

Committee of Practitioners Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 2021 - via ZOOM and NDE Office - 9:00 am

The November 17, 2021 meeting of the Nebraska Committee of Practitioners was held In Person at 500 S. 84th St., 2nd Floor Lincoln, NE, 68510, and pursuant to the LB 83 via Zoom. [Zoom address: <https://zoom.us/j/4024712452> Meeting ID: 402 471 2452 Or via Telephone: +1 346 248 7799 Meeting ID: 402 471 2452]. Access to the meeting was made available to the Committee members, members of the public.

Tina Forté, Committee Chair, called the Committee of Practitioners meeting to order at 9:00 AM on Wednesday November 17, 2021, via Zoom and NDE Office.

Members in Attendance	NDE Staff in Attendance	Not in Attendance
Hillary Bentley	Ann Carmoney	Brent Cudly
Anne Caruso	Pat Frost	Andy DeFreece
Scott English	Sue Henry	Bill Heimann
Cheryl Enyinnaya	Dottie Heusman	Kristin Schultz
Tina Forté	Ken Howard	Monica Shipman
Michele Hensley	Anne Hubbell	Kim Snyder
Linda Hix	Jim Kent	Jan Handa-NDE
Tara James	Allyson Olson	Kim Larson-NDE
Tracy Kovar	Kirk Russell	
Ita Mendoza	Beth Wooster	
Matt Rohlfen	Rhonda Wredt	Guest
Deb Ross	Benjamin Zink	
Kris Schneider		
Robert Ziegler		

Welcome & Introductions:

This COP meeting was held in person at the NDE Office and via Zoom on November 17, 2021. Tina Forté, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the Zoom session and individuals participating in person. Beth Wooster ESEA Federal Programs Administrator, introduced new staff that have joined the team. Dr. Ken Howard started in July as the new Homeless Liaison. Ann Carmoney began in October as a Title I consultant and REAP coordinator. Beth Wooster ESEA Federal Programs Administrator and Kirk Russell, Assistant Administrator/Title I Director welcomed Mr. Scott English, Assistant Director (DHHS Facility Based Schools) who accepted the invitation to join the COP committee. Tina then had everyone introduce themselves and their roles.

Nebraska Open Meeting Acts (NOMA) Reminder:

Tina issued a general reminder about the NOMA. A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available.

Open for public comments:

Tina asked if there was any public comment. None was requested.

Approval of Minutes for June 22nd meeting:

Ann Nickerson made a motion to approve the June 22, 2021 minutes. Deb Ross seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Scott English-Assistant Director of Schools (DHHS Facility Based Schools-YDC)

Scott shared the updates to the DHHS Facility Based Schools and the partnership between NDE and DHHS. This project consisted of creating a unified vision, mission, and core values amongst all the YRTC campuses. A strategic plan with priorities and a timeline has been put in place. With all of the upcoming changes and challenges for the YRTC campuses, Scott now believes the staff “know their why” and has set out to implement the vision and purpose.

Election of Committee of Practitioners Chairperson for 2021-2022:

Tina Forté Director of Title IA from Omaha Public Schools was re-elected by unanimous voice vote to serve as the Chairperson for the 2021-22 school year.

NDE COP Process Rules – Other:

Kirk shared the COP feedback from the September 2021 google poll. The survey was provided for COP voting members to offer input on several items. The COP Executive committee will use the feed-back and input going forward to continue to improve our Advisory Committee work.

NDE COP Process Rule – Report on Recruitment & Committees-

Kirk thanked the six volunteers who have volunteered to form an Ad Hoc recruitment committee who will review and propose membership names to be seated on the committee. The committee will plan to meet three times in the next three months.

NDE COP Process Rules – Purpose:

Due to the 2021 Legislature amending LB 83 (Nebraska Open Meetings Act), our “Purpose Section” of the Advisory Process Rules needed to be updated. *[As defined in Public Law 114-95, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], §1603(b)(1), IN GENERAL – Each State Educational agency that receives funds under this title shall create a State committee of practitioners to advise the State in carrying out its responsibilities under this title. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act (as amended by LB83, 2021 Legislature) guidelines will be followed].* Linda Hix made the motion to approve, and Kris Schneider seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

NDE COP Process Rules – Emergency Declaration-

Linda Hix made the motion to approve the Title IA Paraprofessional Qualification Flexibilities Offered by NDE and Kris Schneider seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

[As such, the NDE is temporarily modifying the requirements for instructional paraprofessionals by allowing districts broad authority to use locally determined measures for paras to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and/or mathematics for paraprofessionals funded through Title I-A. Districts may employ paras who have a high school diploma or equivalent and demonstrate knowledge through a locally approved means.

“Locally approved” means should include at least one of the following within 30 calendar days of hire or 30 days after this notice (by November 6, 2021):

Beth stated the Paraprofessional Qualification Flexibilities will be on the COP March agenda for further discussion. She asked for the committee to brainstorm for additional ideas to discuss.

