



*Focusing on
Leadership & Service*

2022–2023 ANNUAL REPORT

This Annual Report provides an opportunity for ESU 16 to share with the community its current status. This report is also a requirement from the Nebraska Department of Education for accreditation. ESU 16 serves a nine-county area in rural West-Central Nebraska.

Mission Statement

ESU 16 provides visionary leadership and equitable access to services for all learners.

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These core values and guiding principles are fundamental to how we reflect on and engage in our shared work with student, family, school, and community partners. ESU 16 staff are **COMMITTED** to:

- Meaningful **RELATIONSHIPS** and mutual **TRUST** to ground our work with individuals, school districts and communities.
- **COLLABORATION** with colleagues and district partners to develop and deliver quality educational programs and services.
- Continuous **EVOLUTION** and **ADAPTATION** to ensure services and supports that are aligned to the unique needs of each learner and each context.
- **PROFESSIONALISM** evidenced by competence, integrity, and mutual respect.
- A foundation of **TEAMWORK** that synergizes individual expertise and collective resources

On behalf of the Educational Service Unit 16 Board and Staff, I hope this summary of services will assist you in your understanding of programs and services available through ESU 16.

It is the intent of the ESU 16 Board to plan cooperatively with local districts to meet the needs of students, teachers and administration within the service unit area. It is also a goal of the board to keep as many programs as possible under the control of local School Boards of Education.

The Educational Service Unit exists to provide services to support local school districts in their attempt to meet the educational needs of their students. These needs are determined through direct communications with school districts and an advisory council or representatives from the schools within the service unit area. Success in developing programs to meet the needs of the school districts is dependent upon effective communications. We need to know how we are doing in meeting the needs of schools, and likewise, we need the cooperation of schools to make the program work.

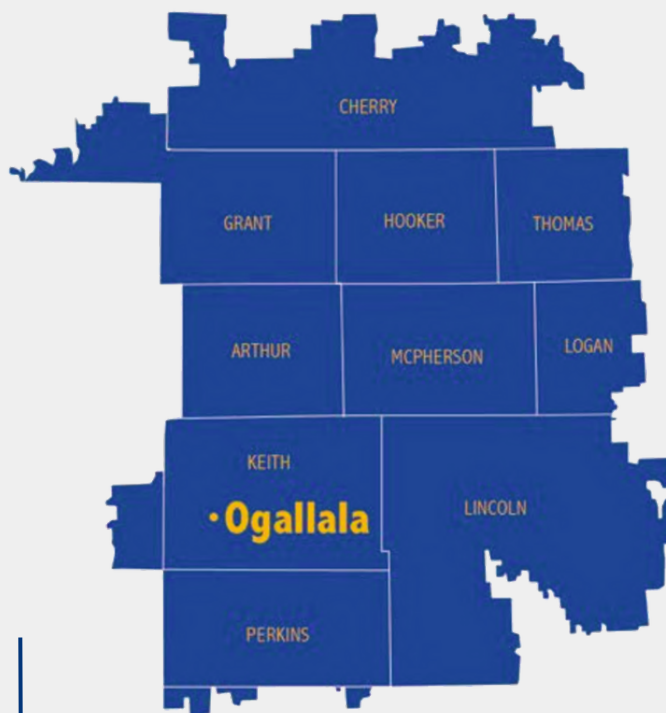
Deb Paulman

ESU 16 Administrator





45 – ESU 16 Employees
7,315 Students
9 Counties
12,000 Square Miles



TRAININGS

ESU 16 provides several training opportunities for superintendents, non-certified staff, and board members. Trainings include asbestos care and removal, wellness training, dispensing medications, budget workshops, superintendent mentorship and board member workshops. Requests for additional trainings may be made through the Advisory Council or by contacting the ESU 16 office directly.

Arthur County Schools
Brady Public Schools
Hershey Public Schools
Hyannis Area Schools
Maxwell Public Schools
McPherson County Schools
Mullen Public Schools
North Platte Public Schools
Ogallala Public Schools
Paxton Consolidated Schools
Perkins County Schools
South Platte Public Schools
Stapleton Public Schools
Sutherland Public Schools
Thedford County Schools
Wallace Public Schools
Four non-public schools

