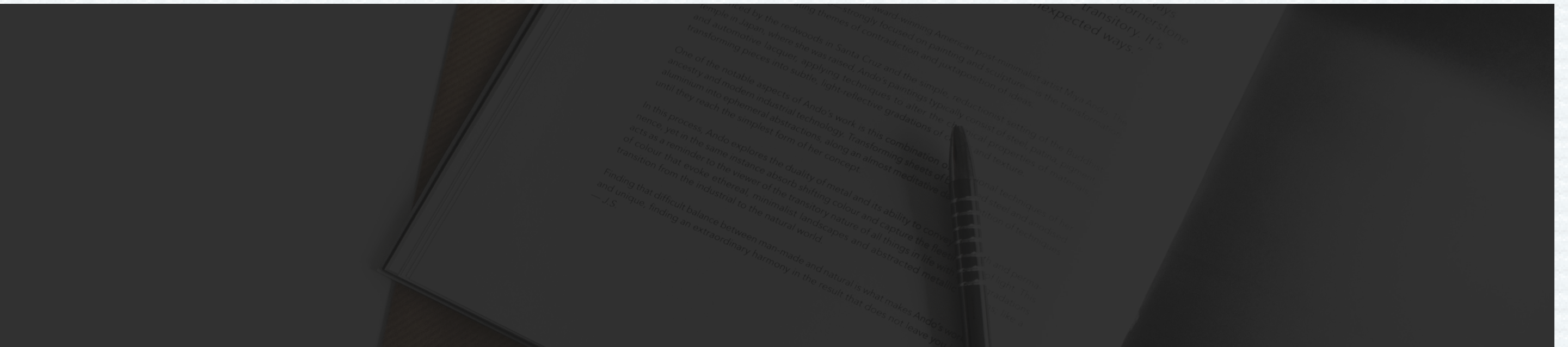




Educational Service Unit 16

Focusing on Leadership & Service



2020-2021 Annual Report

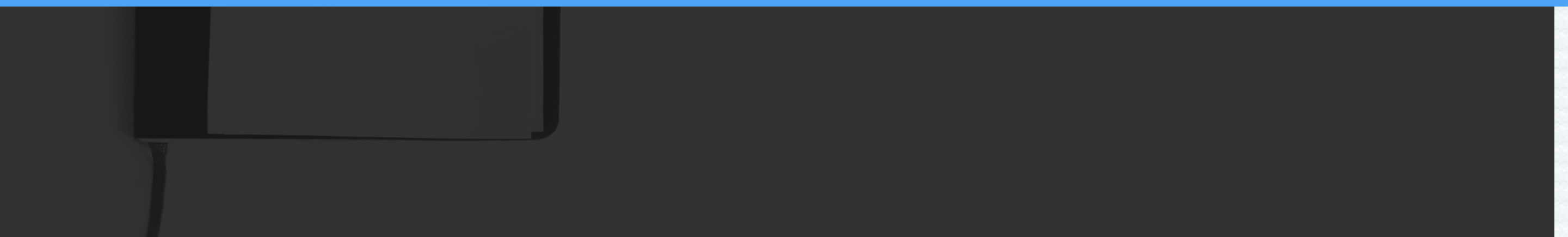
This Annual Report provides an opportunity for ESU16 to share with the community its current status. This report is also a requirement from the Nebraska Department of Education for accreditation. ESU16 serves a nine-county area in rural West-Central Nebraska.

Mission Statement

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

314 West 1st Street
Ogallala, Nebraska 69153

(308) 284-8481
www.esu16.org



Core Values:

- All Learners & Positive Learning Environments
- Partnerships & Relationships
- Collaboration & Communication
- Responsiveness & Responsibility
- Leadership & Accountability

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



District 1
Julie Boettcher



District 2
Rod Rayburn, Vice President



District 3
Bill McGahan



District 4
Robert Jones



District 5
Nikki Bergeron



District 6
Judy Thompson, President



Educational Service Unit 16
Board of Directors



District 7
Mel McNea



District 8
Sooky Marks, Secretary



District 9
Judy Seger



District 10
Bill Eakins



District 11
John Frates



District 12
Claudia Melvin

The Board meets the third Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m., except in the month of July. All meetings are open to the public. An official legal notice appears on www.esu16.org webpage, in the North Platte Telegraph and the Keith County News.



