



# OPPORTUNITY

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## OF A LIFETIME

NDE DAY • WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021



#LifetimeOpportunity

#NDEDay2021

MATTHEW L. BLOMSTEDT, Ph.D.

# Commissioner's Message



I could not be more proud of the work of the education system in Nebraska. Over the past two years you have managed the challenges of floods and pandemics that disrupted our state, nation, and globe. Yet, you delivered each and every time. The challenges disrupted your work but you provided a focus on what was most important to your students and communities at every turn. When there was a need to be innovative, you stepped up to the challenge. Last year, when I challenged you to find the opportunity to be innovative in these disruptions, you not only did, but then challenged me to do the same. That is a sign of a strong education system and of strong relationships within that system.

We continue down the path of innovation, making changes to address the moment and the future. But, I know that the pace of these changes has to meet the moment we face. As always, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will work to listen and guide as best we can in the moment.

The beginning of each school year brings the opportunity of a lifetime for our students. These moments are always exciting and essential as Nebraska students mature into our future leaders and innovators. I know our children walk through the doors of your schools to caring adults, teachers, paraeducators, custodians, bus drivers, food service staff, support staff, and administrators. We continue to pride ourselves on seeing that each and every student has their opportunity of a lifetime.

For education, it seems the pressure is never "off." We are expected to meet students where they are (and we do), but we need the help of families, communities, businesses, and one another. This opportunity of lifetime in an education system is to work smarter and better together. This week, you will hear about key areas of focus for the state of education in Nebraska. But most of all, I want to spend this unique time structuring our supports for key areas of focus for districts, schools, and you.

In this opportunity, we can be proud of our efforts through this pandemic and make certain that each student reflects on this educational moment as one of Nebraska's dedication to them and to their future.

The NDE mission statement is, "to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living." What a great opportunity for all of us to serve our remarkable students and communities!

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of Education

# Covid-19 By the Numbers

33

Covid-19 Webinars with the Governor, Superintendents, and Local Health Officials

90%

Participation for NSCAS ACT

35

Press Conferences, Town Halls, and Media Events with the Governor, Chancellor Gold, City of Lincoln, U.S. Senate, Nebraska Loves Public Schools, and NSEA

95%

Participation for NSCAS General

28

NDE Virtual Conferences and Events

300,000

Successful Test Administrations for NSCAS General in ELA, Math, and Science Field Test

38,871

Online NDE-hosted Zoom meetings

7

Remote or Online Only Schools

\$906,315,815

Overall Funds Available to Nebraska K-12 Schools through Covid-19 Relief Packages

88

Hybrid Schools (Both Remote/Online and In-person Instruction)

36,132

Devices Provided to Nebraska School Districts

941

Full-time In-person Schools

# Partnerships During Covid-19

Over the last year and beyond, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has convened and communicated with the Nebraska education community. Nebraska schools were critical to the success of the past school year. Partnerships across the state were also central to the quick return to teaching and learning. Beginning on March 8, 2020 the NDE hosted weekly, then biweekly, meetings with school and district administrators, bringing together the governor as well as local and state public health officials to share in the state of education during the pandemic. These meetings provided clear, consistent communication focused on health and well-being, mitigation strategies, and continuity of learning. Together with our partners, we presented relevant data and guidance to school leaders, and allowed time for community dialogue. Additionally, the NDE staff met weekly with the chief medical officer and state epidemiologist to collaborate and create a strategy for district COVID-19 screening, distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE), and virus mitigation in school settings.

## LAUNCH NEBRASKA

The NDE, in collaboration with myriad partners, developed **Launch Nebraska**, a comprehensive guide to leadership and systems work, continuity of learning, and conditions for learning necessary to make the 2020-21 school year safe and productive for students. The NDE distilled Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for facilities, lunchroom settings, fine arts, career and technical education classrooms, and extracurricular activities. The NDE worked collaboratively with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and local health departments to disseminate and update guidance regularly, and shared the resources weekly with superintendents and other school leaders. Launch Nebraska now includes key actions necessary for renewal and acceleration in the 2021-22 school year.