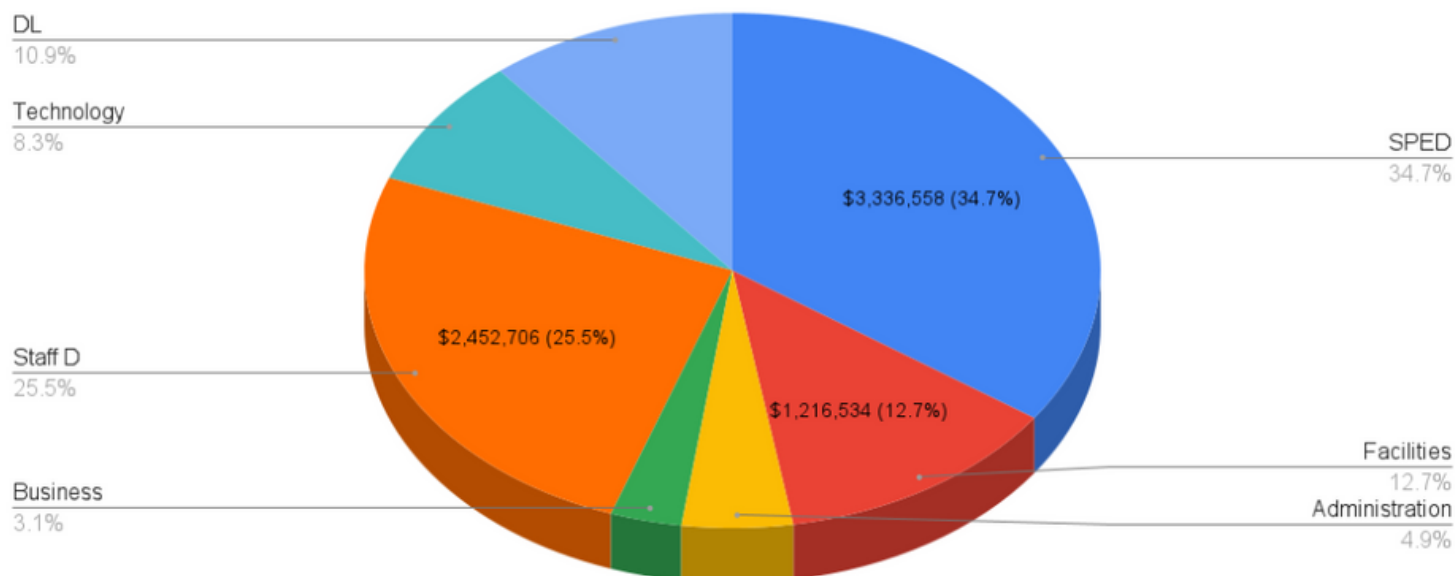
HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022-23

- Hosted seven Advisory Council meetings.
- Implemented SIMPL Process with member district administrators to review programs and services for 2023-24.
- Coop Purchase savings to ESU 16 member districts topped \$68,078.
- Coop Purchase provided furniture, supplies, and materials to 19 school districts
- Conducted annual financial audit.
- ESU 16 staff logged 6,257 service hours supporting their school districts.
- Hosted an in person ESU 15 & 16 Board Member Workshop in January.
- Facilitated the development and pilot of statewide accreditation visit protocols for Educational Service Units.
- Facilitated ESUCC/PDO identification and design of professional learning to build ESUs capacity statewide to support curriculum based professional learning.
- Worked closely with Instruction Partners, Loree Cain, Melissa Engel (ESU 16 CIP co-leads), ESU 16 Directors, Steering Committee and staff to build common understanding of three strategic goals for the 2022-2027 continuous improvement cycle.
- Partnered with Doane University to utilize ESU 16 facilities to bring the Doane Educational Leadership coursework to Western Nebraska.
- Provided Asbestos and Medication Dispensing training to area schools.



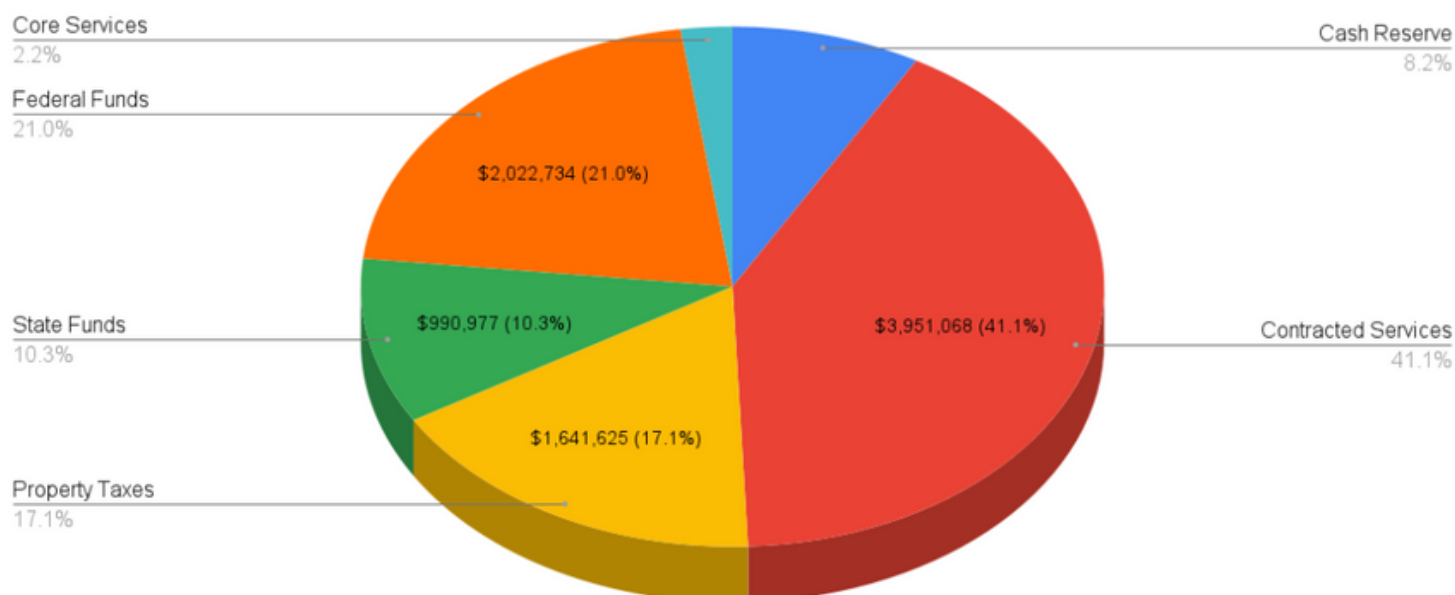
2022-23 Budgeted Expenditures by Program

