



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT

NEBRASKA
esu13
 serving the panhandle

Educational Service Units (ESUs) of Nebraska were established by the state legislature in 1965 to provide vital support and resources to public school districts. At ESU 13, we are dedicated to serving, supporting, and empowering the students, educators, and communities across the Nebraska Panhandle. Our services span the counties of Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, and Sioux, ensuring that every school district we work with has access to the tools and expertise they need to thrive.



1,500
 SCHOOL STAFF



11
 COUNTIES



+14,000
 STUDENTS

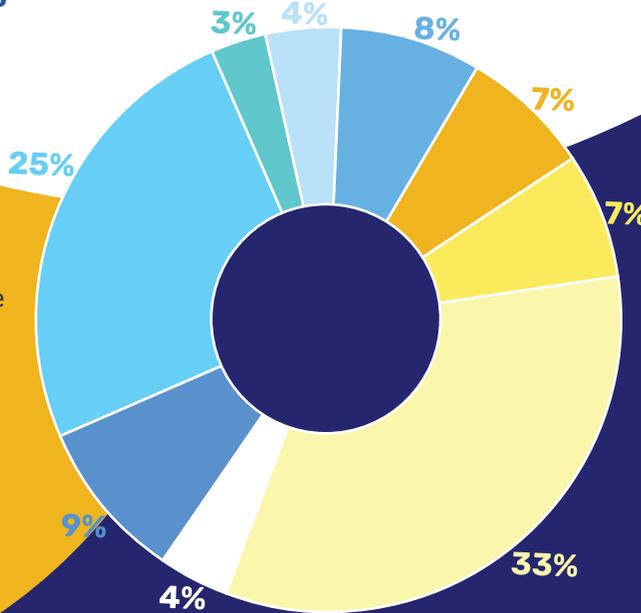


14,181
 SQUARE MILES



21
 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

9 DEPARTMENTS - 174 EMPLOYEES



- 14** Administration
- 13** Alternative Education
- 12** Early Childhood
- 57** Head Start/Early Head Start
- 7.5** Professional Learning
- 16** Psychological and Behavior Health
- 44** Special Education
- 4.5** Technology
- 6** Title IC Education

OUR MISSION

Serve, Support, Empower

OUR VISION AND BELIEFS

Achieving educational excellence for all learners through strong partnerships, service, and leadership by...

- Collaborating with schools, families, and communities
- Serving with equity, efficiency, and integrity
- Communicating effectively
- Leading with innovation

12 BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Sinner, **Board President**
 Kim Marx, **Vice President**
 Tom Millette, **Secretary**

Tim Horn; Patricia Jones; Dr. Caroline Winchester;
 Dr. Ronda Kinsey; Ray Richards; Scott Marsh; Diane Coon; Casper Ningen; and Steve Diemoz

LEADERSHIP THOUGHTS



A MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

On behalf of ESU 13, it is my privilege to share a brief overview of the services we provided during the 2023-24 school year. This has been a transformative year for ESU 13 as we embarked on a deeper journey into our strategic priorities. These priorities were established with the goal of continuously improving the valued services we provide to support our local districts and communities in meeting the educational needs of their children and youth.

A key element of this effort has been ensuring that we maximize and responsibly manage the resources available to us. As you will see in the Administration section, through effective financial management and strategic partnerships, we've successfully multiplied our resources and secured substantial external funding to further support our schools.

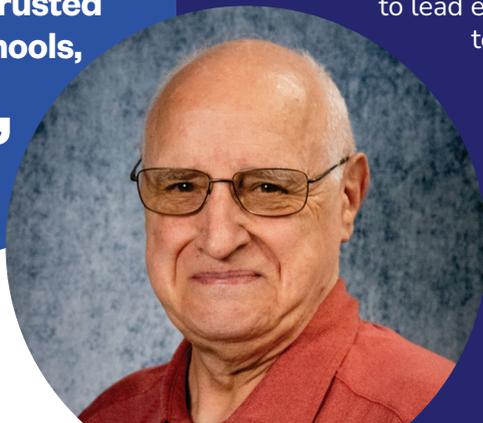
As we work toward the goals outlined in our strategic plan, our Board of Education and ESU 13 leadership remain focused on identifying and responding to the evolving needs of our schools, students, and communities. We have worked diligently to align our systems and services, measure our effectiveness, expand our relationships with community partners, and invest in the growth and well-being of our staff. These efforts will not only ensure that we meet the needs of our schools and communities today, but also build a solid foundation for the future.