- 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

46 - ESU16 Employees
7,592 students
9 Counties
12,000 Square Miles

TRAININGS

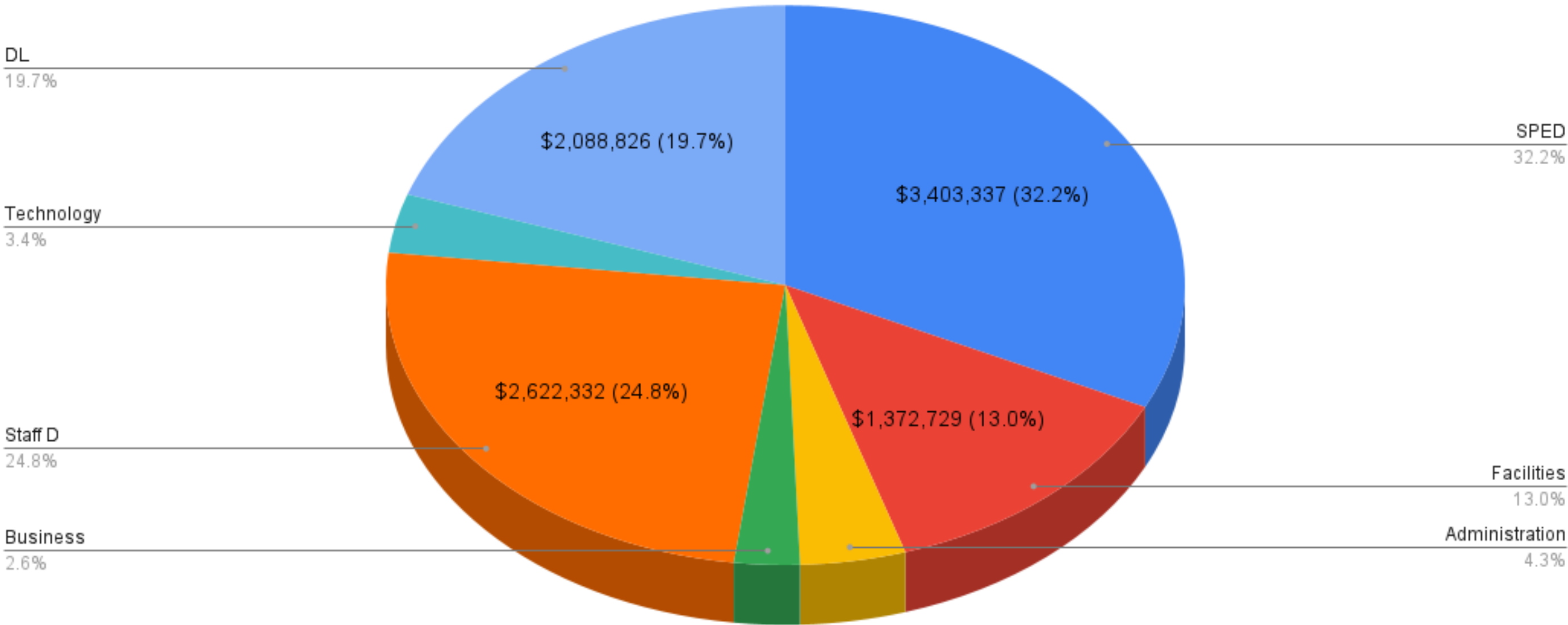
ESU 16 provides several training opportunities for superintendents, non-certified staff, and board members. Trainings include asbestos care and removal, wellness training, dispensing medications, budget workshops, superintendent mentorship and board member workshops. Request for additional trainings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