## OTHER STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS

- The NDE led statewide efforts and partnerships with the Douglas County Health Department, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and the Omaha Community Foundation to message the continued need for safety, masking, vaccinations, and mental health through its sponsorship in the *Do Right, Right Now* campaign.
- The NDE coordinated the distribution of hand sanitizer and face masks to school districts at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, and continues to closely monitor PPE needs for districts.
- The NDE worked closely with the DHHS to pilot COVID-19 screening tests for 2,500 students statewide in two separate phases.
- The NDE has developed and hosted professional learning webinars for school nurses and other school health personnel through a partnership with Nebraska Children's Hospital and Project ECHO.

## LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the last year, school districts, local health districts, and the NDE worked collaboratively to develop plans for school operations. Local health departments provided the following services to districts:

- Consulted with superintendents
- Provided guidance and technical assistance to local schools
- Determined consistent protocols for if/when COVID-19 cases occurred within schools
- Quarantined and isolated school staff and students based upon COVID-19 cases and/or exposure
- Regularly communicated the local COVID-19 status, including local and state risk dials

# ESSER Funding Summary

The NDE is dedicated to ensuring the responsible, accountable, focused, and transparent use of federal funds at both the state and locals levels. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides an opportunity of a lifetime to implement evidence-based strategies that will close achievement gaps and advance the learning of all students. The NDE is providing significant support up front, providing resources, guidance, and technical assistance to educators as they develop their ARP plans.

ESSER funds represent an opportunity to make strategic, sustainable investments to help address systemic inequalities; implement innovation and creativity to transform teaching and learning; and realize our shared vision to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

## Nebraska's ESSER Funding

GRANT FUND	ESSER I	ESSER II	ESSER III
<b>Stimulus Program</b>	<b>CARES Act</b>	<b>CRRSA Act</b>	<b>ARP Act</b>
<b>Total Nebraska ESSER Aid</b>	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$549,484,612
<b>Available for Obligation Through*</b>	9/30/22	9/30/23	9/30/24
<b>Total Nebraska ESSER Aid</b>	\$65,085,085	\$243,073,530	\$545,908,619
<b>Local Aid Distribution (90% School Districts)</b>	\$58,576,577	\$218,766,177	\$491,317,757
<b>Main Purpose of Funds</b>	Ensure students and educators have devices, connectivity, and support needed to continue to learn and provide communication and support to families and students.	Measure and address "learning loss" among students disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and school closures, particularly students with high-needs.	Reopen schools and sustain safe operation aligned to CDC guidance for in-person learning. Provide evidenced-based interventions to meet social, emotional, and academic needs.
<b>State Reservation (10% NDE)</b> Includes 0.5% State Administration Maintenance of Effort (MOE) and Equity (MEQ)	\$6,508,509	\$24,307,353	\$54,590,862
<b>Budgeted Investments</b>	60% Technology 19% Fall Planning 9% Renewal/ Acceleration 5% Administration 4% Inclusive Environment 3% SEL & Mental Health	Developing strategic priorities-based planning guidance and supports for schools to achieve School Renewal and Acceleration through <a href="https://launchne.com">launchne.com</a> and educational partners.	

\*Period of availability includes the Tydings period. Pre-award costs are allowable for expenses incurred from March 13, 2020 for ESSER I, II, & III.



# Emergency Relief Funds

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law, a \$2 trillion package of assistance measures, including \$30.75 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund. The purpose of CARES is to provide emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

The Education Stabilization Fund allocated \$151.3 million to Nebraska:

- \$69.8 million to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund
- \$65.1 million to the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund
- \$16.4 million to the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund

From the beginning of the pandemic, the NDE emphasized the critical need to support marginalized student groups in their continuity of learning. School districts were required to submit "Continuity of Learning Plans" which asked specifically about strategies to serve students with disabilities and English learners. Responses informed support to schools, professional learning offerings, and flexibilities in rules and regulations. Digital equity gaps were also addressed through early and coordinated focus on the hierarchy of technology needs. A significant investment was made in bridging the digital divide through both the NDE's CARES Act set aside and the governor's investment of Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) dollars.

## Our Roles: An Opportunity of a Lifetime



The NDE will **CHAMPION** educational equity by actively leading the strategic vision, goals, and policy direction to support learning, earning, and living for all students.