This work is made possible through strong partnerships with local school districts, community agencies, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), the ESU Coordinating Council (ESUCC), and other key collaborators. Together, we are committed to ensuring the services we provide continue to grow and evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this annual report and learn more about the impactful work happening at ESU 13.

Respectfully,
Laura Barrett, EdD
Administrator, ESU 13

“ We are proud to support the important work to ensure ESU 13 continues as a trusted resource for schools, students, and communities. ”



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

As the vibrant colors and crisp air of autumn settle in, it's the perfect time to reflect on the 2023-2024 school year and the important role ESU 13 continues to play in supporting our local districts across the Nebraska Panhandle. Our communities can take pride in the work being done to enhance educational opportunities for students.

As President of the ESU 13 Board of Education, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the educators, administrators, and staff who work tirelessly to meet the evolving needs of our schools. ESU 13's leadership has been instrumental in addressing challenges and embracing opportunities at both state and national levels. Their dedication ensures that students, even in our most rural areas, receive the support they need to thrive.

The ESU 13 Board of Education values the involvement and efforts of the entire Unit. We are proud to support this important work and remain committed to ensuring ESU 13 continues to be a trusted resource for schools, students, and communities.

A special thank you to Dr. Laura Barrett for her visionary leadership, which has guided the organization toward continued growth and success.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the future and how ESU 13 will continue to lead educational advancements. Whether through partnerships, technology, or professional development, we remain at the forefront of driving positive change.

Thank you for your continued support of ESU 13 and its vital role in shaping the future of education in our region.

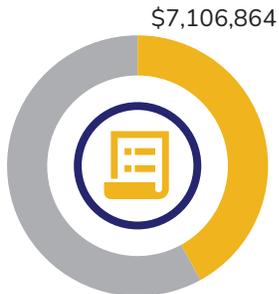
Sincerely,
Mark Sinner
President, ESU 13 Board of Education

“ This has been a transformative year for ESU 13 as we embarked on a deeper journey into our strategic priorities. ”

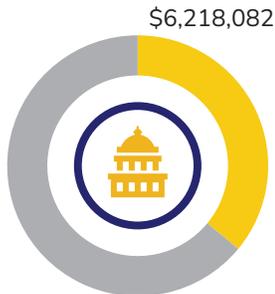
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



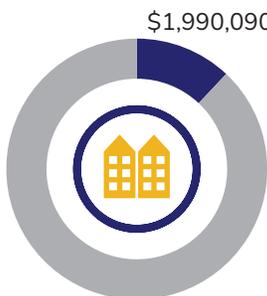
\$17,045,210
IN REVENUE



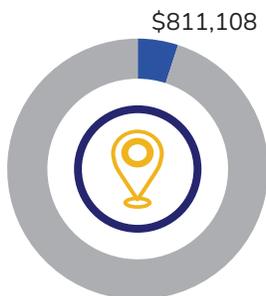
Local Receipts



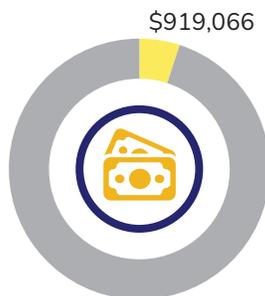
Federal Sources



Personal & Real Property Tax

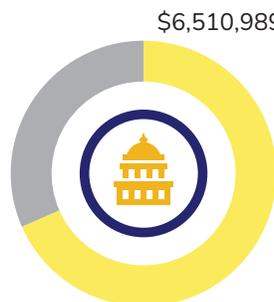


State Sources

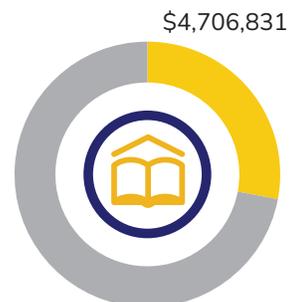


Core Service

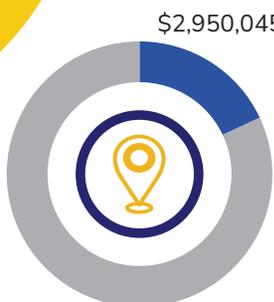
\$16,586,070
IN EXPENSES



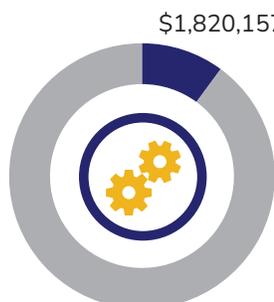
Federal Programs



Alternative & Special Education



State Contracts



Business & Operational



Support Services

OUR SERVICES

NEARLY \$7M was accessed through local, state and federal grants for supplemental services, at no cost, to students, families, school staff and childcare providers.