Highlights for 2020-21

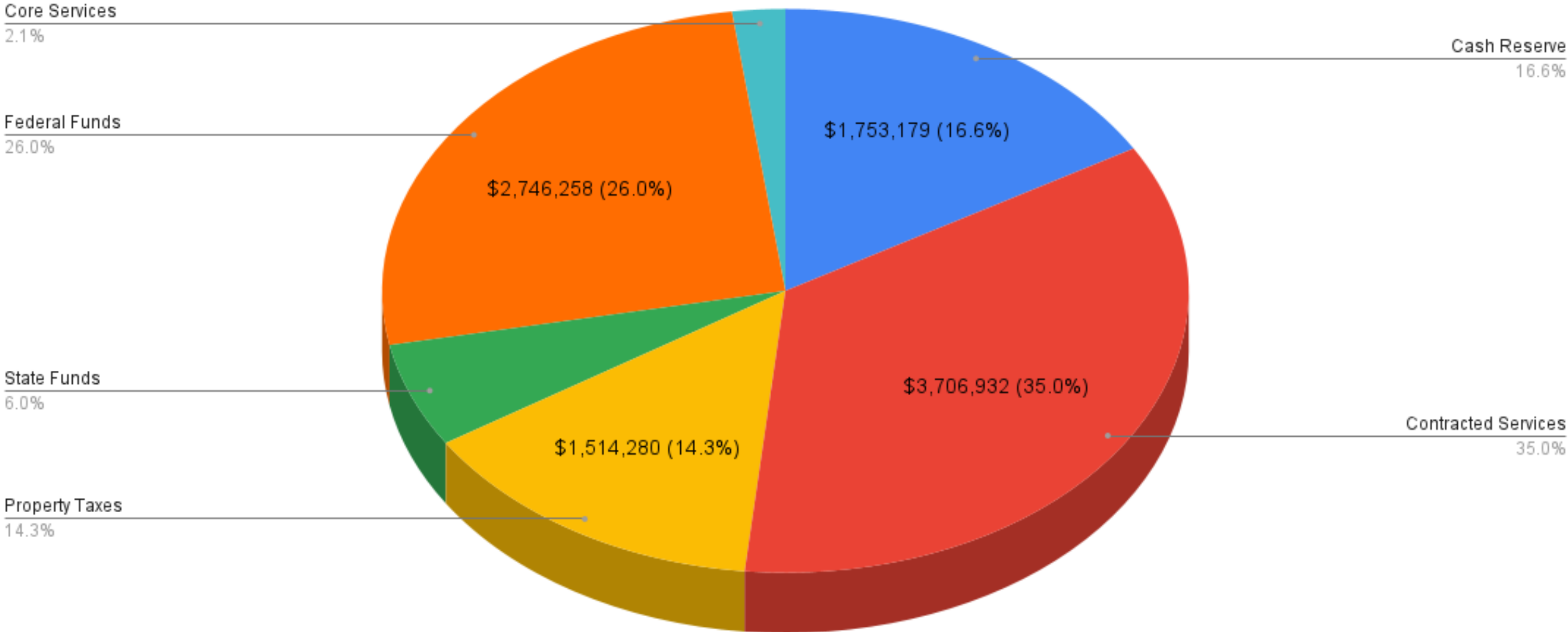
- ESU 16 Superintendents, Public Health officials, NDE representatives, and various guest presenters met for weekly Zoom meetings through the 2020-21 school year
- Implemented SIMPL Process with member district administrators to review programs and services for 2020-21
- Coop Purchase savings to ESU 16 member districts topped \$105,644
- Coop Purchase provided furniture, supplies, and materials to 19 school districts
- Conducted annual financial audit
- Hosted a Rule 84 external visit April 6-7, 2021.
- ESU 16 staff logged 4,346 service hours supporting their school districts
- Hired one new Teaching & Learning Consultant
- Promoted agency Purpose, Direction and Values/Belief Statements
- Attended 5 area member school district board of education meetings
- Hosted a virtual ESUs 15 & 16 Board Member Training in January
- Started NPSSC renovations in February 2021
- Supported in-person instruction in member districts