The NDE will **REGULATE** educational equity by leveraging policy authority to ensure delivery of high-quality, equitable education and services, beyond compliance with state and federal regulations.



The NDE will **BUILD CAPACITY** around educational equity by directing technical assistance and professional development opportunities and by promoting the sharing of best practices.



The NDE will **BUILD CONNECTIONS** in support of educational equity by bridging the divide between learning, earning, and living, connecting schools, families, business, and communities.



The NDE will demonstrate **CHANGE AGENCY** by exploring and supporting promising new innovations that advance educational equity.

# Response & Relief Supplemental Funds

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA), was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides an additional \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund). This funding—more than four times the amount under the CARES Act—helps the NDE and Nebraska public school districts restore and maintain high-quality learning environments and take comprehensive action to mitigate the unprecedented unfinished teaching and learning that many of our most vulnerable students have endured.

The NDE is committed to supporting school districts in implementing and wisely investing these unprecedented resources. In February 2021, the NDE released **Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration**, which serves as a guide to improve outcomes and secure investments for all Nebraska students through key shifts, components, and core actions for 2021 and beyond.

The six key components of the framework are:



### *System Considerations:*

Systems considerations integrate data, technology, and infrastructure to reexamine traditional school systems and structures. Systems considerations integrate the whole child needs with academic needs.



### *High-Quality Instructional Materials & Content:*

High-quality instructional materials create coherence, offer consistency across all learning environments, and support student voice and social-emotional health. The predictable structure of coherent, consistent instructional materials and content are foundational for teachers and students alike.



### *Diagnosing Unfinished Teaching & Learning:*

Because of a disrupted school year, unfinished teaching and learning may impact students' progress towards mastery of grade-level content. Determining the content that may not have been taught is critical to moving to grade-level content as quickly as possible. Leveraging data from multiple sources provides insight into what students know, what they don't know, and addresses misconceptions about what students think they know.



### *Planning for Acceleration:*

When planning for the upcoming school year, and the following school year, "meeting students where they are" will not be enough. A mindset of "acceleration, not remediation" is needed so that students are met with grade-level expectations while also addressing students' social and emotional needs.



### *Ensuring Equitable Instruction:*

Leaders and teachers must continue to assess the extent to which the academic and social-emotional needs of historically marginalized student groups are addressed and ensure all students have equitable access and success in their learning opportunities. Special attention must also be paid to the senior class to ensure students graduate with postsecondary plans.



### *Professional Learning for Teachers & School Leaders:*

The traditional structures in which educators learn must be adapted to support teaching and learning. Content-specific professional learning that accelerates all students' learning must support educators as they build knowledge and skills while ensuring their own sense of self-efficacy and social-emotional health and learning.

# Critical Aid to Schools

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, which delivers critical aid to states (as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia), districts, schools, educators, students, and families as the country continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

ARP (ESSER III) funds will allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to enact appropriate measures to help schools:

