

TO: NITC Commissioners
FROM: Tom Rolfes, Education I.T. Manager
DATE: 7/8/2021
RE: Network Nebraska and Digital Education Initiative Reports

Education Council update: The Education Council met on April 21 and June 16 over Zoom. Progress is still being made on the NITC Action Items, even as schools and colleges grapple with the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Network Nebraska Update:

- 1. Prepare for the future of Network Nebraska as a statewide, multipurpose, high capacity, scalable telecommunications network**
 - a. The Office of the CIO and State Purchasing are preparing for another RFP to bid out school districts, as requested, and public libraries interested in the E-rate Special Construction Matching Funds.
 - b. An estimated dozen public libraries plan to take advantage of the Public Service Commission's Special Construction Matching E-rate funds for new fiber for 2022-23.
 - c. The Network Nebraska Advisory Group held a special meeting on June 16 to finalize budgets and the draft Participation Fee, Interregional Transport Fee, and the statewide internet cost center.
 - d. Internet orders for 2021-22 increased about 16% for K-12 entities and about 9% for Higher Ed and non-E-rate eligible entities.
 - e. The University of Nebraska engineering team drafted a set of infrastructure upgrades that may be eligible for the U.S. Treasury Capital Project Section 604 funding which will be coming to Nebraska.

- 2. Effectively communicate to current and potential Network Nebraska Participants**
 - a. The Office of the CIO has been involved in the Nebraska statewide eduroam pilot project for 2021-23. A nationwide news release is being prepared for release by Internet2 and a statewide news release is being prepared by the Nebraska Dept of Education for a 7/21/2021 release.
<https://connectednebraska.com/>

- 3. Identify needs and deliver advanced services to meet the growing needs of its membership**
 - a. Patrick Wright, State Information Security Officer, has been negotiating a statewide enterprise agreement that will bring cybersecurity awareness training to 25,000 K-12 staff and 100,000 high school students.
 - b. Zoom licensing orders for 2021-22 are in the process of being collected.

Digital Education Update:

- 1. Disseminate informational reports to insure the success of Nebraska digital education**
 - a. Information about the FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund, FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit program, ESSER III Technology funding, and the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects funding has been distributed to ESUs for sharing with school districts. Presentations are scheduled for the Administrator Days Conference, July 28-30 in Kearney.

- 2. Expand awareness and address the need for equity of access**
 - a. Digital Equity data is being collected from Nebraska school districts and unserved student addresses are being mapped so that appropriate provider services can be arranged in each service area.
 - b. Office of the CIO staff have continued to monitor the development of wireless and satellite technologies to gauge their potential in narrowing the Homework Gap in areas where students households are unserved or underserved.