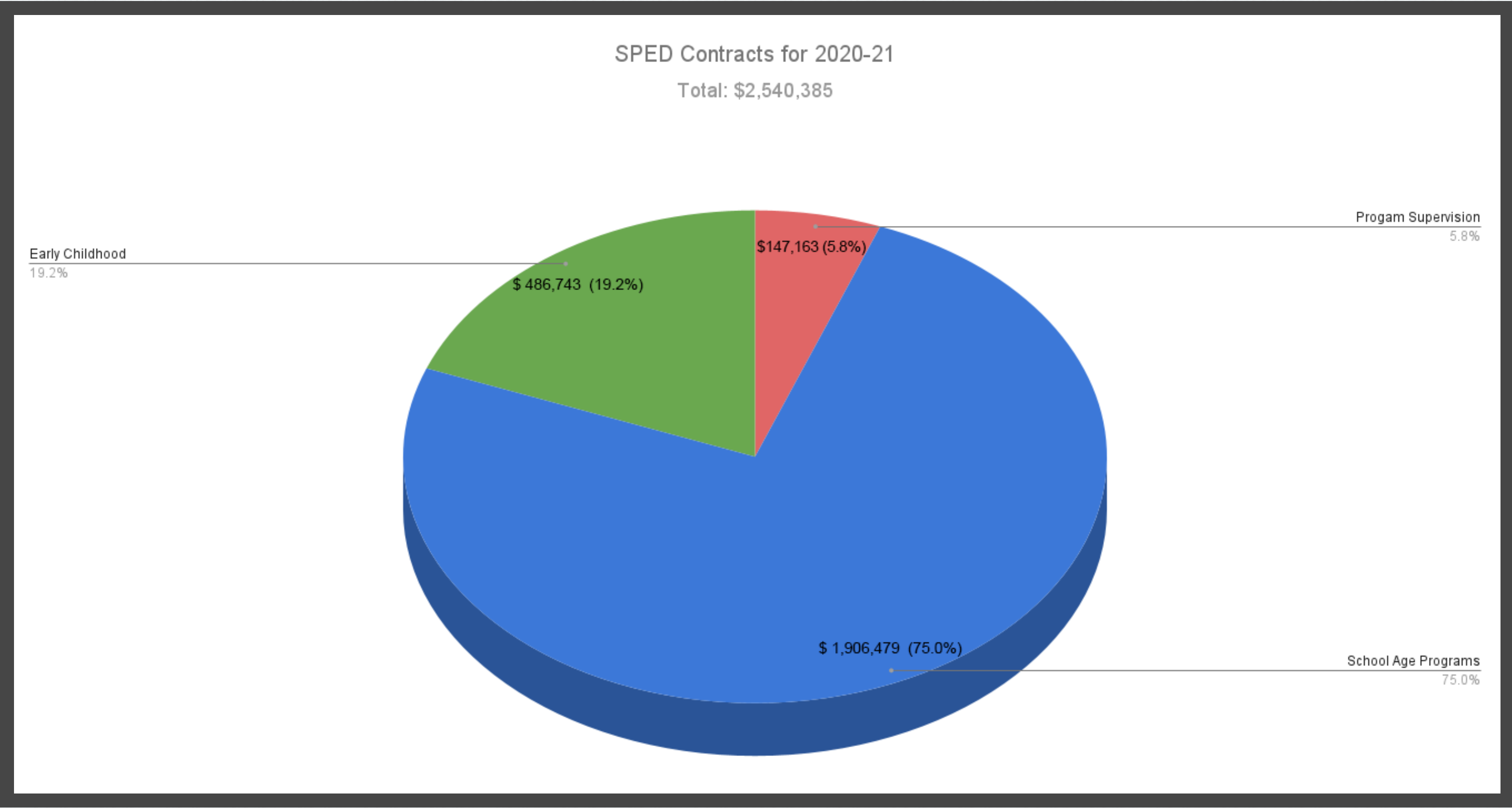
2020-21 Expenditures by Program
Total: \$10,579,322



