

(social vulnerability index). Sites include schools with existing afterschool and summer programs, and support to establish new sites.

**Federal Programs Information:**

Beth shared the allocations for 2021-2022 and preliminary allocations for upcoming 2022-23 year. There are slight increases in every program except Migrant. We do not have finale numbers on the REAP/RLIS.

**Waivers:**

Beth informed the committee that NDE is not expecting any new waivers. The funds that were carried over for 2019-20 and 2020-21 must be used by September 30, 2022 for both public and nonpublic schools. Reminder to all districts there is a 15% limit (of total Title I-A allocation) of grant funds that can be carried over for Title I-A in each budget year.

**Nonpublic:**

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman shared he has a recorded session on the consultation process and is on the data conference section of the NDE webpage. He asks districts especially for Title II and IV, if they are moving the funds to watch for accuracy in the narrative that you are not using the funds.

**Coordinated School & District Support:**

Kim Snyder, Director of Teacher/Principal Support gave an update on S.E.E.D. (Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development) process. S.E.E.D. was founded on the state board approved NE Teacher and Principal Standards in Spring of 2020. It is similar in its purpose as MTSS and will help meet the needs of the teachers and principals. The Data Profile Conference will be held June 16-17, 2022. ESU's and higher ed will be welcome to attend.

**Multi-District Agreements for 2021-22:**

Beth discussed the future changes for multi-district agreements that will affect Title I cooperatives. In the last year, we moved away from the Title I co-ops. This year we made the shift to those districts who were in the co-op now contracted with the ESU's for support and has worked well. The Multi-District Agreement will be emailed to districts March 31, 2022.

**Consolidated Application for 2022-23:**

Beth reported the consolidated application is being reviewed and revised by the NDE reviewers. It will be more streamlined and efficient for the districts to complete. There will be changes in the process of using Indirect Costs and reporting on the grants.

**Parent, Family and Community Engagement:**

Kim Larson, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator shared the continuing development of the School-Family Community Engagement Framework. Teams will be meeting for a two-day session to make final revisions before posting the information. The Framework will provide resources for schools to improve in growing strong relationships with families and community partners.

## **ESEA Program Updates**

### **Title I-A: Educationally Disadvantaged:**

Kirk Russell, Title I Director updated the committee that 2021-22 Schoolwide Plans are due April 1<sup>st</sup> through SharePoint Landing Page. Also, PEER reviews will be in person regionally across the state beginning the week of April 11<sup>th</sup> through April 19<sup>th</sup>, with the last session being offered as zoom session for make-up purposes. The PEER review districts will complete their Self Reviews and submit to us as well on or before May 1, 2022.

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

Dottie Heusman, SIG Coordinator reported only two schools have this grant. Schuyler Central High School is using the allocation for on-line curriculum resources. Walthill Elementary School is using the allocation to help support the salary and benefits of an additional staff member. This will be the last year of the School Improvement Grant.

### **Title I-A School Improvement (1003a) CSI/SFI:**

Lane Carr and Shirley Vargas described the plans for next steps with the new plan that will be sent to the federal government in regard to selecting schools for the next cohort. Currently there are 27 CSI schools in Nebraska. Those schools sent a budget to us, and we were able to fund the amounts that they needed. Schools will be wrapping up this year and will not be able to carryover any funds.

### **Title I-C: Migrant:**

Sue Henry, Migrant Coordinator and Benjamin Zink, Migrant Program Specialist reported their March 26<sup>th</sup> Parent and Student conference was a great success with 400 registrants at Lexington Public Schools. Communication Title I-C Letters for administrators explaining the Migrant Program will be sent out soon.

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

Ann Carmoney, Federal Programs Title I, Part D Specialist shared the two subparts.

Subpart 1 - Our schools are working with HHS and the department of corrections to continue to get funded based off caseload counts which are sent in yearly. The facilities continue to collect data for student outcomes in math and reading along with any career/vocational outcomes while students are at the facility.

Subpart 2 – There are 4 local districts with detention centers. These facilities continue to receive funds based on caseload counts that are set in yearly. The detention centers and the school districts are still required to have agreements attached to their annual ESSA Consolidated application as well as a review of their program.

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

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman no report given.

### **Title III: Language Acquisition:**

Allyson Olson, Title III Director and Anne Hubbell, Title III Specialist made the following report:

**NPD Grant (Project Assets)** is a program of study over the course of 18 months and currently is recruiting the first cohort of 80 educators to begin in June 2022.

**CAAELP (Alternate ELPA21)** project will provide an associate English Language Proficiency assessment for English Learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities and the schools that support them. A pilot test

was conducted this year and a field test scheduled for next year with plans for the operational assessment to begin in the 2023-24 school year.

**ELPA21 Summative** testing window ran from February 7<sup>th</sup> through March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Close to 100,000 separate test events were administered as each English Learner takes four separate assessments (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening).

A request was made to change the Nebraska “English as a Second Language” endorsement to reflect the more asset-based terminology of “Multilingual Learner.”

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

Dottie Heusman, Title IV-A Coordinator shared the purpose of Title IV-A is to improve academic achievement and schools can use the allocations in three ways: 1) Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; 2) Improve school conditions for student learning; and 3) Improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

There are no fiscal waivers for the 2021-22 year. Therefore, districts are back to all requirements that have been established with the grant. Those rules were shared with the COP Committee in November of 2021. Areas that will need to be expanded in Title IV in the upcoming year will be to help districts see the connection between their school improvement plan/goals and their needs assessment for Title IV. The other area of focus will be to use data to help determine if the Title IV-A funds are supporting the academic achievement they expected. Information from the federal audit will provide input on how to support districts in these ways.

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

Jan Handa, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Coordinator reported the external review for the recent competition for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Continuation Grants was completed in March and the State Board will vote on the slate of recommendations at the April 8, 2022 meeting. There also will be a slate of competitive Two-Year Opportunity Grants on that agenda for a vote by the State Board. Eligible recipients must be 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sites that have been in operation at least five years.

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

Ann Carmoney reported the SRSA REAP Grants are grants given to school districts directly from the federal government. The NDE helps support this process by providing membership information to the federal government, providing support to districts to access the federal websites, and by reminding districts about deadlines. This grant is given to districts that have an average daily attendance of 600 students or less. The SRSA REAP grants are due by April 15, 2022. There are 158 districts eligible and 29 of them still need to complete the application process. Two districts will be applying for the RLIS funding because it is more than their REAP allocation amount.

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

Dr. Ken Howard reported there were 13 LEA’s received about \$360,000. There has been a lot more interest because of the HCY grants and the identification process.

#### **Head Start/Early Childhood:**

Stephanie Knust, Head Start State Collaboration Office Director discussed Head Start/ Early Childhood’s four priorities for 2022-23 they will focus on. The Office of Head Start issued an Interim Final Rule, or IFR in November 2021 on vaccines and masking in Head Start Programs. Fiscal Year 2022 appropriation is \$11 billion for ongoing operations including: COLA, quality improvement funding, Migrant and Seasonal programs and

Tribal Colleges and Universities. The emergency/Covid-19 funds were awarded to programs based on funded enrollment slots and we continue to spend down those federal funds.

**Other:**

Beth and Kirk stated according to the USDE January 12, 2022 letter, USDA & NDE Nutritional Services (School Meals Program), will require districts to use the free/reduced lunch forms again for the 2022-23 school year.

**Next Meetings:**

Our next meeting date is scheduled for November 2022, day/date to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.