

Educational Service Unit 16

Focusing on Leadership & Service



2019-2020 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.

**314 West 1st Street
Ogallala, NE 69153**

**308-284-8481
www.esu16.org**

Core Values:

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

TagLine:
Leadership
& Service

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

Board of Directors

Julie Boettcher , District 1
Rod Rayburn, District 2
Bill McGahan, District 3
Robert Jones, District 4
Nikki Bergeron, District 5
Judy Thompson, District 6

Mel McNea, District 7
Margaret "Sooky" Marks, District 8
Judy Seger, District 9
Bill Eakins, District 10
John Frates, District 11
Claudia Melvin, District 12

The Board meets the third Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m., except the month of July. All meetings are open to the public. An official legal notice appears on www.esu16.org webpage and the front door of ESU 16 Central Office in Ogallala, Nebraska.

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

Four non-public schools

48 - ESU16 Employees

8,517 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.

Student Loan Forgiveness

The ESU 16 Student Loan Forgiveness Program is a national program delivered locally through Educational Service Agency partners. The loan forgiveness program may enhance recruitment and retention capabilities of districts and brings new economic value to communities. The program is free to school districts. No cost estimates of the savings can be accessed by individuals seeking to determine if this program is right for them. Any fees incurred will be paid by the person who has determined that the loan forgiveness program is beneficial to them.

