



### PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** January 17, 2024

**TO:** Dr. Brian L. Maher  
Commissioner of Education

**FROM:** Kristin Yates, Information Systems Officer  
Jill Aurand, Administrator, Data Management and Application Development

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Grant the Commissioner the authority to enter into new contracts with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), contractors and other vendor partners in support of NDE Portal replacement and other associated projects.

**AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other):** Contract

#### RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This is the first of three inter-related informational items detailing contracts, services and projects proposed for disposition of remaining ESSER funds allocated to the area of Information, Data and Technology (IDT). The IDT developed an updated strategic plan in 2022 to guide our area’s planned activities through the end of fiscal year 2026 (see attachment A) in accordance with the strategic direction for data and systems articulated in the Nebraska State Board of Education’s 2017-2026 Strategic Vision and Direction statement ([2019-Strategic-Plan.pdf \(nebraskaeducationvision.com\)](#)) with the goal of providing data and business process modernizations that improve internal and external access to data, customer service, data and IT security, automation of internal business processes, stakeholder education and overall area sustainability. Key areas of emphasis in the IDT Strategic Plan include the following:



All proposed expenditures conform with the Information, Data and Technology Strategic Plan. This agenda item seeks the authority to enter into new contracts for temporary OCIO contractors, external contractors and software or materials purchases required to meet the demands and objectives of the following projects:

Project	Description	Est. Cost
1. NDE Portal Replacement	The NDE portal is the main means of secure data collection and access transactions with schools and districts. The current portal was written nearly 20 years ago. Technology and security functionality has not been upgraded to meet the current needs of the agency and districts or to appropriately mitigate security risks. The new "Access Management System" is intended to be a single source of access for all secure collections and applications at the agency. It will utilize Single Sign On for school district and NDE staff, improving security by eliminating the need to remove access to users manually. It will streamline the provisioning of access to data collections and applications, reducing time and effort for each district administrator. Applications that are not tied to a school district, such as the Excellence In Teaching and Exempt Schools applications, will also be able to be integrated into this new system.	\$1,000,000
2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment	This project will allow NDE staff to internally administer our Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) web application that is currently being supported by a paid external vendor. This application enables school-level users to enter CNA scoring through an intuitive, easily navigated interface.	\$100,000
3. Public Records Requests	This project provides website development, content management and additional technical supports to aid in efficient response to the numerous public records request received by NDE each year.	\$150,000
4. Finance Data	This is a proof of concept project to increase internal and external users ability to make data-informed decisions through increased integration of student, staff, district and financial data sources.	\$500,000
5. Purchase Card and Travel Applications	This project will enable department-wide rollout of a proof of concept project automating Purchase Card and Travel Authorization business processes.	\$150,000
6. Data Catalog	This project will modernize the NDE data catalog. Data catalogs provide critical information about attributes of the data NDE collects and makes available to internal and external users and enables easier self service use of NDE data.	\$200,000
7. SharePoint Migration	This project provides additional application development support to facilitate continued refinement of NDE's migration to Microsoft SharePoint.	\$49,999
8. Data Collections Approval and Administration Application	This project will allow for a proof of concept to allow for automation of data requests received by the agency in order to provide increased efficiency in responses to data users.	\$150,000

With federal deadlines for completion of ESSER spending on September 30, 2024, the Commissioner may reallocate resources among specifically enumerated projects above as well as approve additional modernization and data improvement projects of like kind of benefit to of the Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska school districts.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** February 2023

**ESTIMATED COST:** Up to \$2,500,000.

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal ESSER Resources
- 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:

Two methods of procurement will be utilized for these projects. The State of Nebraska operates an Information Technology (IT) Time and Materials Procurement system called “Covendis” that provides access to pre-approved quality IT services suppliers. The process of requisition, interview, and contracting occurs through the system. The rates for different individuals hired for tasks and services through the system are based on market rates and provide a more efficient engagement of IT services. In addition, NDE has contracted directly with the state Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), term employees and independent contractors for similar IT service augmentation and support. These services provide temporary IT staff augmentation for the continued support for deliverables that support the State Board Vision and Direction Plan. A Request for Proposal is currently being developed for the Portal Replacement project and additional RFPs may be issued for the Finance Visualization project or other projects if adequate resources for the projects cannot be obtained through Covendis or OCIO.

- Rationale for method of procurement: Procurement of contractors from Covendis or OCIO satisfies state procurement requirements. Competitive negotiation will be used for any RFPs issued based on the nature of the services required and the cost and duration expected. Multiple responses are desired in order to effectively compare the bidders’ offerings and capabilities.
- Rationale for contractor selection: Contractors hired from Covendis will be selected after review of materials and interview. Where the RFP process is utilized, a contract will be signed with the responsible contractor whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered.

**FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:**

- Describe the grantee selection process: Not Applicable

*\*Updated 08.15.2023*