ADMINISTRATION

Laura Barrett, EdD, Administrator

Our Administration Department provides administrative support and leadership to staff and member school districts by:

- Facilitating the Superintendents' Administrative Advisory Council
- Serving as a liaison to NDE and ESUCC
- Representing ESU 13 throughout the panhandle
- Securing and allocating revenue sources
- Grant management
- Providing a safe and clean environment at ESU 13 facilities

2023-2024 Highlights

- The total savings through cooperative purchasing amounted to \$482,415. This program was utilized by 27 entities, including local public and non-public schools, as well as area public agencies.
- For every dollar collected in property taxes, we leveraged an impressive \$11.97 of additional funding to provide necessary support to our schools. Even after accounting for the property taxes that fund schools, we still secured \$2.92 in external funding, ensuring high-quality services at minimal or no cost to our schools.
- We accessed nearly \$7M through local, state and federal grants for supplemental services, at no cost, to students, families, school staff and childcare providers.



\$482,415 SAVED
by 27 member schools and partners through ESU 13 Cooperative Purchasing.



19 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS graduated from the VALTS program throughout the year.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Tom Peacock, Director

Our Alternative Education Department provides alternative education opportunities to high school students in the panhandle through the following programs:

- Valley Alternative Learning Transitioning School (VALTS) - Scottsbluff and Sidney campuses
- Nebraska Education Virtual Academy (NEVA)

2023-2024 Highlights

- A total of 19 students graduated from VALTS including 10 from Gering, 4 from Bridgeport, and 1 graduate each from Mitchell, Morrill, Minatare, Banner County, and Bayard.
- To date, a total of 771 students have graduated from 11 area high schools.

OUR SERVICES



96 TRAININGS
and advanced learning opportunities were offered to child care providers by PELC.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Nici Johnson, Director

Our Early Childhood Department provides quality experiences for children birth to age eight through the following programs:

- Early Development Network (EDN)
- Panhandle Early Learning Connections (PELC)
- Rooted in Relationships
- Sixpence Sprouting Success
- Early Childhood Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Early Learning Connections coach consulting

2023-2024 Highlights

- PELC offered 96 license required trainings and advanced learning opportunities to child care providers.
- Sixpence Child Care Partnerships and Rooted in Relationships provided 432 coaching sessions to partnering child care programs and providers.
- The EDN worked 183 referrals of children Birth to 3 for 12 school districts in Planning Region Team 13 and 14.

HEAD START

Krystie Hohnstein, Director

Head Start (HS) plays a vital role in serving young children and families in Scotts Bluff, Cheyenne, and Morrill Counties. Key aspects include:

- Serving children birth to five years old, with Early Head Start (EHS) - birth to age 3 and HS - ages 3 to 5.
- Holistic approach addressing health, education, special services, family services, and parent engagement.
- 80% of funding comes from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and 20% from community volunteerism, partnerships, and donations.
- Guided by Performance Standards emphasizing parent education, health services, nutrition, and child individualization.
- Developed through research and collaboration, ensuring comprehensive support for children and families.

2023-2024 Highlights

- ESU 13 HS completed their first year of EHS services in Bridgeport, serving 8 infants and toddlers from the community.
- 28% of HS and 20% of EHS children received services for an Individualized Education Program or Individualized Family Service Plan.



**FIRST YEAR
OF EHS IN
BRIDGEPORT**
served 8 infants
and toddlers.

OUR SERVICES



8,681 TOTAL registrations from administrators, principals, and support personnel participating in ESU 13 learning opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Deirdre Amundsen, Director

Professional Learning offers collaborative development and support for teachers, staff, and administrators, addressing district needs by:

- Assessment analysis and application of diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative data.
- Guidance in Continuous Improvement Processes through Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) practices.
- Instructional material selection and implementation assistance.
- Content-specific instructional guidance.
- Leadership opportunities for superintendents and principals.
- New Teacher Academy.
- Specialist networking for administrative assistants, high ability learner leaders, English learner instructors, and paraprofessionals.
- Student event coordination.

Professional Learning enhances student outcomes, supports school improvement, and helps schools meet state and national requirements.