2020-21 Budgeted Receipts by Source
Total: \$10,579,323



ESU 16 employs a full-time Director of Special Education 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 supervises and coordinates all special education services available through ESU 16. Assistance is given to districts on referral placement, student progress, and transportation. The Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities Process required by the Nebraska Department of Education is coordinated and assisted.



Highlights for 2020-21

- Provided supports to districts with Student Mental Health needs
 - Transitional Life Skills Program, OWLS, held at Mid Plains Community College for 7 students.
 - Staff along with district personnel attended MTSS Day 3 & Day 4 Refinement training
 - Fall & Spring SPED Meetings brought in outside speakers to present information to ESU & district SPED staff.
-

Grants

- Promoting Engagement and Knowledge (PEaK) Project
 - Applegate Grants
 - Planning Region Team Systems Support/Change
-

Statewide Involvement

- Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors
 - NSHLA State Board Representative
 - Western Region ASD Advisory Team
 - Western Region Transition Facilitator
-

Continuing Projects

- Assistance to schools with data collection and writing Targeted Improvement Plans
- Assistance to schools with IDEA Special Education Consolidated Grant Application, final financials, and all Special Education reports
- Provide Crisis Prevention Training to district staff
- Continue to support district ADVISER data personnel with uploading Special Education data
- Monthly meetings with Agencies regarding students in Transition
- Submit monthly MIPS data for districts

Speech Language Pathology

Speech Language Pathologists educate students with speech, language and learning difficulties. They evaluate children birth to 21 who are referred for speech, language, stuttering, or voice assessment and make recommendations to school personnel and parents. They develop educational plans and adjust curriculum to meet the students' special needs.

Audiology

ESU 16 provides an Audiologist to assist ESU 15 and ESU 16 member school districts with students who might have 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 will work with the ESU 16 Deaf Educator 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 will assist school districts with verification and accommodations for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The teacher will assess the needs for a sign language interpreter and work with the interpreter in order to meet the needs of the student as needed. They will help the school in locating assistive technology equipment, classroom materials, and support the classroom teacher in evaluating its effectiveness.

Psychological Services

ESU 16 provides psychological testing for students needing this service. They also assist with data analysis and behavior plans. Complete referral requests must be made by individuals requesting a psychological examination. The referral process follows NDE Rule 51 guidelines with a Student Assistance Team completing a problem-solving process prior to referral. School Psychologists collaborate with the LIMHP's, Behavior Consultant, and School Social Worker to comprise the ESU16 Mental Health Team.

Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner

ESU 16 provides two Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioners (LIMHP) available to districts for counseling students with a mental health diagnosis. The LIMHP is responsible for evaluation, risk assessment and counseling to address students' needs socially and emotionally. Consultation is provided to educators, parents and other professionals to create safe, healthy and supportive learning environments for students. LIMHP's collaborate with the School Psychologists, Behavior Consultant, and School Social Worker to comprise the ESU 16 Mental Health Team.

Behavior Consultant

ESU 16 provides a Behavior Consultant to assist schools with students having behavioral and/or emotional difficulty in the school setting. A request needs to be made as part of a student assistance team or part of a Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation. The Behavior Consultant collaborates with the School Psychologists, LIMHP's, and School Social Worker to comprise the ESU 16 Mental Health Team.

Teacher Consultants

Teacher Consultants assist school personnel in developing individualized education programs, progress monitoring, and specialized instruction. Contracts for Teacher Consultant costs are divided among school districts, based on the number of Special Education teachers.

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 Assistance 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.

