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Providing innovation, leadership and service.



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*ESU #1 will model excellence by helping
schools increase educators' effectiveness and
student learning as a result of expert services.*



ESU #1 engages in an agency improvement process and strives to be a leader in all aspects of education. We continually examine our practices to determine if our vision, mission and goals represent who we are as a partner to our school districts. Our mission is to **Provide Innovation, Leadership and Service**. As we reflect on who we are as a service agency, we value the professional staff we employ and our partners within the school districts of northeast Nebraska.

The agency improvement process allows ESU #1 to:

- ▶ Prioritize and establish a clear vision of agency goals and expectations through the collection and analysis of data from a variety of sources.
- ▶ Identify strengths and areas of concern to coordinate department efforts and activities in support of agency improvement goals.
- ▶ Continuously evaluate data and monitor progress regarding the overall effectiveness of the agency.

In partnership with local school districts, ESU #1 continues to look for ways to improve instructional skills and student achievement. Throughout continual reflection, the focus can be narrowed to target efforts that will have the greatest impact. ESU #1 takes pride in the success of its staff, students and the school districts served.



Tower School

Tower School in Wayne, Nebraska, was built during the fiscal year of 1992-93 and provides contracted services to school districts in an alternative setting. The Tower School Level III program consists of two specialized classrooms with students placed in classrooms based on individual needs.

The services Tower School provides focus on behavior modification, social skills, functional skills, daily living skills, job skills, transition skills and ultimately prepares students to be contributing members of society and experience success in a variety of settings.

Certified teachers, along with other itinerant service providers and paraeducators, annually serve 45-50 students from area school districts.

Tower School
901 East 14th Street
Wayne, NE 68787
Ph: 402-375-3005
Ph: 402-375-3011
Fax: 402-375-1205



Migrant Education

The ESU #1 Migrant Education Program (MEP) works to ensure that migrant children fully benefit from the same free public education provided to other children. To achieve this, the MEP supports educational programs for migrant children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves.

One of the MEP's purposes is to ensure that the special educational needs of migrant children are identified and addressed. The MEP provides migrant students with the opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic content standards that all children are expected to meet. Our program promotes interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migrant children, providing for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records.

Lastly, MEP sponsors family literacy services for migrant children and their families.



ESU #1 offers a wide variety of services to the schools we serve. Parents who think their child might benefit from one of the many services offered can contact their local school district for additional information. Some of the services ESU #1 offers include:

Special Education

- ▶ Audiological testing
- ▶ Level III Program at Tower School in Wayne
- ▶ Deaf education
- ▶ Early Childhood Special Education services
- ▶ Early Development Network services
- ▶ Occupational therapy
- ▶ Physical therapy
- ▶ Program supervision
- ▶ School psychology services
- ▶ Speech therapy
- ▶ Transition services
- ▶ Vision and orientation & mobility consultation



Other Services

- ▶ Education of migratory children
- ▶ RealCare baby loan program
- ▶ Computer and equipment repair
- ▶ Cooperative purchase program
- ▶ Early Childhood professional development
- ▶ E-Rate consulting
- ▶ Internet infrastructure and support
- ▶ Media and digital resources
- ▶ Staff development and training
- ▶ Schoolwide hearing screening