Total: \$9,614,104



2022-23 Budgeted Receipts by Source

Total: \$9,614,104

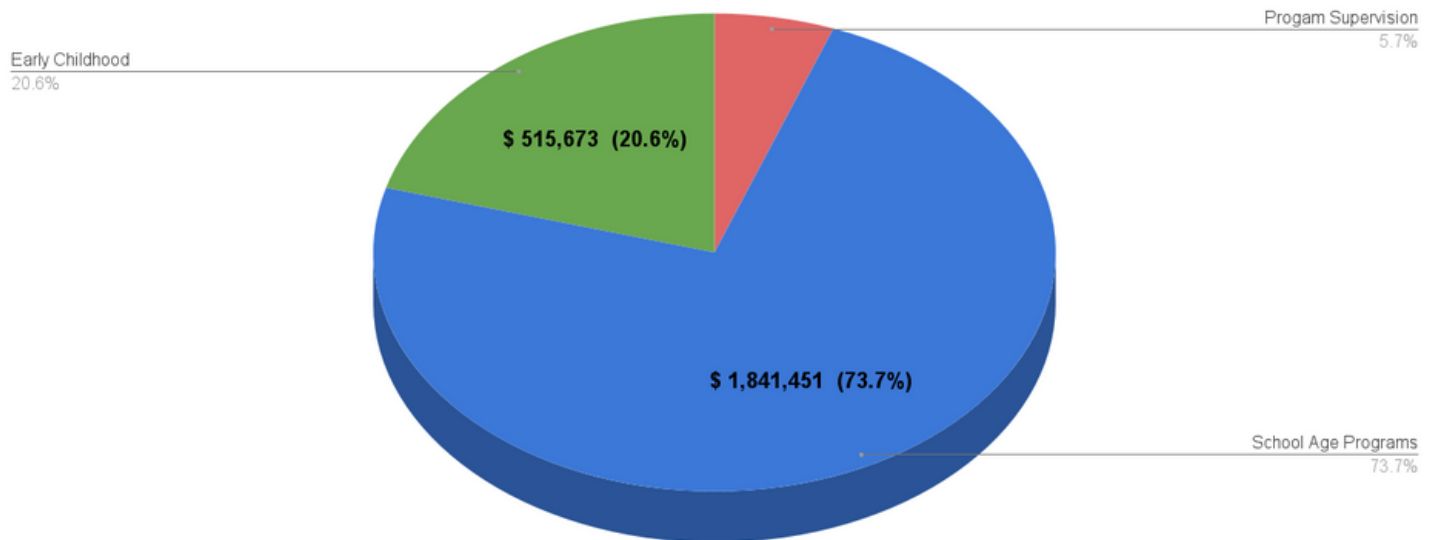


SPECIAL SERVICES

ESU 16 employs a full-time Director of Special Services who is responsible for assisting all school districts to comply with requirements of LB 403, LB 889, PL 94-142, and PL 99-457. The Director ensures adherence to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Nebraska Rule 51 and Rule 52. The Director supervises and coordinates all special education and mental health services available through ESU 16. Assistance is given to districts on referrals, student progress, student program development, IEP writing, goal development, transportation, and overall compliance with special education law. The Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities Process required by the Nebraska Department of Education is coordinated and assisted.