2023-2024 Highlights

- 113 services were offered to Panhandle school districts.
- 1,652 service activity hours were logged.
- 2,436 students attended Professional Learning sponsored student events.
- 8,681 registrations from school staff members.
- 6,023 ESU 13 provider hours.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Dr. Katie Carrizales, Director

Our Psychological & Behavioral Health Department provides comprehensive services through collaborative partnerships including:

- Child specific therapeutic consultation/intervention
- Psychological assessment and Counseling
- Mobile Youth Intensive Outpatient program
- Doctoral psychology internship site
- Counseling cadre
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title IV-A Consortium
- Ecological In-Home Family Treatment (EIHFT)
- Education and training for schools, youth, and families
- Panhandle Beginnings Day Treatment School (PBDTX)

2023 -2024 Highlights

- 150 youth and families received therapeutic treatment
- Nearly 500 students evaluated this year.

NEARLY 500 STUDENTS were evaluated, and **150 YOUTH AND FAMILIES** received therapy.



OUR SERVICES

SUPPORTED 8 TRAINEES, including interns, practicum students, and postdoctoral psychologists.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (CONT.)

- 22 families served through the EIHFT program.
- 16 students participated in Day Treatment.
- 3 school districts implemented a comprehensive mental health support initiative through the School Mental Health Grant.

Our department supported the following trainees:

- Two doctoral interns
- One masters intern
- One practicum student
- Two Provisionally Licensed Mental Health Practitioners
- Two postdoctoral psychologists



Services provided in all **21 SCHOOL DISTRICTS.**

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Jessica Broderick, Director

Our Special Education Department contracts with member school districts to provide the following:

- Nebraska Autism Network
- Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing
- Early Childhood Special Education
- LifeLink-Nebraska
- Meridian School
- Occupational therapy
- Post-secondary transition support
- Special education supervision
- Speech-language pathology
- Teacher of the visually impaired
- Targeted Improvement Plan/Improved Learning for Children with Disabilities Focused Supports
- Inclusive practices coaching

2023 -2024 Highlights

- 1 Meridian graduate (Scotts Bluff County)
- 3 LifeLink graduates (Scotts Bluff, Box Butte, Banner County)
- Provided services in all 21 school districts.
- Managed 5 grants totaling \$522,325, aimed at improving outcomes for young children and students.



OUR SERVICES



267 STUDENTS
were served in
our region.

TITLE IC MIGRANT EDUCATION

Madison Luke, Manager

Our Title IC Migrant Education Department identifies eligible students and provides the following educational and support services:

- Academic instruction
- Bilingual and multicultural supports
- Post secondary and vocational guidance
- Leadership development
- Counseling services
- Health and wellness supports
- Preschool services
- Family advocacy

2023 -2024 Highlights

- 267 students enrolled in the region were served and offered support services.
- 99 students received supplemental instructional services.
- 57 students were identified as Priority for Service (PFS), and all received support.
- 99 students were identified as At Risk, with all receiving services.
- Of the 2,500+ documented services provided, 25% were instructional, and 75% were support services.

TECHNOLOGY

BJ Peters, Director

Our Technology Department provides a wide variety of technology services and support to ESU 13 staff and member school districts through:

- Network support
- Digital resources
- Distance learning
- Digital citizenship
- E-Rate guidance
- Technology training and support
- LAN manager and media specialist meetings

2023-2024 Highlights

- Assisted member school districts in applying for over \$700,000 in E-Rate eligible services and equipment this past year. Due to our high poverty rates in western Nebraska, over \$544,000 was discounted, resulting in more than a 75% savings. E-Rate is a program that helps schools afford telecommunications and internet services, funded by the Universal Service Fund and administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company.
- In the spring, our Tech team, alongside a professional grant writing team, submitted a \$1 million USDA Rural Utility Distance Learning grant. Grant awards are expected in fall 2024. This grant will greatly benefit staff and students in our ESU 13 districts, helping to bridge the gap between students and the wealth of educational opportunities beyond their immediate surroundings.



OVER \$700K
in E-Rate services
and equipment was
secured for member
school districts.

OFFICE LOCATIONS



Headquarters
4215 Avenue I
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

(308) 635-3696
www.esu13.org



Sidney Location
361 College Drive
Sidney, NE 69162



Chadron Location
Burkhiser Complex
Chadron State College
1000 Main Street
Chadron, NE 69337



VALTS and LifeLink
WNCC Harms Center
2620 College Park
Scottsbluff, NE 69361



Panhandle Beginnings
Day Treatment
116 Terry Blvd
Gering, NE 69341



Early Childhood Offices
4502 Avenue I
Scottsbluff, NE 69361



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