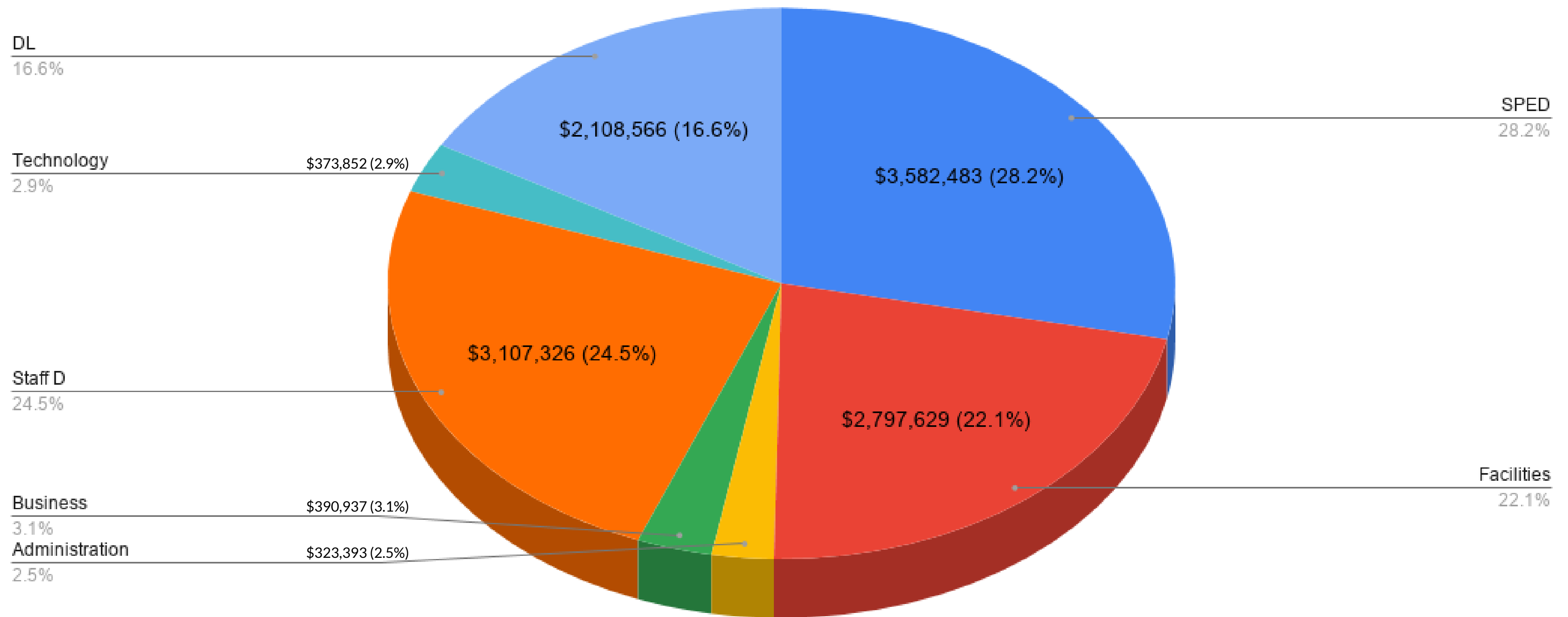
Highlights for 2019-2020

- ESUs 15 and 16 joint Advisory Council met 3 times through February
- Beginning late February, ESU 16 Superintendents, Public Health officials, NDE representatives, and various guest presenters met for weekly Zoom meetings
- Implemented SIMPL Process with member district administrators to identify programs and services for 2019-20
- Coop Purchase savings to ESU 16 member districts topped \$137,729
- Coop Purchase provided furniture, supplies, and materials to 19 school districts
- Conducted annual financial audit
- Continuation of 2016-2021 AdvancED Process
- ESU 16 staff logged 8,314 service hours supporting their school districts
- Hired four new staff members
- Promoted agency Purpose, Direction and Values/Belief Statements
- Attended 8 area member school district board of education meetings
- Expanded the social media sites: including redesign of ESU 16 Webpage
- ESU 16 board policies were updated