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 is to prepare students for the workforce through academic, social skills, life skills, and vocational development. It also increases independence, self-determination, self-advocacy, lifelong learning, and linkage for adult services.

Inclusion Services

This program assists school districts in providing, at the local school district site, services for students who have been verified moderate or severe/profound or multi-disabled. An Inclusion/Transition Consultant travels to the school district to assist paraprofessionals and classroom teachers in program planning for the IEP; conduct staffings; locate assistive devices; modify curriculum, and confer with parents.

Transition Services

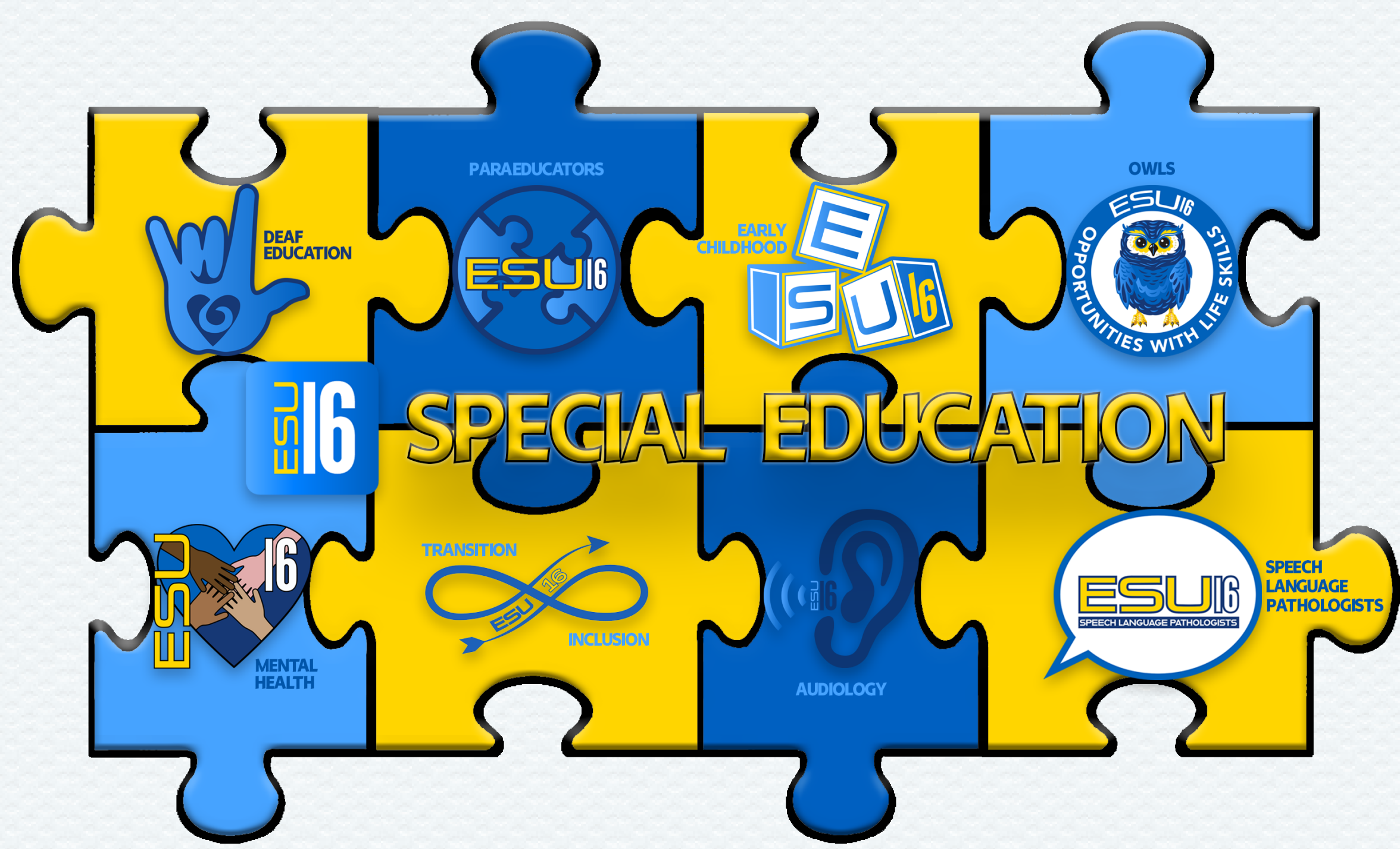
Job responsibilities include assisting resource teachers with the development of transition plans, coordinating career assessments for Transition planning, consulting with the area agency personnel regarding services available, and working cooperatively with special education teachers, resource teachers, 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 will serve as the agency for the Regional Coordinated Plan. ESU 16 provides districts who contract for our services with Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Speech Pathologist, Diagnostic and Evaluation services for all children birth through 5 years of age that may be in need of early interventions.