EMERGENCY RELIEF GRANTS

Beth Wooster briefed the committee on the ESSER Grants timeline. The Nebraska state plan was approved and now has received all the funds. The reimbursements are being pushed through quickly as many districts are doing large projects. The commissioner has granted a second final reviewer, Dottie Heusman to assist with the process time. ESSER I and II grants have all been approved and final amendments are now being submitted. Dottie Heusman, Title Consultant, added that there continues to be more requirements from the Federal government. There will be more information requested from the districts that was not initially required from the Federal level until recently.

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported we have half of the money that has been reimbursed to the districts for EANS I. EANS II will be run by FACTS which will handle a larger amount of funds. The numbers NDE are submitting to the USED will allow us to serve approximately 85% of the free and reduced students in Nebraska. Once the USED approves EANS II plan we will have six months to have all funds budgeted and allocated.

Dr. Ken Howard, Title Consultant, reported on the ARP-HCY grant. He recapped Nebraska was awarded approximately \$3.6 million. Of that amount \$2.7 million will go directly to school districts. ARP-HCY I is a competitive grant, and the application is in the final stages for completion. ARP-HCY II funds will be based on a formula basis centered on reported Homeless students counts taken from previous year data and based on Title I free/reduced formula. The funds remaining after subgrants have been awarded shall be twenty-five percent (25 %) or (\$893,998), and the state's plan calls for the State Homeless Liaison to use those funds for the following and similar activities as reflected in the M-V act. A partnership with SchoolHouse Connection began last spring as the SEA began working on the state's APR-HCY ESSER I and II plans. The contract was approved at the November state board meeting. The goal is to open this grant around December 1st and these funds will be good through September 30, 2025.

Federal Programs Information

Beth informed the committee that NDE has been chosen to have Federal monitoring from February 28th to March 4th. It will be a desk audit and includes all ESSA grants; Title I-A, School Improvement, Title I-C, Title II-A, Title III, Title IV-A, Title V-B. It will also include ESSER, EANS and GEERS funds at a later date. Several districts were also chosen to participate in this audit to look at how NDE is corresponding with the districts. Districts included: Omaha Public Schools, Lincoln Public Schools, Millard Public Schools, Mitchell Public Schools, Westside Community Schools and ESU #9.

Waivers:

Beth listed the previous fiscal waivers. The latest August 5, 2021 Fiscal Waiver can carryover 19-20 and now 20-21 funds. Any 18-19 funds cannot be carried over again. Title I normally has a limit of 15% of the total allocation may be carried over which has been lifted. Waivers can be found ([here](#)).

Nonpublic

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman reported on the consultations and asked nonpublic schools to turn in free and reduced numbers. More students equal more money to local and state levels. Even if school does not plan on using the money, he asks schools to turn in those numbers.

Multi-District Agreements for 2021-22 ([here](#))

Kirk discussed the future changes for multi-district agreements that will affect Title I cooperatives. He shared the four ESU's; ESU #2, #7, #10 and #16 will continue to support their school districts for 2021-22 through the use of "contracted services" agreements. He explained each district will individually complete the ESSA Consolidated Application going forward.

Consolidated Application for 2021-22

Beth stated that there was an issue with the reallocations on the unified grant profiles. All districts had received the reallocations twice. It was then discovered that Title III IE allocations were uploaded incorrectly. MTW is working on correcting these.

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Kirk reported for Kim Larson: Our NDE Family and Community Engagement Coordinator provided a few updates on the School, Family & Community Engagement Framework. We are completing our first year for the Nebraska Café. We ultimately plan to create resources for school districts to implement their own CAFEs to bring families together and give educators the chance to listen to families directly regarding their experiences and support they need. If you would be interested in contributing, please contact Kim Larson at kim.larson@nebraska.gov.

ESEA Program Updates

Title I-A: Educationally Disadvantaged

Kirk Russell, Title I Director shared for the upcoming year (2021-22) there will be one hundred thirty-four Schoolwide Plans submitted, one hundred eight SW buildings monitored and one hundred twenty-nine buildings participating in PEER Review. We will use the same SharePoint landing webpage and regional In-Person PEER Reviewing sessions.

The ESEA Consultants are also working to improve the ESSA Consolidated Application, specifically on the Title IA program information page question number one and the Schoolwide Plan cover page. Both pages are meant to show how each building/district is serving their grade level bands and that these documents both will match.

2021 Title I, Part A Comparability Reporting requirement is coming to a close. There were twenty-three (23) districts that were required to complete in the Portal. Comparability is a Title I requirement to ensure that a district is providing comparable resources to Title I and non-Title I buildings.

Title I-A School Improvement Grant (SIG)

Dottie Heusman, SIG Coordinator reported additional dollars were available to be used for this grant, so it was continued until September 30, 2022, for the two districts that were SIG schools for 2020-21. These additional dollars were due to unused dollars by LEAs in the 2019-20 school year. The allocations that were awarded this year are: Walthill Elementary School \$29,323 and Schuyler Central High School \$29,324. Each school has completed a new grant budget. These dollars must be spent this school year, or they will be returned to the federal government. Both districts are aware of this and have plans to use these dollars for continuations of projects from past years.

