



TEL 402.471.2295
FAX 402.471.0117



P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987



education.ne.gov



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: February 14, 2023

TO: Deborah A. Frison, Ed.D.
Deputy Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dr. Zainab Rida and Jay Martin, Office of Coordinated Student Support Services

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Grant the Deputy Commissioner the authority to accept a Subaward Grant from the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center to engage qualified individual(s) to deliver training in the evidence-based Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S) model.

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Subaward Grant Recipient

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- **What:** The *Engaging Nebraska Educators in Mental Health Awareness Training* project will capitalize on the position of local schools to meet the mental health needs of Nebraska students in grades K-12, by training educators in the evidence-based intervention of Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S).
- **Why:**
 - Currently, the mental health needs of Nebraska's youth are growing, yet unmet due to a shortage of available mental health services across the state.
 - Nebraska Rule 10 states in section 011.01B: Each school system has a safety and security plan for the schools in the system. The plan addresses the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors. The plan is approved by the local governing body. PFA is a component of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
 - This project will meet this shortage by preparing and utilizing a workforce positioned in every community in the state – educators. However, to fully support and respond to students' mental health needs, educators require additional training and support.
 - The PFA-S or crisis team prepares the school district to respond to hazards, threats, and incidents. It also executes and coordinates the response in the event of an actual crisis incident and assists students and staff to recover as quickly as possible with minimal negative repercussions.
- **Who:** PFA-S is designed for delivery in school settings by school staff and includes components that will fill existing educator skill-gaps related to identifying students with mental health issues, mental health promotion, and appropriately responding to crises (including de-escalation).
- **How:** State-wide implementation of PFA-S, through replication of an established framework for delivery, will achieve the project goals of:
 - organizing educators in local and regional PFA-S teams,



TEL 402.471.2295
FAX 402.471.0117



P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987



education.ne.gov



- training educators in PFA-S, (c) creating systems for educator referral of students with mental health needs (including SMI/SED) to Regional Behavioral Health Authorities,
- developing and disseminating resources and strategies to promote the mental health of school communities.

These goals will be achieved through a partnership between the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, the Nebraska Department of Education, and Nebraska's Regional Behavioral Health Authorities.

- **When:** Over the course of the project (December 1, 2022-September 30, 2026) the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will train 1,000 Nebraska educators (250 per year) to serve all 244 of Nebraska's school districts.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): March 2023

ESTIMATED COST: \$50,000 for Year One of 4-year grant

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC) through The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement:
- Rationale for method of procurement:
- Rationale for contractor selection:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

This project will serve all public and non-public schools in Nebraska. Schools can register on the [Psychological First Aid for Schools](#) page on the NDE School Safety website. Multiple opportunities for training are provided throughout the year to meet school needs. NDE's goal is that all staff members in every building of a school district are ready to respond from minute one of a crisis through recovery.

**Updated 02.07.2023*