SPED Contracts for 2022-23

Total: \$2,540,385



HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022-23

- Delivered special education services (i.e., speech/language, OT, PT, deaf education, vision, etc.) to students birth through 21 years in their least restrictive environments.
- Increased focus on cross-discipline and cross-departmental collaboration within ESU 16 to better support ESU 16 member districts.
- Implementation of the primary service delivery model with students and families within early childhood.
- Supported district problem-solving teams through the delivery of tiered levels of intervention and through the special education evaluation process.
- Delivered Initial and Refresher Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training.
- Delivered training opportunities related to special education and mental health at the ESU 16 PLC Days in August, October, and February.
- Increased training, implementation, and fidelity across the region with routines-based early intervention strategies (i.e., routines based interview, getting ready) .
- Collaboration with NDE to provide early childhood-related professional development opportunities within planning region team 16.
- Collaboration with the Western and Central Region Autism Teams to build student teams' capacity to support students verified with autism spectrum disorder.
- Representative participation in the 22-23 Nebraska ASD STEPS Training Program.
- Implementation of PEERS Social Skills Curriculum as a tier III intervention.
- Collaboration with Western Region Transition Grant Team.
 - Hosted transition teacher PLC meetings.
- Continued support for resource teachers with delivering transition services and arranging work-based learning experiences for students ages 14-21.
- Supported school districts with the inclusion of special education students in their least restrictive environments.
- ESU 16 representatives attended the NDE Inclusive Practices and Learning Acceleration trainings throughout the school year.
- Organized events to facilitate students' social skills development and community involvement (e.g., Partner-Up Rodeo, Dining and Dancing, Talent Show, Bowling, etc).
- Organized and offered employment-specific job shadow experiences for students in contracting districts (medical, agriculture, trades, and small business).

- Facilitation of ESU 16 Mental Health Grant Work.
 - Cohort #1- Perkins County Schools, Mullen Public Schools, Brady Public Schools.
 - Cohort #2- Stapleton Public Schools, Wallace Public Schools.
 - Collaborated with Ricky Robertson, educator/author/consultant.
 - Focused on implementing and supporting tiered levels of social, emotional, and behavioral support through an MTSS framework.
- Implementation of Safe Dates (evidence-based dating violence prevention program) in classrooms.
- Engaged in collaboration with ESU 5 to refine the ESU 16 mental health service delivery model.
- Opportunities with Life Skills Transition Program held at Mid Plains Community College for 3 full-time students and 4 part-time students.
 - ESU 16 purchased a vehicle for transporting students.
- Hosted Fall & Spring Special Education meetings in North Platte that focused on special education compliance, inclusion of special education students, assistive technology, implementation of an MTSS framework, organization of student data, appreciative inquiry, conversations worth having, etc.
 - A special thank you to ESU 16 staff, Kris Elmshaeuser (NDE), AT4ALL, SRS, Georgia Ryba (UNMC), and Mikki Bohling/Jamie Lewis (ESU 10/Central ASD Team) for their presentations.
- Provided in-district support with targeted improvement plan development and NDE indicator data reporting.
- Provided IEP and MDT meeting facilitation for contracting districts.

GRANTS

Promoting Engagement and Knowledge (PEaK) Project

Early Development Network Grant

Early Development Network Tech Grant

NDE Mental Health Grant/Contract

Various Applegate Grants awarded to specific staff members

Planning Region Team 16 Grant

Western Region Transition Grant (shared grant with ESU 13 and 15)

Western Region Autism Grant (shared grant with ESU 13)

STATEWIDE INVOLVEMENT

- Nebraska Association for the Gifted (NAG) Board member
- State Transition Advisory Board
- Western Regional Transition team
- Advisory Board for Nebraska Youth Center
- Systems of Care Region II
- Western Nebraska Autism Team members
- ESU SDA Regional Crisis Team & ESU 16 Crisis Team Coordinator
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Instructor (CPI)
- Member of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (Nationally Certified School Psychologist)
- Member & Ethic Chairperson for Nebraska School Psychologist Association (NSPA)
- Western Nebraska Autism Team Advisory Council Member
- NCSA-NASES and CASE Member
- NSLHA (Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association) Members
- Nebraska Speech Language and Hearing Association Region 5 Representative
- Connection's Homeless Shelter Board Member
- American Speech Language and Hearing Association Members

CONTINUING PROJECTS

- Assistance to schools with data collection and writing targeted improvement plans.
- Assistance to schools with IDEA special education consolidated grant application, IDEA reimbursements, final financial reports, and other special education related reports
- Assistance to schools with maintenance of effort monitoring and completion of the compliance and eligibility reports.
- Provide Crisis Prevention Training to district staff
- Provide training to special education paraprofessionals
- Continue to support district ADVISER data personnel with uploading special education data and data reporting
- Submit monthly Medicaid in the Public Schools data
- Attendance at agency meetings

Special Education Staff Development

ESU 16 takes part in the NDE Special Education Continuous Improvement Process. ESU 16 provides training to districts based on district determination needs and requests. Staff members are available to provide in-service and workshops on special education issues such as Student Problem-Solving Team Training, Co-Teaching Methods, Severe Disability Models, Behavior, Classroom Management, IEP Compliance, Legislation, and Litigation. Schools may request training and consulting in any area of special education.

Speech Language Pathology

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) educate students with various identified needs. They address concerns in the areas of speech, language, fluency, voice, learning, social skills, executive functioning, and other developmental areas. SLPs evaluate children birth to 21 years and make recommendations to school personnel and parents. They develop educational plans, implement plans through structured intervention, and adjust curriculum to meet students' special needs.