The ESU 16 Teaching & Learning team positively impacts student achievement by providing educational leadership and supports to the faculty and administration in area schools. This team includes teaching, learning, and instructional technology specialists who provide professional learning opportunities, follow-up support and coordinate the exchange of knowledge and skills among ESU 16 educators. The team also supports development of instructional resources to enhance curriculum and instruction. We also facilitate local, state, and federal grant development.

Highlights for 2020–21

- Facilitated workshop series and instructional coaching for new teachers
- Provided NWEA-MAP Growth training to districts
- Worked with districts to align curriculum to the Nebraska standards in Mathematics, ELA, Science and Social Studies
- Provided updates to districts regarding the development and implementation of NSCAS summative assessment
- Facilitated a series of principal meetings
- Continued support of the MTSS and PBIS implementation in schools
- Provided Title I support and coaching to cooperative member schools and completed Title I monitoring visit
- Provided funding and support for career exploration & technical education supports with Carl Perkins Grant including reVISION Grant
- Provided training specific to Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language, Differentiation, Behavior, Instructional Model, State-wide Initiatives, Instructional Materials Adoption Process, Curriculum Specific (Standards Based Report Card), and Teacher Mental Health support
- Planned and developed a series of summer workshops for science, teacher leadership, curriculum development, instructional materials, ELA supports, and LETRS
- Administered Title II-A, Title IV Consortium, Title I Cooperative and fulfilled grant requirements
- Provided services/support for district High Ability Learner's (HAL) plan, content specific HAL teachers' workshop and HAL student events
- Provided Instructional, Cognitive, and Principal Coaching
- Supported districts in Continuous Improvement Process
- Provided training for adopting high-quality instructional materials and implementation support
- Established ongoing training to develop foundational literacy skills through LETRS
- Provided remote teaching & learning support (establishing pedagogy for virtual learning)
- Planned, developed, and implemented data analysis platform & process

Involved in:

- Statewide ELA, Math, PBiS, Science, CSI/Needs Improvement Schools Support, Science, High-Quality Instructional materials projects, and ESU standard rubric development
- State MTSS & MTSS Builders Group
- State Quiz Bowl
- Nebraska Association of Gifted
- ESU Professional Development Organization, SDA, & TLT
- ESU Content Cadres (Science, ELA, Math, Social Studies)
- EDReports Reviewer Certified
- NWEA Assessment Certified facilitators
- CCSSO core team with NDE on High-Quality Instructional Materials & Professional Learning
- Partnerships with vendors

Continued Support in the Following Areas:

- Continuous Improvement (both AdvancED & Nebraska Frameworks)
- Curriculum Development
- Assessment Development
- Instructional Strategies
- Leadership
- Classroom coaching
- Instructional Materials Adoption & Implementation Process
- Support for Needs Improvement- Learning Walks, Principal Coaching, Data Analysis, etc.
- Support for online learning & best practices
- All content & pedagogy support

Grant Cooperative & Consortia Provided

- Titles I; IIA; IV
- Carl Perkins Technical Education
- High Ability Learner (HAL)
- Applegate Grants to support Staff Development trainings
- ReVISION



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.