Administrative/Business Services

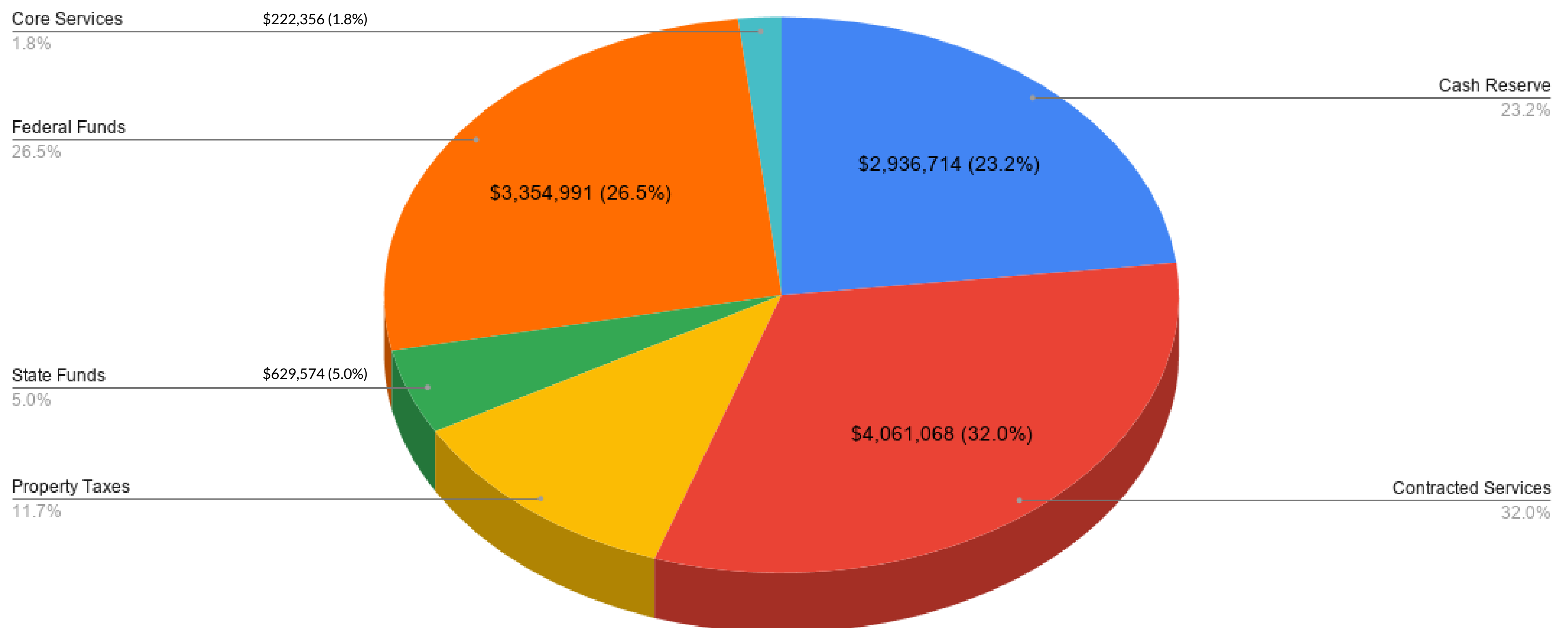
2019-20 Expenditures by Program

Total: \$12,684,186



2019-20 Budgeted Receipts by Source

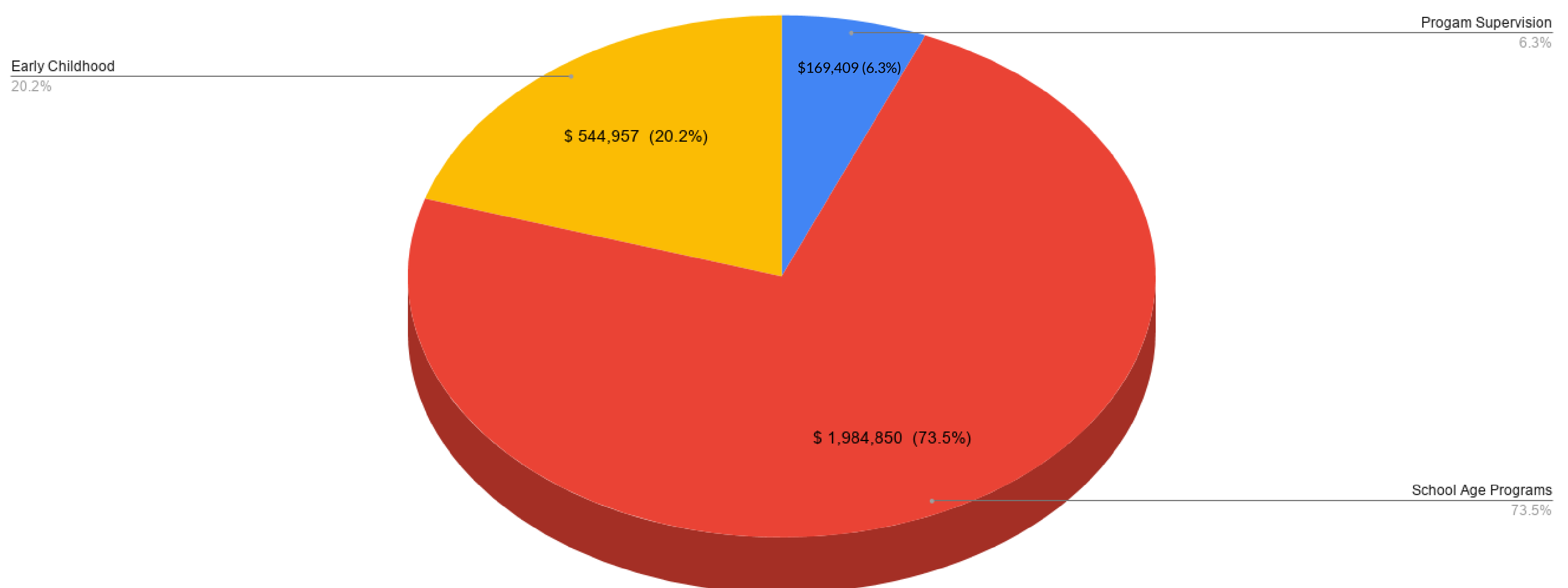
Total: \$12,684,188



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.

SPED Contracts for 2019-20

Total: \$2,699,216



Highlights for 2019-2020

- Received a Systems of Care Support Grant through Region II for continuance of the Licensed Mental Health Care program
- Provided supports to districts with Student Mental Health needs
- Summer SWEEP Program for Transition Age Students: Ogallala and North Platte.
- Partner Up Rodeo with the High School Rodeo Association, Students with Disabilities, and the cooperation of many local businesses
- Transitional Life Skills Program, OWLS, held at Mid Plains Community College for 5 students.
- Assisted three districts with NDE Monitoring Visit
- Staff along with district personnel attended MTSS Day 1 & Day 2 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

Continuing Projects

- Assistance to schools with data collection and writing Targeted Improvement Plans
- Social Skills Workshops for elementary and high school students
- Student Transition workshops for high school students
- 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 luncheon meetings with Agencies regarding students in Transition
- Submit monthly MIPS data for districts

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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, ESU 16 and 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 Educators 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 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. Contracts are based on students receiving services at an hourly rate of one hour per week, year-round counseling services. LIMHP's collaborate with the School Psychologists, Behavior Consultant, and School Social Worker to comprise the ESU 16 Mental Health Team.