Audiology

ESU 16 provides an Audiologist to assist ESU 15 and ESU 16 member school districts with students with hearing concerns. The audiologist is responsible for providing a comprehensive diagnostic testing in a soundproof booth. Consultation is provided to parents and teachers regarding the testing and the discussion of interventions that may include the use of assistive technology. The audiologist collaborated with teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing in coordinating the use of assistive technology devices such as auditory trainers and hearing aids.

Deaf Education

The teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing assists school districts with verification and accommodations for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The teacher assesses the needs for a sign language interpreter and works with the interpreter in order to meet the needs of each student. She helps the school in locating assistive technology equipment, classroom materials, and supports the classroom teacher in evaluating effectiveness.

Psychological Services

ESU 16 school psychologists complete cognitive/intellectual, social emotional, and behavioral evaluations with students to determine eligibility for special education services. They also assist school district resource teachers with the administration of academic assessments when needed. ESU 16 school psychologists support student data analysis and the development and implementation of behavior improvement plans. The school psychologists adhere to the referral process that is in accordance with NDE Rule 51. Districts' teams complete a problem-solving process prior to referral for a special education evaluation. School psychologists collaborate with the ESU 16 Mental Wellness team and districts' guidance counselors to support the mental health needs of students in districts.

Mental Wellness Team

ESU 16's mental wellness team is composed of five professionals who are certified to deliver mental health/wellness support, a representative from our ESU 16 teaching and learning department, along with our two school psychologists. This team is working to support school districts in providing tiered levels of mental wellness support to students and staff within contracting districts. This often includes being responsible for the evaluation, risk assessment, and counseling of students to address their social and emotional needs. Consultation is provided to educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for students. This team implements preventative curricula like the Safe Dates dating violence prevention program at the classroom level, and serves as liaisons between the school, community, and family.

Special Education Teacher Consultants

The ESU 16 special education teacher consultant assists school personnel in developing individualized education programs, progress monitoring, and assisting with specialized instruction. The consultant meets monthly with resource teachers to deliver important reminders, due dates, compliance information, and best practice suggestions. Contracts for teacher consultant costs are divided among school districts, based on the number of special education teachers.

Opportunity with Life Skills Program

The Opportunity with Life Skills Program (OWLS) is an enriched transition program for high school students with intellectual disabilities, age 16-21, located on the campus of Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte. The program aims to prepare students for the workforce through academic, social skills, life skills, and vocational development. It targets student growth in the following areas: increased independence, self-determination, self-advocacy, lifelong learning, and linkage to adult services.

Inclusion / Transition Services

This program assists school districts in providing services for students with more significant needs. This often includes students who have been verified with an intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, or autism. An inclusion/transition consultant travels to the school district to assist resource teachers, paraprofessionals, and classroom teachers in program planning for the IEP; conducting staffings; locating assistive devices; modifying curriculum, conferring with parents, and supporting transition-related activities and experiences.

Job responsibilities include consulting with resource teachers in relation to the development of transition plans, career assessments for transition planning, consulting with the area agency personnel regarding services available, and working cooperatively with special education staff, resource teachers, speech-language pathologists, guidance counselors, academic teachers, medical personnel, and administrative personnel to maximize available services to students with disabilities.

Early Development Network

ESU 16 received the contract with the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services for service coordination. Service coordination is the identification, referral, and coordination of services for children, birth through the age of two, and families. The service coordinator serves as the single point of contact in helping parents gain needed services and assistance. This program is funded through the Department of Health & Human Services and is of no cost to the school districts.

Early Childhood Team

ESU 16 provides districts who contract for early childhood services with whatever service a student (birth–5 years) is identified as needing. This often includes services with an early childhood special education teacher or speech language pathologist. This may also include services with an occupational therapist, physical therapist, or deaf educator. The early childhood team implements the primary service provider model of service delivery for students. They are also trained in routines-based early intervention strategies. EŠU 16's early childhood team coordinates the planning region team meetings, PRT grant work, and targeted improvement plan development for PRT 16. They are actively involved in promoting child find throughout the region.

