



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: May 21, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Amy Rhone, Administrator – The Office of Special Education

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action: Issuance of subgrants for the purposes of funding the Promoting Engagement and Knowledge Projects (PEaK).

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

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Office of Special Education is bringing forward the activities that are being continued pursuant to the Federal IDEA Part B regulations that require federal IDEA Part B funds to be utilized by states for activities outlined within the IDEA Part B federal application. The Office of Special Education, Part B Discretionary Grant funds requested within this proposal meet the Federal subgranting requirements contained within 2 CFR §200.331 to use the funds to carry out a portion of the public award and for a public purpose specified in the authorizing statute of IDEA Part B.

The NDE Office of Special Education is committed to supporting districts in improving results for children with disabilities. To meet this purpose, funding is available annually to support implementation and evaluation of Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) through a PEaK (Promoting Engagement and Knowledge) project. The PEaK Project funding is supplemental to, and is not intended to supplant or duplicate, any other funding source(s). Districts or consortiums of districts supported by an ESU may apply for projects funded with IDEA discretionary dollars for the specific purpose of improving learning for children with disabilities.

As part of Nebraska's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) System, all school districts must participate in an ongoing review of their special education program utilizing the Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD) process. The process includes an analysis of district data to study relevant data, district infrastructure, and other pertinent findings to identify target areas for improvement. This is followed by identifying measurable results (goals) and coherent improvement strategies that will be the focus of the improvement activities in the TIP. Next, the district reviews the current infrastructure and capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain evidence-based practice.

Finally, based upon strengths and challenges, a comprehensive, multi-year TIP detailing coherent improvement strategies focused on improving results for children with disabilities is created.

The NDE recognizes Inclusive Education as a framework to implement many of the evidence-based practices identified in districts' TIPs. Inclusive Education offers a model for providing high-quality educational programming that improves access and opportunities for all learners. Districts and ESUs that choose to Improve Literacy Outcomes as their General Focus for Improvement **and** that choose to leverage Inclusive Education in the implementation of their TIPs are eligible to apply for the Journey to Inclusion Grant.

Subgrants are awarded to districts or consortium of districts that meet the grant requirements and that have demonstrated project completion and success in previous years.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): April 2025

ESTIMATED COST: Total available funding, to be distributed to districts or consortiums on a formula basis = \$2,301,880.00.

ESU #1	\$58,338.00
ESU #2	\$95,256.00
ESU #3	\$98,532.00
ESU #6	\$63,651.00
ESU #7	\$91,609.00
ESU #8	\$76,671.00
ESU #10	\$82,950.00
ESU #13	\$95,025.00
Bellevue Public Schools	\$66,108.00
Elkhorn Public Schools	\$80,185.00
Grand Island Public Schools	\$70,490.00
Lincoln Public Schools	\$291,578.00
Millard Public Schools	\$163,100.00
Omaha Public Schools	\$361,851.00
Papillion LaVista Public Schools	\$84,273 .00

*Pursuant to NDE, Agency Management Policy (AMP) 2.02, the list above only contains the PEaK grants of \$50,000 or more to review and approve. The listed grants make up 77% of the almost \$2,301,880.00 provided in PEaK funding annually.

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: IDEA Part B – 611, Discretionary Funds

- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: Last approved in 2024

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:

Describe the grantee selection process: As the Office of Special Education must make federal application(s) each year under Part B (611 and 619) and Part C, the use of IDEA Federal Funding must align to meeting the IDEA federal regulations as they are set forth within the respective applications.

The NDE, Office of Special Education, annually, conducts opportunities to apply for discretionary grant funds to conduct activities for the improvement of services to infants, toddlers, students with disabilities and their families. Annual alignment in priorities established by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), as well as a alignment of priorities within our NDE, Office of Special Education, allows for the selection of project to receive sub-recipient grants, contracts, and/or memorandums of understanding (MOU) for each funding period. Notice of funding opportunities are annually published and proposals are evaluated to ensure funds are awarded to projects that are able to meet the federal and state priorities.

The Office of Special Education, Part B Discretionary Grant funds requested within this proposal meet the Federal subgranting requirements contained within 2 CFR §200.331 to use the funds to carry out a portion of the public award and for a public purpose specified in the authorizing statute of IDEA Part B:

- To provide technical assistance to schools and LEAs, and direct services, including direct student services described in section 1003A(c)(3) of the ESEA to children with disabilities, to schools or LEAs implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities under section 1111(d) of the ESEA on the basis of consistent underperformance of the disaggregated subgroup of children with disabilities, including providing professional development to special and regular education teachers, who teach children with disabilities, based on scientifically based research to improve educational instruction, in order to improve academic achievement based on the challenging academic standards described in section 1111(b)(1) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 1411 (e)(2)(C)(xi))
- To support capacity building activities and improve the delivery of services by local educational agencies to improve results for children with disabilities (20 U.S.C. 1411 (e)(2)(C)(vii))
- To assist local educational agencies in meeting personnel shortages (20 U.S.C. 1411 (e)(2)(C)(vii))

Through these sub-award(s), NDE ensures appropriate and quality learning opportunities should exist for all children. All PEaK Projects as part of the OSE subaward process, has undergone an evaluation of sub-award/grant obligations, annually to ensure that the grantee selected is carrying out the responsibilities set forth

within the state plan and sub-award/grant. The project has successfully carried out similar duties on previous sub-awards/grants.