Highlights for 2020-21

- Pre-K Paraprofessional Workshop series. A total of 16 early childhood para-professionals attended from the following districts: Hershey, North Platte, and Wallace. This series focused on social and emotional development. This workshop series supports paraprofessionals and districts in meeting Rule 11 requirements.
- National Speakers presented on the following topics:
 - Dr. Randy Boardman - Time to Teach which focuses on classroom management
 - Jennifer Nehl - Emotional Poverty
 - Michael Gurian - Boys & Girls Learn Differently
- Crisis Prevention Institute Training deliver via Zoom
- Initial Trainings on November 17 & February 24
- Refresher Trainings on October 29 & January 27

State & Regional Involvement:

- State Early Childhood Partnership
- Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NeAEYC)
 - TEACH Early Childhood NE Advisory Committee
- Nebraska Preschool Development Grant (PDG)
 - Transition Committee
- NE Huddle
 - Child Care Referral Network Committee (CCRN)
- First Five Nebraska
 - Policy Leadership Academy

High Plains Early Learning Connection

ESU's 15 and 16 Involvement:

- Early Childhood Preschool Advisory Committees
 - Hershey
 - Sutherland
 - Wallace
- Planning Region Teams (PRT's)
 - ESU 15
 - ESU 16
 - North Platte
- Communities for Kids (C4K)
 - Keith County
 - North Platte
 - Red Willow County
- Rooted in Relationships (RiR)
- Early Childhood Multi Tiered Systems of Support (EC MTSS) Region 5
- School District Support on Early Childhood Content and Pedagogy
- Crisis Prevention Institute Training
- Keith County Interagency Work Group



The primary goal of the Network Operations staff is to provide and support teaching and learning through the appropriate use of technology in 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 Applications for Education, learning management systems, student information systems, 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 2020-21

- 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.
- Network Operations continued a digital safety public awareness and communication outreach through the ThrillShare and Apptegy platform.
- New team and program pages were designed and linked to the ESU 16 website, and staff were provided with licensing and training for Adobe Creative Cloud Suite and Canvas to produce outreach materials.
- FreshDesk, a new “help ticket” platform, was rolled out to assist staff and districts in requesting technical assistance and to remove duplicated input time into the Service Implementation Model Process and Log (SIMPL).
- 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, the Nebraska Digital Learning Association, and the ESU/NDE Data Cadre.

Southwest Nebraska Distance Education Network

Highlights for 2020-21

- SNDEN personnel planned and oversaw the first 2021 Nebraska Digital Learning Association's virtual conference held via Zoom on November 12th.
- New reports for tracking and reporting Distance Learning exchanges were created, with districts qualifying for \$170,000 from incentive dollars. These funds were reinstated into legislation in 2021 directly due to efforts of SNDEN staff in working with local legislators.
- SNDEN provided assistance through it's HarmanMedia Suite to members and local service agencies to provide online video delivery service when platforms reached end of life status during the 2020-21 school year.
- Director, Scott Jones, served as the president of the Nebraska Digital Learning Association and the K-12 chair of the Network Nebraska Advisory Group (NNAG) which plays a pivotal role in the distribution of internet access and services across the state.
- SNDEN currently manages the 35,000 Zoom licenses that Network Nebraska provides for K-12 and Higher Ed.

Continued Support Provided in the Following Areas:

- Information Literacy training
- Technology, software, and network support
- Internet service
- Internet safety for students
- Technology planning for schools
- E-rate / USF Support
- Wireless site surveys 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. CIP evidence is catalogued at <https://sites.google.com/esusixteen.org/sip-website/esucc-standards/network-operations>
- Training in cloud applications including web page publications, registration databases, email, Google Applications for Education, and student/learning management systems
- Poster and vinyl printing
- Integration of technology into the curriculum
- Security for ESU and district wide area and local area networks and services, including email

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. Through the latest technology, 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>