TEACHING & LEARNING

The ESU 16 Teaching & Learning team positively impacts student achievement by providing educational leadership and support to educators and administration in sixteen area member school districts. This team includes teaching, learning, mental wellness, and instructional technology specialists who provide professional learning opportunities and on-going, personalized support to ESU 16 PreK-12 educators and leaders. The team also supports development of instructional resources to enhance curriculum and instruction. Facilitation of local, state, and federal grant development is also a part of our work.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022-23

- Facilitated New Teacher workshop series and instructional coaching
- Developed & aligned curriculum to the Nebraska standards in Mathematics, ELA, Science and Social Studies
- Individualized district support for adoption & implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) in Math, ELA, and Science inclusive of personalization for each district and educator with instructional coaching
- Provided updates, support, and Zoom meetings with districts regarding NSCAS Growth summative assessment
- Personalized & implemented a series of Principal Cadre meetings and leadership support/coaching
- Customized support for the development and implementation of MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) to meet the needs of all students
- Provided Title I educator support & coaching to contracted member schools
- Offered various trainings specific to Early Childhood PreK-2 teachers, English as a Second Language supports, Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language, Differentiation, Questioning, Grading, Behavior, Building teacher capacity with Instructional Materials Adoption and Implementation Process, Curriculum/Materials Specific, and Standards Based Report Card development
- Building leadership capacity for identifying good math instruction looks like through implementation of the Math Acceleration Project
- Planned and developed a series of summer workshops for teacher leadership, instructional materials, Science of Reading, Behavior support
- Development of Mental Health team with identifying what Mental Wellness support looks like for all student needs in the contracted school districts
- Provided Instructional and Principal Coaching to districts
- School Improvement Process (SIP) support
- Provided trainings in all 16 districts for adopting high-quality instructional materials and implementation support (deeply embedded professional learning to build teacher and leadership capacity with strong instructional use of the HQIM)
- Planned, developed, and implemented trainings & individualized support with eduCLIMBER platform within districts

- Developed, Planned, and Implemented the EDventurous regional Professional Learning Community (PLC) for twelve districts 3x over the course of the year (450+ teachers, paraprofessionals, administration) comprised of keynote speakers, vast amount of breakout options, and PLC content/grade level time (support for 26 different grade-level or content teams)
- Support and training for PreK–2 teachers across ESU 15 and 16 around identified needs (MTSS, Behavior, and instructional support)
- Individualized support with the use of the STEM trailer and integration of instructional use within the classroom
- Provided Preschool Paraprofessional Workshop series for 16 paraprofessionals around the topic of “Reaching All Learners”
- GOLD and CLASS training opportunities for new preschool teachers
- Coordinated training with two national speakers for ESU 15 and ESU 16
- Dan St. Romain focused on cultivating character in kids
- Dr. Lori Desautels addressed the adult and student nervous system
- Planned and developed an SEBL coaching project with Dan St. Romain



INVOLVED IN

- Revised Math Standards Rollout Committee
- Developed documents in support of the new 2022 Nebraska Career and College Ready Standards (NCCRS) in math to be promoted on NDE website
- Fellowship 2.0 core team developer (Instructional Materials Adoption/Implementation support to ESU's across the state)
- Math Acceleration Project core team
- Learning Acceleration Project Planning team and support within ESU 16 High Quality Instructional materials and Professional Learning Core Team
- Curriculum Based Professional Learning (CBPL) Lead for ESU's statewide
- ESU standard rubric development
- National presentation on development of ESU standard development with ESU 3
- Accountability, Accreditation, and Assessment (AAA) Advisory team member
- Ag curriculum building and support
- Statewide webinars and podcasts with Andrew Easton
- State MTSS & MTSS Builders Group
- Active members in ESU Professional Development Organization, Staff Development Affiliate and have led some work within these organizations
- Co-chair in Math ESU Content Cadre
- Active members in Science, ELA, Social Studies, MTSS, Mental Health, Data Content, State Early Childhood Cadres
- NWEA Assessment Certified facilitator
- SIMPL Lead for ESU16

- Developed partnerships with vendors
- Co-lead for internal continuous improvement process for ESU16
- Lead and Chairs on Steering Committee for ESU16
- Leads for strategies within ESU16 CIP
- Lead Developer for Mental Health team and creation of Mental Wellness Programming
- Trainer of Pyramid Model for Early Childhood
- Lead and team member for statewide accreditation teams for two school systems across the state of Nebraska

CONTINUED SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) continued development and implementation for all districts
- Continuous Improvement for all districts
- Curriculum Development in all content areas
- Assessment Development specifically with NSCAS Growth and implementation of eduCLIMBER for data analysis
- Collaboration with T&L and Special Services and Mental Health Teams Content trainings in all content areas (expanding beyond Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies)
- Leadership coaching, cadre, mentor support and programming
- PreK-2 Early Childhood support and Pyramid integration
- Mental Wellness programming and support for contracted districts
- Classroom instructional coaching for both instructional and behavioral
- Instructional Materials Adoption & Implementation Process for educators and leadership
- Curriculum-Based Professional Learning opportunities and implementation
- Support for Needs Improvement or highest need districts identified as ATSI/TSI
- All content & pedagogy support
- English Language Learner (ESL) educator support
- High Ability Learners support and programming

GRANT COOPERATIVE & CONSORTIA PROVIDED

Titles I Contracted Services

Title IIA Consortia Services

Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant

Applegate Grants to support Teaching and Learning trainings

REVISION grant support

PreK - 2 PD Specialist Grant

HIGH PLAINS EARLY LEARNING CONNECTION

ESU 16 employs a full-time Coordinator of the Early Learning Connection. Nebraska's Early Learning Connection (ELC) is an integrated system of early childhood professional development. It is designed as a system that supports the career and professional development of all who provide programs and services for young children birth through age eight.