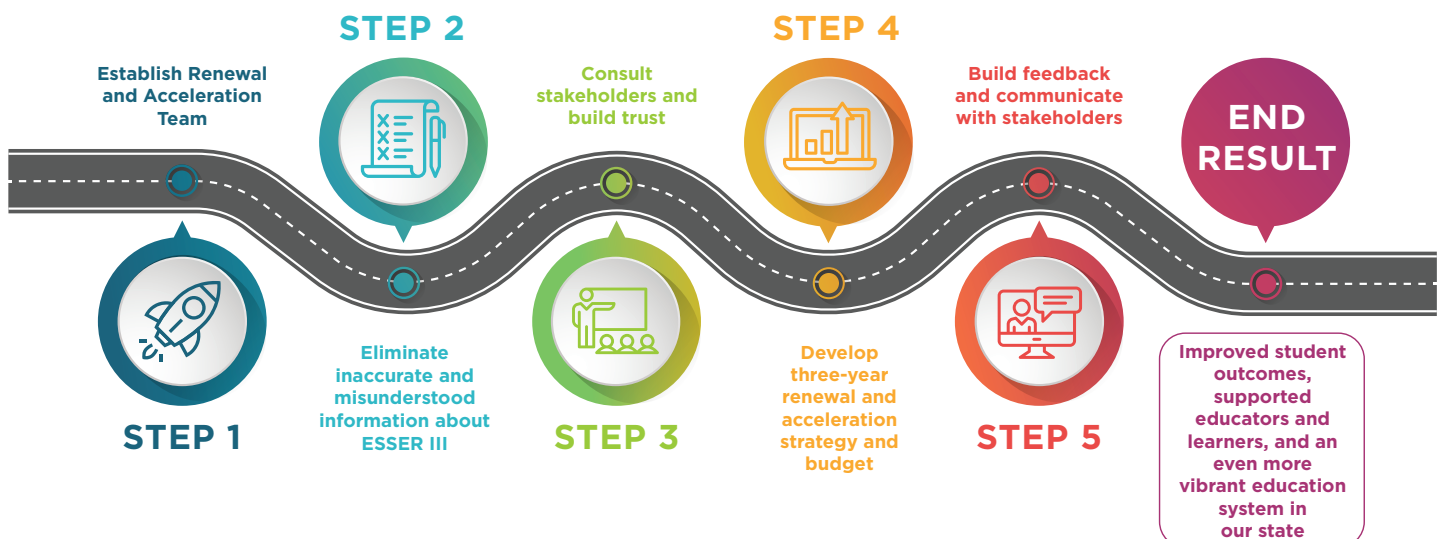
- invest in mitigation strategies consistent with the *CDC Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools* to the greatest extent practicable;
- address the many impacts of COVID-19 on students, including from interrupted instruction;
- implement strategies to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs;
- offer crucial summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs;
- support early childhood education;
- invest in staff capacity; and
- avoid devastating layoffs at this critical moment, ensuring that all students have access to teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to support their needs.

Implementation of ARP requires school districts to target resources to support four core actions:

- Anchor core instruction to high-quality instructional materials and content and move forward with appropriate supports and interventions.
- Collect and analyze student-level data to determine the level of support needed by each student, especially those known to be most at risk.
- Assess and address whole-child needs (e.g. mental health, nutritional needs, etc.) while integrating with and aligning to academic acceleration.
- Utilize community and higher education engagement and partnerships as strategies for service innovation that maximizes every asset and resource, not just those controlled by the district.

To support district leaders in the process for using ARP funds, the NDE has created a budget roadmap.

## Nebraska Renewal and Acceleration Strategy and Budget Roadmap





# Priority Investments

ESSER III - ARP required the NDE to submit an application to the USDoe. In May 2021 the NDE collected input and reviewed data to determine successes, priorities, and strategies for supporting schools and developing next steps for the use of state funds. The NDE hosted 14 round table sessions with students, families, teachers, administrators, community leaders, tribes, youth serving-organizations, and other advocacy and civil rights groups. Additionally, the NDE surveyed stakeholders on the prioritization of strategies and investments of state funds. The NDE submitted the ESSER III - ARP state plan to the USDoe on June 21, 2021. While the vast majority (90%) of federal stimulus funding goes to districts, clearly articulating statewide priorities is critical for three reasons:

- 1.) **Sets direction for renewal and acceleration.** Districts, community partners, and stakeholders look to the NDE to set a clear, compelling direction and tone for the future. The NDE can use these priorities to leverage additional funds, and rally additional support.
- 2.) **Ensures transparency.** Planning and meticulously tracking results is a must to ensure return on investment and accountability.
- 3.) **Signals to schools where to, and where not to, invest.** Districts can look to the NDE's priorities and decide to invest more, or avoid that priority area entirely. This adds an element of time sensitivity to our work to ensure we announce statewide priorities before schools begin their planning.

Based on this feedback, Nebraska's statewide priority investments for ESSER III - ARP are:



## *Mental Health Support*

Provide access to comprehensive emotional and mental health services to students, staff, and communities.



## *Family & Community Engagement*

Reimagine meaningful family and community engagement.



## *Educator & Leader Support*

Invest in high-quality professional development, upskilling, and the teacher and leader pipeline.



## *System Investments*

Comprehensively modernize information, data, technology, and process systems.



## *Learning Acceleration*

Ensure equitable access to grade-level instruction to address unfinished learning and support learning acceleration.