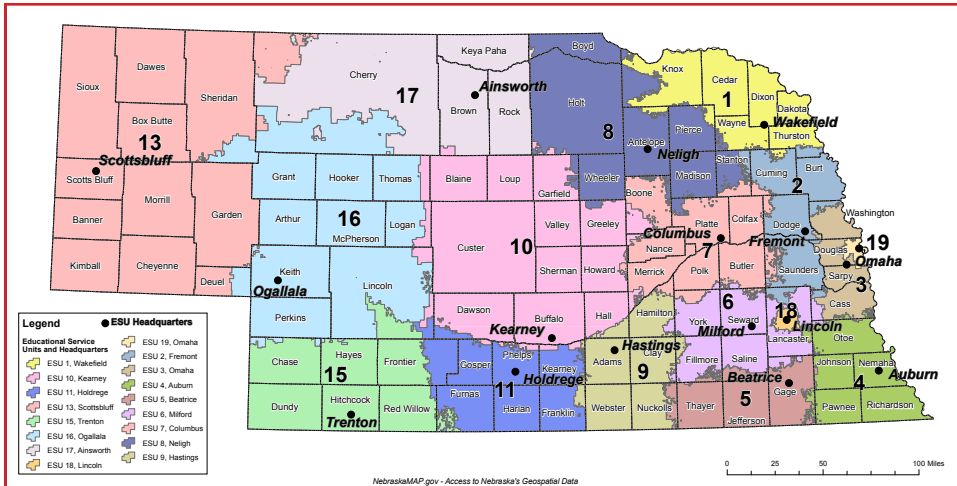
About ESU #1

Educational Service Unit #1 provides services to the local school districts in Cedar, Dakota, Dixon, Knox, Thurston and Wayne counties in northeast Nebraska. ESU #1 is one of 17 Educational Service Units statewide.

The service units were created by the state Legislature in 1965 and later placed under the jurisdiction of the Nebraska Department of Education.

Historically, the purpose of the ESUs has been to provide services that individual school districts can't economically or efficiently provide for themselves. As the school districts identified new needs, the diversity of services offered by the ESUs evolved.

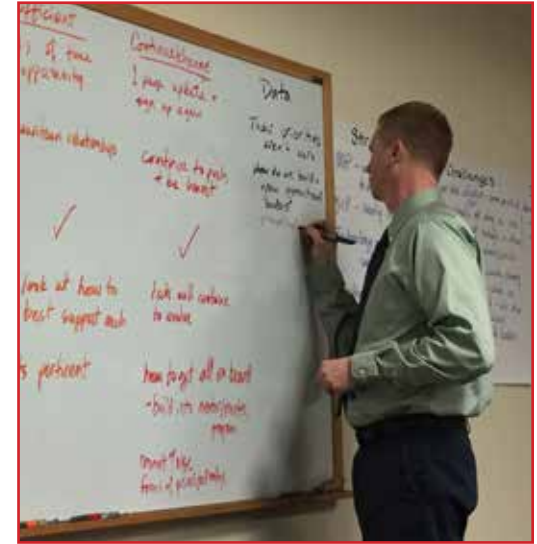
ESU #1 is headquartered in Wakefield and provides a variety of special education, staff development, technology and media services to the 23 school districts in its six-county area. ESU #1 also operates the Level III program at the Tower School in Wayne.



Special Education Teams

Assistive Technology Team

Assistive technology can include “high tech” tools such as switches, switch adapted toys, computer software, adaptive equipment and dedicated voice output communication aids or “low tech” tools like adapted books. The ESU #1 Assistive Technology Team aids districts in the determination of a student’s need for services, including evaluations, consultations and short-term equipment loans.



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Team

Autism is a behaviorally defined disorder that is generally recognized by disturbances in communication, social interaction and perceptual organization or patterns of behavior. Diagnosed individuals may exhibit a variety of symptoms, ranging from mild to severe, and may display a wide range of skills and deficits.

Brain Injury Regional School Support Team (BIRSST)

The Brain Injury Regional School Support Team (BIRSST) includes speech/language pathologists, psychologists, nurses, teachers and coaches. The team consults with school staff when a child sustains a head injury; trains staff on concussion management; and educates staff on head injuries and their impact on educational performance. BIRSST team members assist schools and Concussion Management Teams (CMT) through consultation, trainings, and resource materials.

Usher Syndrome Team

Usher syndrome is an inherited condition that affects both hearing and vision. Currently, there is no cure, which makes early identification paramount in providing appropriate educational programs. The main purpose of the team is to screen those children and youths who are hearing impaired and who fit the profile for Usher's for visual acuity difficulties.

