



**Proposed Biennial Budget Requests**

**Aid Funding Requests**

**1. ESU Core Service Funding**

**Description:** State Statute 79-1241.03 provides for an annual increase in ESU Core Service funding of two percent plus student growth each year which amounts to \$333,308 for FY 25/26 and \$341,540 for FY26/27. However, Legislature has not increased the appropriation for ESU Core Service funding since 2009/10 so the ESU’s are requesting an increase of three million for each year of the biennium. The increase is to be distributed evenly between the ESUCC for cybersecurity support with the rest being added to the ESU core service funding formula to be distributed per State Statute.

Amount:	FY 25/26	\$3,000,000
	FY26/27	\$3,000,000

**Operations Funding Requests**

**1. Software and platforms needed for data collections, transformations, hosting, storage and display.**

**Description:** NDE has made significant investments in updating data systems and avenues for district and public access to data over the last several years. Cloud-focused changes to our data system will increase access to data in ways that make it easier, faster, simpler and safer for interested parties to access data for data-informed decision-making through user-friendly interfaces such as dashboards. Many of our legacy data systems operated on outdated code or were written using antiquated tools or code that are potentially insecure and are no longer best practice for data management or data presentation. These systems have been funded with Federal grants in past years which are no longer available going forward.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$448,142
	FY 26/27	\$470,549

**2. Early childhood integrated data systems funding (ECIDS)**

**Description:** A variety of states are engaged in developing ECIDS systems for the collection and linking of early childhood student and staff data NDE’s past work in the area has provided an opportunity to collaborate with DHHS in the early childhood data system space. More work is necessary. According to

current and emerging research, children show differences in communication abilities as young as 18 months of age. A CDC report summarizing research in the field, noted the correlation between vocabulary at 18 months and reading ability at 3rd grade. Third grade reading has, in turn, been correlated to high school graduation rates. At young ages, a child's health is intricately intertwined with their growing cognitive and social abilities. The Nebraska ECIDS project has the potential to harness the health data of its youngest citizens to pinpoint where resources can be focused to obtain the greatest long-term benefit for our individual children, our communities, and the long-term success of our state.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$250,000
	FY 26/27	\$297,350

### **3. Information Security Specialist Position**

**Description:** The department currently maintains about 120 web applications/collections, has terabytes of data, (staff documents and collections), some of which is privately identifiable data of our constituents, contractors etc. Without a dedicated person, we lack effective policy creation and dissemination processes (required by FERPA, SLDS grant, and SSA and CAFR audits), additionally we lack proper ongoing auditing of security controls, and staff trainings. We collaborate with OCIO's information security officer, but still need a position for the day to day, hands on kinds of duties.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$151,893
	FY 26/27	\$153,481

### **4. Development of an application to manage existing and new teacher payment systems.**

**Description:** Funding is needed to build and maintain applications that could be used to manage any existing and new teacher payment requirements from the legislature. Current systems that would be incorporated are the "Teach in Nebraska Today Program" and the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program." Currently these systems are managed through a mix of Qualtrics surveys, email, and manual work. This system would automate some of the work, allow teachers to apply and to view the status of their application, and NDE to manage all aspects of the program. It would also provide a system where new legislative requirements for similar programs could be implemented quickly.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$298,382
	FY 26/27	\$301,453

### **5. Priority school support work funding**

**Description:** In the most recent administration of the NAEP assessment, Nebraska is among the top states for literacy and math in 4th and 8th grades. However, when reviewing disaggregated data, there are disparities between students with disabilities and those without, students from low-income backgrounds and those from middle to upper class backgrounds, and students who are learning English for the first time and native English speakers. In 2023, the NDE state accountability system identified 303 excellent schools, 437 great schools, 288 schools, and 76 needs support to improve schools. The NDE federal accountability system originally identified 27 school in 2018 and it has increased to 87 schools in 2023, located across the state. The funding provided to the NDE to support schools in need of improvement has not increased since the inception of the Priority School work in 2015. Despite an increasing number of schools needing support, there has not been an increase to the amount of funds appropriated to this work. An increase of \$150,000 will allow the NDE to build internal and regional

capacity and not rely on external contractors to conduct this work. Increasing the funding for priority school work will allow for more schools to receive the support they need to improve student outcomes. Of the Needs Support for Improve elementary schools, the average status score (percent of ELA and math proficient scores combined) was 24%; the average status score of middle schools was 24%; and for high schools, the average status score was 28%. These are very low averages among our schools with the classification of Needs Support to Improve and should be a call to action. With the increase of state funds to support local schools and districts, it is important to ensure a return on that investment by enabling the NDE to better differentiate supports and reach additional schools in need of assistance.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$150,000
	FY 26/27	\$150,000

#### **6. Statewide assessment system funding request**

**Description:** The NDE has engaged multiple stakeholders in determining needs for a balanced statewide assessment system that is primarily focused on supporting excellent instruction, while also providing essential summative information that fulfills federal requirements. The basic components of the statewide assessment system are a through-year/summative assessment design and an assessment delivery platform. 9942

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$898,339
	FY26/27	\$3,296,128

#### **7. Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) Funding request**

**Description:** NDE has been a partner in NSWERS through a Memorandum of Understanding and an interlocal agreement since its inception. NSWERS' focus is on integrating data in the PK-20-Workforce space and supporting evidence-based decision-making and program improvement for partner agencies as well as external users. NSWERS development has been 100% grant funded thus far, but NSWERS is in the process of shifting to a 50% grant/service funded, 50% partner funded financing model in the next biennium. As a partner, we are obligated under the terms of the current interlocal agreement to provide financial support.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$130,893
	FY 26/27	\$179,795

#### **8. Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind and Visually Impaired (NCECBVI) funding for increased staffing capacity**

**Description:** The NDE contracts with Educational Service Unit (ESU) #4 to operate the center and provide both residential services as well as educational programming. Through this contract, the center serves children from infancy to age 21. NCECBVI's program offers the expertise and specialized skills of the center's staff to blind, visually impaired, and multi-disabled students in residential, day, and outreach settings. Services are provided to local school districts, students, families, teachers, and other support staff upon request. Since 2021, NCECBVI has experienced an increase in requests from local school districts to provide educational programming, support, and technical assistance due to the continued rise in appropriately trained personnel to meet the complex needs of people who are blind, visually impaired, and students who have multiple disabilities. This rise has been attributed to the increase in

significant needs of students and in educator shortages. However, for NCECBVI to meet the increased requests made by districts, additional funding for positions within NCECBVI is required.

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$550,000
	FY 26/27	\$830,000

**9. Appropriation for basic maintenance and repairs of the facility**

**Description:** To provide for basic maintenance and repairs dedicated to ensuring that the existing infrastructure receive the investment necessary to begin addressing backlogged repairs and deferred maintenance liabilities to maintain the facility’s suitability to its original intended function. These are repairs to prevent deterioration, damage to the building, maintain support systems, and operating equipment. Postponing repairs and system upgrades lead to higher operating and maintenance costs and subsequently increased repair or replacement costs. Maintenance and repairs include:

- Bathroom (12) Update, \$199,296
- Carpet Replacement, \$49,442
- Second Floor Beak Room Accessibility Update, \$11,100
- Replace/Maintain Exterior Doors, \$18,000
- General Labor, \$16,760

<b>Amount:</b>	FY 25/26	\$294,598
	FY 26/27	\$0