

Disaster Recovery Planning Workshop for K-12 Education

In the aftermath of recent disasters across the United States, and even locally in our own state, many school districts have evaluated their disaster recovery plans. The idea for a statewide disaster recovery planning workshop started with a discussion among state technology coordinators about what their role would be in the event of a disaster and how to best prepare for one. The outcome of this discussion was a full-day workshop focused on planning for disaster recovery.



The workshop was held February 29th, 2012 at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, NE. The event, co-sponsored by the Office of the CIO, ESU Coordinating Council, Nebraska Educational Technology Association, Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the Nebraska Department of Education, attracted representatives from over 60 organizations from across the state of Nebraska. Organizations represented included 49 public schools districts, 4 non-public school districts, 9 educational service units, 1 higher education institution and 1 state agency. There were over 130 participants in attendance at the event.



Keynote speaker for the workshop was Kirk Langer, Director of Technology at Lincoln Public Schools. Kirk recounted his first-hand experience with the LPS district office fire and shared important lessons learned from disaster recovery and business continuity efforts. Participants then were split into two groups: technology coordinators and administrators. Gary Needham, Technology Director for Kearney Public Schools, led the technology coordinators group. This session focused on preparing for a data disaster and inventorying an essential services checklist. Kirk Langer led the administrator group which focused on policies and funding in the midst of a disaster.

Over the noon hour, Dr. Steve Joel, Superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools, spoke about his role as a leader in the aftermath of the LPS district office fire. He spoke from an administrator's perspective and touched on how proper reactions to the events can send important messages. The afternoon consisted of administrator and tech coordinator teams actually working on their plans with materials provided. It also allowed time for



disaster recovery partnerships to be developed between schools.

Other workshop facilitators and organizers included SuAnn Witt from the Nebraska Department of Education, Tom Rolfes from the State Office of the CIO/NITC and Lucas Bingham from Louisville Public Schools. On behalf of all involved, we want to thank the sponsors for helping to play a key role in making such an event possible.