The High Plains Early Learning Connections Partnership (HPELC) serves the counties in both ESU 15 & 16 which include Arthur, Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow and Thomas.

The HPELC publishes a monthly newsletter with updates and training opportunities. For more information visit: <http://highplainsearlylearningconnection.weebly.com/>

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022-23

- On June 25th, the first High Plains/Panhandle Early Childhood Conference was held in Sidney. Laura Stauble presented Igniting Empathy: Challenging Behavior as a Catalyst for Change. This event was a collaborative effort between the two regions with the goal of meeting provider professional development needs closer to home and in the time zone in which they live.
- On July 20th, the workshop Trees & Me was presented by Jack Hilgert at the Lake McConaughy Visitors Center in Ogallala. This was the first time a workshop had been held in July as usually I encourage providers to take the month off to recharge. I was pleasantly surprised that twelve providers attended which is an excellent turnout considering the month and the location..
- Dan St. Romain visited the High Plains on November 4th to present Ages, Stages, and Behaviors. Bringing Dan to the region was a collaborative effort between the HPELC and the High Plains PreK - 2nd grade PD Coordinator, Briana Hawks. We had a wonderful turnout with over 60 people in attendance.
- Ms. Hawks and I also co-facilitated the PreK Para-professional workshop this year. The topic this year was working with diverse learners.
- On March 21st, Jim Cain presented Building Unity, Community & Connection as part of the High Plains Partnership meeting and planning retreat. Partners attending represented NE DHSS, Nebraska Extension, Communities for Kids, Rooted in Relationships, ESU's 15 & 16, the Early Development Network, Mid Plains Community College, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, as well as a center director and early childhood consultant and trainer. The day opened with Jim leading the group in highly engaging activities. After lunch, the planning retreat was held.

- The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ was offered on Saturdays this year. This rigorous Rule 11 Pre-K paraprofessional learning series was taught by Mindy Young and was held monthly between September and April.
- Early Learning Guidelines workshops are offered both virtually and in person. New this year was offering Zoom workshops in both central and mountain time zones. Offering ELGs in the mountain time zone was a collaborative effort between the High Plains and Panhandle ELCs. Of special note is that three in-person workshops were offered in Eustis this year for those in the eastern part of the High Plains region.
- The Preschool Teacher Collaborative was able to meet on four occasions this year and was led by teacher leaders Teresa Cox from Hershey Public and Monica Carter from North Platte Public. A highlight this year was the workshop Block Play presented by NE Extension educator Tasha Wulf.
- Additional successes included:
 - Increase in the variety of training offered in the region in addition to licensed required training
 - The successful effort to engage ALL areas of the High Plains region
 - Partnership and collaboration between the HPELC and PreK – 2nd PD coordinators

STATE & REGIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- State Early Childhood Partnership
- Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC)
 - TEACH Early Childhood NE Advisory Committee
- NE Huddle
- Child Care Referral Network Committee (CCRN)
- First Five Nebraska
- First Five Nebraska / Prenatal to 5 Fiscal Strategies Cost Model Advisory Work Group

ESU'S 15 & 16 INVOLVEMENT

- Planning Region Teams (PRT's)
 - ESU 15
 - ESU 16
 - PRT 27 North Platte
- Communities for Kids (C4K)
 - Keith County
 - North Platte
- Rooted in Relationships (RiR)
- Early Childhood Multi Tiered Systems of Support (EC MTSS) Region 5
- Keith County Interagency Work Group
- Keith County Family Block Party
- EdVenturous PLC Project



NETWORK OPERATIONS

The primary goal of Network Operations staff is to provide support and safeguards through best practices and the appropriate use of technology within our organization and the ESU 16 school districts. Staff promote responsible digital citizenship and provide information, consultation, evaluation, research, and training with a current focus on responsible social networking and Internet safety.

Over 9,000 K-12 teachers, administrators, school personnel, and students are provided Internet access and digital assistance by the ESU 16 Network Operations team. Successful online student and staff projects are continually implemented and service opportunities are available but not limited to the following: Google Workspace for Education, learning management systems, student information systems, state/federal data collection, Carl Perkins support of career and technical education, open educational resources, an online video delivery system, Erate assistance, and teleconferencing for meetings and classes.