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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 equally among all school districts.

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 assessment 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 special needs students.

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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 2019-2020:

- 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 early childhood professional development and support to preschool and daycare providers
- Support/advise districts making application for preschool grant funds
- Provided funding and support for career exploration & technical education supports with Carl Perkins Grant
- Provided training specific to Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language, Differentiation, Behavior, Instructional Model, State-wide Initiatives, and Instructional Materials Adoption Process, Curriculum Specific (Standards Based Report Card)
- Planned and developed a series of summer workshops for science, teacher leadership, curriculum development, and instructional materials
- 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
- Facilitated ESU 16 internal Continuous Improvement Process
- Facilitated ESU 16 districts implementation of Marzano, Danielson, and district developed Instructional Models
- Provided Instructional, Cognitive, BlendED, 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)
- Supported Leadership with individual needs

Involved in:

- Statewide ELA, Math, PBIIS, BlendED, CSI/Needs Improvement Schools Support, Science, & High-Quality Instructional materials projects
- State MTSS & MTSS Builders Group
- State FPS
- State Quiz Bowl
- Nebraska Association of Gifted
- Science Olympiad
- ESU Professional Development Organization, SDA, & TLT
- Early Childhood Network
- ESU Content Cadres
- EDReports Reviewer Certified
- NWEA Assessment Certified facilitators
- NCTM & NATM Participation
- CCSSO core team with NDE on High-Quality Instructional Materials & Professional Learning

Continued Support in the Following Areas:

- Continuous Improvement (both AdvancED & Nebraska Frameworks)
- Curriculum Development
- Assessment Development
- Instructional Strategies
- Leadership
- BlendEd
- 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)
- Early Childhood Professional Development Grant (ECPDG)
- Applegate Grants to support Staff Development trainings
- Partnership for Innovation Grant
- ReVISION

Early Childhood Professional Development Services

This program provides a full-time early childhood professional development coordinator. The program is designed to work in coordination with state and regional entities, including the Early Childhood Training Center, and to intensify their work in early childhood partnerships in addressing the priority areas identified in the Nebraska Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development.

12 | Network Operation

Over 9,500 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.

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.

Highlights for 2019-2020:

- Over \$150,000 of firewalls were configured and installed at districts to provide security from unauthorized, malicious, and unnecessary network traffic
- Network Operations continued the public awareness and communication outreach through the ThrillShare and Apptegy platforms. New team and program pages were designed and linked to the ESU 16 website
- A new PRTG monitoring instance was set up for ESU 16 and districts. This system sends alerts 24/7 to identify and detect IT infrastructure issues
- A new Epson SureColor SC-P8000 printer was purchased. This poster printer is capable of printing photographic quality imagery up to 44 inches high by 44 feet in length
- Melissa Engel continues to act in a statewide capacity as a member of the ADVISER Virtual Support Team. This team supports the collection of student and school data for local, state, and national reporting for NDE
- AssetTiger was purchased and implemented to replace and streamline ESU 16's current inventory procedures and accountability system
- A new enterprise management server was created for the ESU 16 Forticlient software system which improves endpoint protection, control, management, and monitoring for all staff computing equipment

Southwest Nebraska Distance Education Network

Highlights for 2019-2020:

- SNDEN personnel planned and oversaw the 2020 Nebraska Digital Learning Association's conference held in Lincoln on February 27th & 28th. Keynote speakers Dr. Robbie Melton and Dr. Trish Holliday and twenty-six breakout sessions were featured during the event
- PRTG monitoring was enabled on all school distance learning systems in an effort to gain more timely alerts and notifications for remote troubleshooting to prevent disruption of instruction
- Chad and Todd installed over \$175,000 of new Poly Unified Communication Servers at the main office to provide bridging, recording, and distance learning services for all SNDEN districts
- Network schools qualified for up to \$138,000 in incentive dollars for sending and receiving distance learning and online courses
- Director, Scott Jones, served as the K-12 chair on the Network Nebraska Advisory Group which played a pivotal role in the distribution, training, and troubleshooting of Zoom video desktop conferencing that was ramped up in response to COVID-19 restrictions

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
- Support for schools using data for decision-making
- 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 comprised 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>.