Title I-A School Improvement (1003a)

Dottie stated due to a waiver because of COVID issues the USDE has extended this grant as well and new schools were not selected. This was due to the lack of test results in all states because of the disruption of learning last year. There are 15 districts/27 school buildings who will still receive funding during the 2021-22 school year.

The Federal Programs staff held a meeting with each district to discuss their needs and a budget was determined. Amounts were then awarded based on needs. When all reimbursement requests for the 2020-21 school year are received the additional money left unspent from that year will be reallocated to all the schools. Any dollars unspent as of October 1, 2022, are returned to the federal government. We anticipate selecting schools in fall of 2022 for the next round of grants. We should have data to make these determinations.

Title I-C: Migrant

Sue Henry, Migrant Coordinator and Benjamin Zink, Migrant Program Specialist gave an update that funds will be allocated to 14 LEA/LOA projects to provide supplemental instructional and support services for eligible migratory children and youth residing in the specific district. Beginning with the 2021-22 year we have transitioned to the Non-Project area (counties north of the interstate, Blaine, Loup, Garfield Wheeler, Custer, Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, and counties south of the interstate (Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Furnas, Harlan) to the ESU 9 project. The purpose for adding the new project is to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of eligible migratory families and children that are residing in the specified area. Benjamin explained the movement occurring on the [Nebraska Migrant Regional Map](#).

Title I-D: Neglected At-Risk Delinquent

Pat Frost, Federal Programs Title I, Part D Specialist reported districts are sending in their caseload counts for the year which generates funds for Title IA Neglected at the LEAs that have facilities within their boundaries. Title I D Subpart 2 Delinquent counts are being collected to generate Title I Part D funds for the 4 districts with county detention centers.

The count collections are due to USDE by January 15th. The 2021-22 allocations are NE Correctional Services, \$131,521 and NE DHHS, \$193,040.

Title II-A: Improving Teacher Quality

Jim Kent, Title Consultant/Nonpublic Ombudsman anticipates there will be more to report after the Federal audit.

Title III: Language Acquisition

Allyson Olson, Title III Director and Anne Hubbell, Title III Specialist made the following report:

1. NDE partnered with ELPA21 and received a National Professional Development grant to improve the quality of education by building capacity of content area teachers to infuse evidence-based EL best practices and to build capacity of parents/caregivers to increase language and literacy achievement in EL children. This was a very competitive round of applications, and our award is \$5 million and will extend for five years.
2. There was a dip in ELPA21 Summative proficiency performance from 16.44% in 2019-2020 to 12.8% in 2020-2021.
3. Nebraska is participating with ELPA21 in a pilot study for alternate assessment for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. Nebraska is one of ten states in this pilot study. We are looking for students and teachers to participate. Deadline for this recruitment is December 15, 2021. [pilot study flyer](#).

Title IV-A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE)

Dottie Heusman, Title IV-A Coordinator reported Information was shared with districts this year to help clarify information about the needs assessment requirement (over \$30,000 allocation, must do a needs assessment) and the requirements for the three areas that spending can occur: Well-Rounded Education, Safe and Healthy Students, Technology for Academic Achievement. Districts receiving over \$30,000 allocation must spend 20% on safe and healthy school activities, 20% on well-rounded activities, and 60% can be spent on all three priorities with a 15% cap on spending for devices, equipment, software, and digital content. Districts receiving below \$30,000 allocation must spend on activities in at least one of the three categories. If the well-rounded and/or safe-healthy student's categories are chosen, an allocation must not be less than 20% of the total allocation. If spent in technology for academic achievement, there is a 15% cap on the same items as mentioned.

Title IV-B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

The 21st CCLC grant currently awarded 149 Nebraska sites with federal funds for 2021-22. Jan also reminded the committee the next Grant Competition for 21st CCLC Continuation Grants has a deadline of February 1, 2022. Application materials are available on the 21st CCLC webpage.

Title VI: REAP – Rural Education Achievement Program

Dottie Heusman shared Ann Carmony is the new REAP/RLIS consultant for the State of Nebraska. She reported that we are currently preparing to submit REAP data to USED by December 10, 2021 and updating all superintendent contact information by December 12th. Districts with 600 ADA student counts and under from the previous year qualify for this grant. Title IIA and IVA allocations also determine the amounts awarded. She also reported three districts were allocated funding for the 2021-22 RLIS grant.

Title VII-B: Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Ken Howard, State Home Liaison reported McKinney-Vento is an annual competitive grant given each year. Thirteen schools applied for and will be granted funds, with four schools needing to do an amendment as they had a contingent approval. It is open for schools to send in applications for the upcoming year.

Head Start/Early Childhood

The map for Head Start Regional contacts transitioning from pre-school to kindergarten has been updated and the link provided for in the agenda.

Other:

Beth shared the stance on the USDA & NDE Nutritional Services (School Meals Program) and Free/Reduced Lunch numbers. USDA and many states including Nebraska have been offering free lunches for the past year. USDE federal government guidance for the coming year (2022-23) has not been forthcoming at this time.

National ESEA Conference, February 16-19, 2022 (On-site/Online) held in New Orleans or [online](#).

Next Meetings

Our next meeting date is scheduled for March 2022, day/date to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.