# *Mental Health Support*



The first priority for Nebraska's ESSER III funds is to support student and staff social emotional wellbeing and mental health. This includes social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula and training for teachers, mental health first aid training, and expanding access to mental health practitioners, social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, and tele-health opportunities.

## Project AWARE

In 2018, the NDE was awarded a Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The purpose of this five-year grant is to: increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth; provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school-aged youth to detect and respond to mental health issues; and connect school-aged youth, who may have behavioral health issues, and their families to needed services. The NDE, along with DHHS, are partnering with three school districts to improve school-based mental health services. The school districts are Chadron, Hastings, and South Sioux City. All three districts have strong, long-standing track records of successful collaborations with state and local partners, including mental health providers, community coalitions, civic organizations, the business and private sector, and stakeholders, including students and families.

[www.education.ne.gov/csss/project-aware](http://www.education.ne.gov/csss/project-aware)



**Nebraska**  
HEALTHY SCHOOLS  
PROGRAM

The NDE Nebraska Healthy Schools Program works collaboratively with Nebraska schools to support the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, a program that includes resources and support for the individual, family, school, and the community. The Nebraska Healthy Schools Program aims to provide professional development, resources, and tools to support schools and out of school time providers in all aspects of health and wellbeing for staff, students, and families. There are many new needs created by COVID-19 and the Nebraska Healthy Schools Program works to identify best practices and tools that can assist in providing health and wellbeing support during this time.

[www.education.ne.gov/csss/healthy-school](http://www.education.ne.gov/csss/healthy-school)

# *Family & Community Engagement*



Nebraska is prioritizing initiatives to reimagine family and community engagement in our state. There are many ways to support education engagement including family-school-student partnerships, resources to support in-person communication with families linked to learning goals, expanding access to community school models, and strategies that provide the opportunity for parents and children to interact together.



Families and caregivers are equal partners in the quest to prepare children to be healthy, happy, and productive citizens. Evidence from countless studies show that when parents are supported, empowered, and equipped with the proper tools, their involvement leads to improved academic and life outcomes for their children. The NDE, in partnership with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF), is announcing the **Together, Better** initiative, a series of strategic investments in authentic, evidence-based and reimagined family and community engagement. The NDE and NCFF are collaborating to further family and community engagement in the state with five strategies:

- The Community Schools Pilot Project in three to four selected communities
- The Nebraska Statewide Family Engagement Center Augmentation to expand a family literacy model
- The Nebraska Expanded Learning Expansion Collaborative to build upon successes in the 21st Century Afterschool Learning Centers and a statewide approach to high-quality expanded learning
- Ready Rosie, providing research-based and standards-aligned content to support growth and development outside of schools
- Add staff capacity to implement and sustain the work



Nebraska CAFE: Community and Family Engagement is a series of online meetings for families, community members, and educators. Everyone is welcome and the experience is offered in five languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Karen, and Arabic). Nebraska CAFE amplifies family engagement in schools across the state, further empowers families as change-makers in schools, and provides a platform for families to communicate, network, be heard, and learn from others across the state. Gatherings include time for gaining information and time to talk with others in small and large groups.

[www.education.ne.gov/family/nebraska-cafe](http://www.education.ne.gov/family/nebraska-cafe)

# *Educator & Leader Support*



**Recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers and leaders is key to the success of the education system in Nebraska. Investment in teacher professional development, upskilling, and the teacher and leader pipeline will help us meet this goal. This includes providing professional learning to improve culturally-relevant teaching and learning, building teacher content knowledge, supporting the implementation of high-quality instructional materials, investing in teachers, and creating opportunities to upskill credentials and certifications.**



With support from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Restart Grant, the NDE offered a tailored professional learning series for Nebraska's Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools. SchoolKit, a national professional learning organization, worked closely with the NDE to create communities of practice, supporting school teams with deepening instructional content knowledge to continue to address unfinished teaching and learning in their schools. Four communities of practice were offered: K-5 Foundational Reading; 6-12 Older Readers Who Struggle; K-5 Math Coherence and Grade-level Content; and 6-12 Math Coherence and Grade-level Content.

