



Making a Difference.

Spotlighting How ESAs Impact the Nation's Education System

Working Together To Keep Schools Safe

WHO: Nebraska Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC), LaVista, NE

CHALLENGE: Masks and other personal protective equipment as well as common cleaning supplies were hard to find in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without those supplies, Nebraska school districts would not have been able to open for in-person instruction the fall of 2020.

SOLUTION: ESUs in Nebraska collaborated with FEMA to purchase and distribute 2 million masks to schools in time for the first day of school. Another purchase was made in December. The ESUs also partnered with the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Ethanol Board to obtain 75,000 gallons of hand sanitizer to be delivered to the schools – at no cost to the schools -- with the help of the Nebraska Forest Department, in time for the first day of classes. The ESUCC cooperative purchase program allowed districts to purchase more of the needed supplies at a reduced cost as they became available.

The ESUCC also provided other services to state schools including communication, professional development and training, coordination to provide access to the Internet and devices for students who lacked them, and advocacy on important issues such as school attendance, accreditation status and teacher certification requirements.

RESULT: Schools were able to open on time for the 2020-21 school year and continue to operate safely.

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Pullout Quote: “When the pandemic hit, everyone realized the ESUs were a perfect solution to address a myriad of issues,” said Dr. Kraig Lofquist, executive director of Nebraska’s Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council.