Early Childhood Special Education

Early childhood services are provided to children with disabilities from birth through age five using a Primary Service Provider (PSP) approach. Every family receives support from a geographically based team that minimally consists of an early childhood provider, occupational therapist, physical therapist, services coordinator and a speech language pathologist. One team member is selected as a primary provider to work closely with each family while receiving support from an entire team of experts. Together, the child's parents and the PSP develop child and family outcomes and goals. The PSP uses evidence-based intervention practices to work toward achieving those outcomes and goals. This approach focuses on relationships with families, building the capacity of the child's parents, caregivers, and/or preschool teachers, and increased opportunities for growth within the context of everyday routines and activities.

Early Development Network

The Early Development Network (EDN) provides services and supports specifically for children birth to age 3 and their families. The goal of the EDN is to provide coordinated services for families as conveniently as possible. The program helps families to understand their child's disability and provides assistance in any areas that affect the child's development. EDN Services Coordinators are instrumental in working with the agencies that provide services to make sure the child and family get the help they need. The coordinators also inform families about services available in the community, make sure services are delivered smoothly and properly, and inform families about advocacy and support groups.



Early Childhood Professional Development

The purpose of the Northeast Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships is to develop and maintain professional development partnerships which support early childhood professional opportunities for early childhood teachers, caregivers and parents in inclusive homes, centers and school-based settings. This project is designed to assist in collaborative efforts to achieve high quality, affordable, accessible training for all those who work with young children and families.

Board of Directors

ESU #1 is governed by an 10-member elected board. ESU #1 Board of Directors members are elected to four-year terms, one representative from each of 10 area election districts.

Board meetings are held in open session on the second Tuesday of each month at the Central Office in Wakefield. Members of the public are welcome to attend. The public is also invited to visit the ESU #1 Central Office to view the facilities, discuss operations or inquire about specific services.

Please visit www.esu1.org/board.html for a list of current board members.

Advisory Council

ESU #1 is accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education And AdvancED. It is assisted by an advisory council composed of area superintendents, one each from the six counties we serve, representing both large and small school districts.

The council reviews, recommends and supports the services offered by ESU #1.

Please visit www.esu1.org/advisorycouncil.html for a list of current council members.

Funding

Each ESU is financed by a combination of property tax funds, state funds and service contracts with individual school districts. Because the ESU #1 service area includes several counties, the modest contribution of taxpayers provides a base from which the unit functions.

ESUs receive state funds based on a formula to support staff development, media and technology training, and infrastructure. School contracts are individualized, based on each school district's specific requirements. Rates charged for special education services are monitored and approved by the Nebraska Department of Education.



Professional Services

The ESU #1 Professional Services Team collaborates to provide integrated support for partner districts. Professional Services at ESU #1 include Teaching & Learning, Technology, Communications and Media.

Teaching & Learning Team

The ESU #1's Teaching & Learning Specialists' primary focus is working with administrators and teachers to improve educator effectiveness and increase student achievement. The focus is met through a variety of processes, including analyzing assessment data, facilitating district data retreats and improving instructional practice through content area training.

The team provides assistance for continuous school improvement, curriculum, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), principal leadership, new and mentor teachers, and instructional coaching. The Teaching and Learning Specialists partner with the Nebraska Department of Education to support ESU #1-area districts and schools with statewide initiatives.

The ESU #1 Teaching & Learning Specialists strive to provide leadership that increases student achievement at all levels of education.



Special Education Services

Transition

The ESU#1 Transition Program is designed to help students with disabilities bridge the gap between school experiences and adult life, and helps students function as productively and independently as possible within an integrated adult environment.

Transition-age students are those who are 16 or older. Interest and aptitude testing, job shadows, internships and information about college programs and Job Corp are some of the experiences students may receive during the transition process. The goal is to assist students in finding a realistic career that fits with their interests, preferences and strengths.

Visual and Orientation & Mobility

The ESU #1 Vision Program provides individualized learning environments, working to meet the unique and individual needs of students with verified visual impairments.

Services include direct teaching in the areas of braille instruction, orientation & mobility and technology access, as well as services in areas of the expanded core curriculum for the blind and visually impaired. Consultation, material preparation/adaptation, braille and large print textbook sourcing, functional vision evaluations and orientation and mobility evaluations are also provided.



