



September 22, 2022

Patsy Koch Johns, President
Nebraska State Board of Education
500 South 84th Street
Lincoln, NE 68510

Dear President Koch Johns,

I write this letter to provide formal notice of my intent to resign as Commissioner effective on January 3, 2023 or as soon as practicable after that date.

I have come to this decision after several weeks of contemplation and as the result of the opportunities that exist for me personally and professionally. Though it has been a hard choice, I am excited for a new professional opportunity that will begin in the new year. I also know the importance of the work ahead for the Department of Education and the State of Nebraska and I stand ready to contribute to a smooth transition over the next few weeks and months.

I am proud of my nearly nine years of service to the State of Nebraska but most proud of the opportunity to have served with so many dedicated board members, staff, and partners in this work over the years. In reflection, we have sought to change the very nature of the work of the agency from compliance to support and to modernize functions of the agency. The State Board's strategic plan adopted in 2016 was the fruit of two years of work across the state and within the Department. The primary charge of the plan was one of restructuring the agency to meet the needs and challenges of the future and addressing the inequities inherent in the educational outcomes of students. Additionally, the charge was to make a difference by increasing expectations through standards and assessment while increasing support offered to schools and communities. The foundation and frame are established through the work of the last several years. Working with the State Board and staff, I have been successful in achieving expectations set out in the strategic vision and direction. And though I will not be with the NDE, my future endeavors will focus my skills and attention on education and policy issues.

Little did any of us know then that the preparations for the future would include the need for response to the challenges of a pandemic. Though I always hoped to find a more suitable home for the Nebraska Department of Education, I did not imagine an office move would happen in the midst of these most challenging times. Now, nearing the three-year mark of the pandemic, it is remarkable to realize and reflect that a third of my tenure has been leading through these challenges. I am especially proud of the leadership that I was able to provide to Nebraska schools and to NDE as we took bold steps forward during historic disruptions.

I offer my resignation now as it seems best to begin preparations for the necessary transitions ahead and to focus our work and attention where most needed. I am looking forward to opportunities to continue my leadership in education at the state and national level. I hope to spend my remaining time with the State Board and the NDE staff addressing the immediate needs and ensuring that the foundation for the future is solid. I offer my complete dedication to making this transition successful and look forward to serving the mission of the NDE for the remainder of my tenure.

Sincerely,

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.