ESU 16 provides a variety of online resources that can be easily accessed on its web page at: <https://www.esu16.org/page/media-technology>.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022-23

- Network Operations worked in collaboration with 10 other ESU's to form a cybersecurity task force--the Nebraska Cybersecurity Network (NCN)--to develop plans, procedures, and support deployment to provide districts with a way to better protect school networks across the state.
- A new cybersecurity safety platform called ProofPoint was introduced to staff to help provide training and awareness of phishing and ransomware schemes. Network Operations also continued a digital safety public awareness and communication outreach through the ThrillShare and Apptegy platform to help educate users.
- New team and program pages were designed and linked to the ESU 16 website, and staff were provided with licensing and training for Canvas and Adobe Creative Cloud Suite to produce outreach materials. Network Operations helped secure sessions during the Professional Learning Community events to provide additional training utilizing these platforms.
- Network Operations staff worked in conjunction with engineers from Network Nebraska to provide districts with digital security from denial of services attacks, ransomware, and phishing schemes utilizing Arbor Sightline, Fortinet, Dmarcian, Forticlient and other software and hardware products.

- The Freshdesk ticket platform was utilized to assist staff and districts in requesting technical assistance and to remove duplicated input time into the Service Implementation Model Process and Log (SIMPL). This platform will be reinforced in 2023-24 with the addition of the registration database (ODIE) which is better aligned to the parameters of ESUCC statewide reporting of services.
- The ESU 16 website had over 12,000 visits last year from 6300 users. After the home page, the most popular pages are the staff page and current job openings page. ESU 16 also maintains social media sites at Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- The ESU 16 Carl Perkins Consortium grant purchased two welders, two laser engraver/printers, a 3-D printer, a class virtual reality set, and several construction tools for Agriculture, Skilled and Technical Sciences, and Business classrooms. The grant also sent 19 teachers to the Nebraska Career Education Conference.
- ESU 16 supports 25 districts regionally with PowerSchool and the publishing of data to the Nebraska ADVISER data collection system. ESU 16 also provides support to ADVISER by hosting the zoom workdays held statewide.
- Fourteen ESU 16 districts made requests for posters for use throughout their schools, including support of the behavior program SWIS and Bridges math curriculum.
- Network Operations staff has served on several statewide organizations, including ESU Professional Development Organization Planning Group, ESU PDO Teaching and Learning with Technology, Network Operations Committee, the Network Nebraska Advisory Group (NNAG), the Collaborative Aggregation Partnership (CAP), Nebraska Digital Learning Association (NDLA), the Nebraska Department of Education Education Innovation Networks for both Data Visualization and Articulate, and the ESU/NDE Data Cadre.

SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA DISTANCE EDUCATION NETWORK

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022–23

New reports for tracking and reporting Distance Learning exchanges were created, with districts qualifying for over \$215,000 from incentive dollars. These funds were reinstated into legislation during 2023 directly due to efforts of SNDEN staff in working with local legislators and ESUCC staff.

SNDEN currently manages the 35,000 Zoom licenses and associated services that Network Nebraska provides for Nebraska's K-12 and Higher Education members. SNDEN took over as the purchasing and fiscal agent for Zoom products in 2022–23.

The network worked in tandem with Polycom, Lonesome Prairie Publications, and AVI-SPL to submit applications for the 2023 Rural Utilities Service grant in the amount of 1.1 million dollars. The USDA had not announced recipients and award amounts at the publication date of this document.

CONTINUED SUPPORT PROVIDED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

- Information Literacy training
- Technology, software, and network support
- Internet services, digital citizenship support, and cybersecurity software and hardware.
- Technology planning for schools
- E-rate / USF Support
- Wireless site surveys and installation available at the schools upon request
- ADVISER training and assistance - In addition to hosting the statewide zoom ADVISER workdays for all districts in Nebraska, ESU 16 personnel provides PowerSchool ADVISER support for 25 districts in western Nebraska.
- Support for schools using data for decision-making. This includes support for districts' school improvement processes. Network Operations staff serve on the ESU 16 continuous improvement steering committee and are instrumental in the implementation of the ESU 16 continuous improvement process.
- Training in cloud applications including web page publications, registration databases, email, Google Workspace for Education, and student/learning management systems
- Poster and vinyl printing
- Integration of technology and software
- Security for ESU and district wide area and local area networks and services

- Support for the Librarian Professional Learning Community at PLC days throughout the year. Network Operations also supported these districts through an Applegate grant that sponsored Battle of the Books.
- Support of OWLS students through a series of internet safety and information literacy lessons. The students also entered the Digital Citizenship Contest sponsored by the ESU PDO Teaching and Learning with Technology group.
- Administration of the ESU 16 Perkins Grant Consortium by writing the grant application and reports, and purchasing equipment for district participants.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Southwest Nebraska Distance Education Network (SNDEN) is a cooperative of public schools, colleges, and educational service units committed to the design, development, and delivery of two way interactive learning opportunities for students in 37 rural communities. It covers over 20,000 square miles in an 18-county area of southwest, west-central, and the Sandhills of Nebraska.

The primary focus of the network is to provide greater access to learning opportunities through collaborations and partnerships with agencies and individuals committed to an equitable distribution of educational resources. The network enables students of all ages to improve their access to learning opportunities and to achieve their lifelong educational goals. SNDEN provides a description of its goals, resources, and schedules on its website located at: <http://www.snden.org>



MEDIA/TECHNOLOGY