Special Education Services

Deaf Education

The ESU #1 Deaf Education Program provides direct and consultative services to students from birth to 21 years of age who have a verified hearing loss. The program offers in-services to staff; provides input at Individual Education Program (IEP), Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings; assists schools with equipment needs for deaf and hard of hearing students; and advocates for families and children who have a hearing loss.

School Psychology

The ESU #1 School Psychology Program provides services in consultation, assessment and intervention to assist educators, parents and other professionals in understanding the learning, social-emotional and behavioral needs of students, and in identifying effective strategies to help children be successful learners.

ESU #1 psychologists continue to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) through data-based, student-focused problem solving. Our current data supports this movement with a reduction in evaluations and an increase in pre-referral interventions.



Physical and Occupational Therapy

ESU #1 physical and occupational therapists provide services both for children birth through age 5 and to school-age students.

Through cosching and consultation with students and their families, as well as school personnel, therapists work to enhance learning and participation, achieve physical milestones and to foster independence.

Professional Services

Technology Services

The ESU #1 Technology Department offers a number of services to ESU #1 school districts. Some of the services coordinated through the Technology Department include computer and equipment repair, internet services, media and teacher resource library, and technology training. We also offer on-site network support to area school districts.



Media Department

The ESU #1 Media Center provides instructional assistance for school districts by supplying professional development resource materials, programs, virtual conferences and inventory distribution, as well as completing individual orders for binding and laminating for administrators, teachers and staff at schools in the ESU #1 service area.

ESU #1 also provides a variety of instructional materials to schools in northeast Nebraska, including digital video titles and access to online content and resources.



Special Education Departments & Specialty Teams

The ESU #1 Special Education Department consists of a diverse group of professionals from a variety of backgrounds with a shared commitment to improving the quality of education for students. ESU #1 Special Education staff is made up of experts in many areas of education who work collaboratively and take initiative to problem solve and build relationships in an ongoing effort to improve student learning.

The various ESU #1 Special Education Departments include: Audiology, Deaf Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Speech-Language, Transition and Vision. The Department also consists of four specialty teams whose main purpose is to provide information and services to students who need special attention in these areas. The specialty teams include the Assistive Technology Team, the Autism Team, the Usher Syndrome Team and the Brain Injury Regional School Support Team.

Special Education Initiatives

Helping a child who is having difficulty in school is a concern of parents and teachers alike. There is a growing effort in education to provide more targeted help, or interventions, to struggling learners. This occurs through a process referred to as Response to Intervention (RtI) or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The goal is to ensure that whenever possible, children succeed in the general education setting.

When a child's needs cannot be met through general education services, a special education evaluation is conducted. If the results indicate that the child qualifies for special education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed. Special education is specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities.

All districts in Nebraska participate in a continuous review of their special education supports and services for children and youth with disabilities through a process called Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD). This process is designed to enhance educational results and functional outcomes and demonstrate growth over time for all children with disabilities from birth through age 21. Nebraska's ILCD process closely aligns with the federal Results Driven Accountability (RDA) initiative to close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

Audiology

The ESU #1 Audiology Department, consisting of one full-time certified/licensed audiologist and assisted by the speech/language pathologists, serves children with audiological screening, testing and follow-ups in their homes, schools and in a soundproof testing suite at the Wakefield office.

Speech and Language

The ESU#1 Speech and Language Department consists of speech and language pathologists (SLPs). Around 20 percent provide services to children birth through age 5, while the other 80 percent provide school-age services. The department focuses on a team approach, working together to provide: assessment and intervention to students with speech and language concerns. The SLPs serve students in areas that adversely affect student's education, such as articulation, language, phonology, apraxia, voice, fluency, literacy readiness, hearing, social skills, autism and other disorders.

Assisted by the audiologist, they also participate in providing hearing screenings to all students in ESU #1-area districts. They work as a team with local school districts in providing direct and consultative services, as well as advocate for families and children with speech, language and hearing disorders.