[www.education.ne.gov/csds/csi-communities-of-practice/](http://www.education.ne.gov/csds/csi-communities-of-practice/)



Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal and Acceleration establishes high expectations for teaching and learning and supports educators in addressing unfinished learning, helping schools to ensure that students have access to grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations. The NDE, in partnership with TNTP, offered a professional learning series supporting district and school leaders in shifting from remediation to acceleration, not by providing content or teaching faster, but by using instructional strategies that help all students grapple with grade-appropriate content.

[www.launchne.com/professional-learning-and-resources/](http://www.launchne.com/professional-learning-and-resources/)

# System Investments



Digital equity is a priority statewide. Nebraska must ensure access to reliable Internet at home for every student and teacher to completely close the “homework gap.” Other system investments include access to modern devices, software, and high-quality digital content, coupled with training and support, enable high-quality teaching and learning. Modernizing data infrastructure and analytics tools with a strong focus on cybersecurity and data privacy is our final system strategy over the coming three years.



This year, the NDE introduced Nebraska's Data Visualization and Use Education Innovation Network. This continuous improvement innovation network showed participants how to use powerful data tools to set strategic goals and improve educational outcomes. A diverse and dedicated group of teachers, principals, administrators, and Educational Service Unit (ESU) staff were selected to expand their data visualization skills. The six interactive, virtual group learning events included training from experienced data communication professionals and knowledge-sharing among participants. The sessions were facilitated by Kitamba, a social impact consultancy focused on education.

[education.ne.gov/education-innovation-networks-ein/#dvv](https://education.ne.gov/education-innovation-networks-ein/#dvv)



ConnectEd Nebraska, powered by *eduroam*, is a new educational internet program for Nebraska K-12 schools. ConnectEd Nebraska provides students and educators free and readily-available access to guest wireless networks at participating eduroam (ConnectEd Nebraska) schools. Nebraska was selected as one of two state networks in the country to pilot a support organization approach to *eduroam* for K-12 schools. School districts opting into the program save time as *eduroam* authentication is automatic and access is immediate. *eduroam* provides ease and security when connecting to wireless internet at schools during regular classes and events or when visiting other participating schools for activities and sports. In addition, ConnectEd Nebraska strives for equity in the state, helping underserved students stay securely connected.

[connectednebraska.com](https://connectednebraska.com)



# *Learning Acceleration*



**Nebraska wants to ensure that all students have equitable access to grade-level instruction to address unfinished learning and support learning acceleration. This includes supporting learning acceleration anchored in high-quality instructional materials, evidence-based interventions and assessments, and high-quality professional learning to support equitable teaching and learning for all students, with particular attention to students most impacted by COVID-19.**



The NDE partnered with OpenUp Resources to provide a new digital learning resource for students. The *onetable* is an innovative digital device for Pre-K, kindergarten, first, and second grade students. *onetable*'s early literacy, numeracy, and writing courses are customized to individual student needs, carefully sequenced, and highly engaging. Best of all, the device does not require an internet connection, making it an ideal tool for students in rural areas with limited internet access. The first distribution of *onetable* devices focused on young readers affected by school closures. Together, the NDE and OpenUp Resources organized a four-month pilot. Participating districts included Walthill, Oakland-Craig, Perkins County, Arthur County, Maxwell Public Schools, Mullen Public Schools, and Paxton Public Schools. The NDE and OpenUp are expanding the pilot as the first phase generated promising data and much enthusiasm from students, teachers, and caregivers. At no cost to districts, schools, or families, additional districts have been invited to participate in a second phase of the pilot. They include Falls City North, Homer, Minatare, Tekamah-Herman, Laurel-Concord-Coleridge, Nebraska City, Auburn, Hartington-Newcastle, Bloomfield, and Wakefield Public Schools.

[openupresources.org/digital-supports/onetable](https://openupresources.org/digital-supports/onetable)



To support schools with math acceleration, the NDE offered Nebraska public and non-public schools access to Zearn Math for summer 2021 and the 2021-22 school year. Zearn is used by one in four students nationwide and are the only EdReports "greenlit" math instructional materials with a strong digital learning component. In addition, to support implementation, the NDE offered comprehensive support through virtual professional learning provided by SchoolKit. This professional learning equipped school leaders and teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to leverage Zearn in addressing unfinished teaching and learning. Zearn is aligned to Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for Mathematics and reflects Nebraska's Instructional Shifts for Mathematics. Zearn also supports Nebraska's Framework for School Renewal and Acceleration.

