



## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** July 16, 2024

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

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Contract for a public engagement campaign

**AGENDA ITEM TYPE :** Action - Contract

### RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Step Up to Quality is Nebraska's quality rating and improvement system for early childhood education and care providers. It is jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It not only provides assistance to early childhood education and care providers, but it also provides assistance to families looking for high quality early childhood education and care services for their young children.
- In May of 2024, the Office of Early Childhood Education informed the Nebraska State Board of Education of a request for proposals (RFP) that was being issued for a public engagement campaign for Step Up to Quality.
- Four entities responded to the RFP.
- Scoring was done by an internal group of staff from the office of Early Childhood. The Administrator, the Director of Step Up to Quality, and the Early Childhood Marketing and Communications Specialist.
- The proposals were scored and the one achieving the highest score was submitted by Emspace + Lovgren. This proposal included plans for paid media, and a well-articulated social media marketing campaign. It was the only proposal that individualized their approach to the multiple needs of families, center based early childhood programs and family child care programs.
- The contract for the public engagement campaign will be funded with federal Child Care and Development Grant funds.
- The contract is to begin September 1, 2024
- The Office of Early Childhood Education is asking for approval to contract for four years.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING:** August 2024

**ESTIMATED COST:** \$200,000 per year

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal Child Care and Development Fund  
Federal Child Care and Development Fund activities include building and maintaining a state quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for child care. In Nebraska, the QRIS is Step Up to Quality.
- New or Renewal: This is a new contract resulting from an RFP issued in May of 2024
- If renewal, date of first approval: NA

**FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:**

- Indicate the method of procurement: This is the result of a Request for proposals. Competitive negotiation was used once the vendor was chosen.
- Rationale for method of procurement: This follows requirements of the State of Nebraska Procurement policies.
- Rationale for contractor selection: This contractor showed a knowledge of early childhood education and care programs and wrote in a variety of methods to engage providers of care. Other proposals lacked detail and seemed to rely on paid media and generic approaches to use of social media.

**FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:**

- Describe the grantee selection process:

*\*Updated 08.15.2023*