[about.zearn.org/summer-math](https://about.zearn.org/summer-math)

# EQUITABLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITH *NSCAS Growth*

This school year (2021-22), Nebraska will embark upon a preliminary transition to NSCAS Growth – an adaptive, through-year assessment for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, grades 3-8. We will be the first in the nation to implement a solution that unifies state and district tests to help foster equitable learning opportunities with results that are actionable at both the instruction and systems level.

## *How We Got Here*

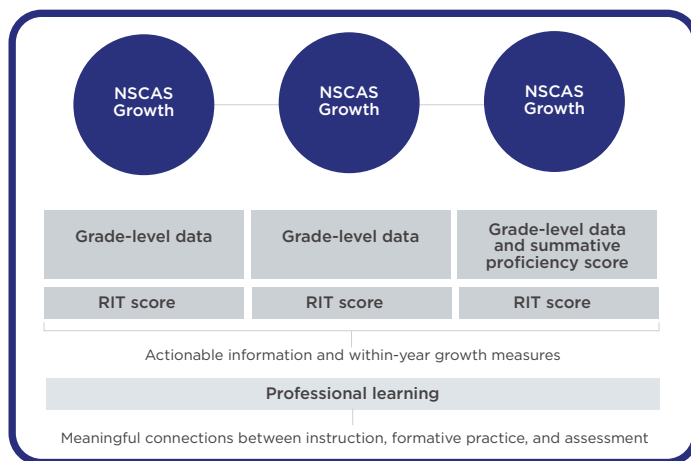
The NDE implemented the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) in partnership with Nebraska educators in 2017 to provide a balanced approach inclusive of formative, interim, and summative (proficiency) measures. Since then, we have continued to seek input from Nebraska educators to make the system even more student-centered.

Educator feedback underlined the need for a cohesive, standards-aligned system that provides more timely and relevant data to inform instruction. Input also revealed that it can be challenging to manage different testing platforms and protocols for interim and summative tests, and the amount of testing in the spring can encroach upon valuable classroom time. NSCAS Growth is designed to address these challenges.

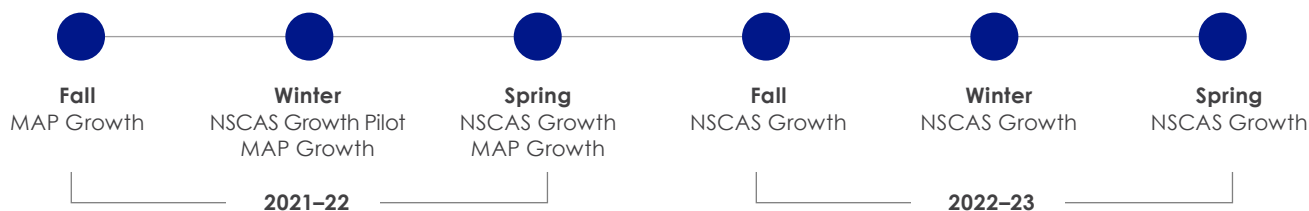
## *About NSCAS Growth*

NSCAS Growth integrates interim and summative measures, assessing student performance relative to Nebraska's grade-level expectations, while also adapting below and beyond grade-level as needed to reveal student learning needs. In this streamlined approach, each assessment informs the next; educators have access to normative and criterion-referenced information throughout the year; and summative proficiency scores are produced at year's end.

With NSCAS Growth, the NDE will continue to promote formative instructional practice through professional learning and resources that equip educators to use growth and grade-level performance information, alongside other sources of knowledge and professional judgment, to inform instruction and improve student learning.



In 2021-22, Nebraska districts will have the opportunity to pilot NSCAS Growth in the winter term and all Nebraska districts will administer NSCAS Growth in the spring. In 2022-23, NSCAS Growth will replace MAP® Growth™ and the NSCAS General Summative test.





*Nebraska Department of Education*

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