13 - Department of Education

Proposal Name: IT Education Systems of Support
NITC ID: 13-01

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Contact: Dean Folkers
Agency: 13 - Department of Education
NITC Tier Alignment:

Agency Priority: 1

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The primary purpose of this Shared Systems and Supports project creates a fundamental shift toward efficiency in access to digital learning resources and tools. The proposed approach reduces local and state burdens, increases equitable access to digital education, and improves the privacy and security of student information across Nebraska. The comprehensive nature of the project supports a significant need found by a recent study estimating that Nebraska's K-12 Public School districts spend approximately $100 million annually on software licenses and staff, including over 655,000 hours each year submitting data for reporting purposes. The study also found the size of a school often determines the level of access to digital learning resources and tools. Primary reasons include costs and capacity to support.

The details in this proposal reveal alignment to NDE Strategic Priorities, to the Nebraska's Statewide Technology Plan: An Enterprise Vision for IT in Nebraska, specifically in the areas of cost savings realized through eliminating duplication, and centralizing services; and to the OCIO Top Priorities Centralize-Optimize-Standardize. Highlights in the plan include:
• Efficiencies through an estimated per-pupil cost savings of between $100 - $300 per pupil;
• Timely and cost effective upgrades to future technology implementations in a nimble and responsive environment;
• Targeted and coordinated professional development;
• Transitions resources from supporting technology to supporting teaching and learning;
• Enhances security and privacy of student information; and
• Provides equitable access to all services and resources to both rural and urban districts.

Building on the strong statewide success of Network Nebraska for Internet access, this project addresses the efficient availability of educational resources like software applications, training, and supports to most effectively use the network. As the Nebraska Department of Education supports and coordinates delivery of solutions meeting expectations of stakeholders, there is a need to stay current with the exponentially increasing pace of technology innovation. Shared sustainable resources allocated for continuous updates to modern and efficient systemic solutions support the future of education in Nebraska all while increasing efficiency, access, and security.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditures

	Fiscal Year 2018	Fiscal Year 2019	Total
Contractual Services:	$6,020,000.00	$6,256,133.00	$12,276,133.00
Telecommunications:	$20,580.00	$21,197.00	$41,777.00
Training:	$70,000.00	$79,000.00	$149,000.00
Operating Costs:	$1,497,585.00	$1,553,012.00	$3,050,597.00
Capital Expenditures:	$116,200.00	$0.00	$116,200.00
Total Estimated Costs:	$7,724,365.00	$7,909,342.00	$15,633,707.00

Comments:

Funding

	Fiscal Year 2018	Fiscal Year 2019	Total
General Fund:	$7,479,223.00	$7,672,500.00	$15,151,723.00
Cash Fund:	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Federal Fund:	$245,142.00	$236,842.00	$481,984.00
Revolving Fund:	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Other Fund:	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total Requested Funding:	$7,724,365.00	$7,909,342.00	$15,633,707.00

Comments:

PROPOSAL SCORE

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		reviewer1	reviewer2	reviewer3	Average
Average	Goals, Objectives and Projected Outcomes (15)	15	15	12	14
	Project Justification / Business Case (25)	22	25	20	22
	Technical Impact (20)	18	19	10	16
	Preliminary Plan for Implementation (10)	7	10	8	8
	Risk Assessment (10)	7	10	6	8
	Financial Analysis and Budget (20)	15	20	15	17
	Total Score	84	99	71	85

REVIEWER COMMENTS

Goals, Objectives and Projected Outcomes   Review Score = 15/15

Strengths: This proposal is well articulated, thorough and consistent with best practices regarding IT spending and development.

Weaknessess:

Project Justification / Business Case   Review Score = 22/25

Strengths: Business case is well stated and documented.

Weaknessess:

Technical Impact   Review Score = 18/20

Strengths: Strong partnerships with OCIO. Emphasis on enterprise solutions rather than disparate systems across the state.

Weaknessess:

Preliminary Plan for Implementation   Review Score = 7/10

Strengths:

Weaknessess: Ambitious plan and schedule. Impact of not meeting proposed schedule unclear.

Risk Assessment   Review Score = 7/10

Strengths:

Weaknessess: Scope of project and change management required during implementation implies significant risk.

Financial Analysis and Budget   Review Score = 15/20

Strengths: A certain level of trust is granted due to the overall excellence of the proposal.
Weaknessess: Lack of details makes close analysis difficult.

Goals, Objectives and Projected Outcomes   Review Score = 15/15

Strengths: This is probably the most comprehensive and well written proposal I've seen in many years.

Weaknessess:

Project Justification / Business Case   Review Score = 25/25

Strengths: The project justification and business cases well thought out and very clearly stated.   the shared systems and support model is clearly explained and it is good to see the amount of support from the partners associated with this project.
Weaknessess:

Technical Impact   Review Score = 19/20

Strengths: It is still early in this project to get any real details about the technical components of the overall project, however the intent and the direction as described do not appear, at this point to be technically unachievable.
Weaknessess:

Preliminary Plan for Implementation   Review Score = 10/10

Strengths: The proposal describes an excellent project management approach to implementing the shared systems and support project.   Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified staffing considerations appear appropriate and monitoring of the implementation seems to be well thought out.
Weaknessess:

Risk Assessment   Review Score = 10/10

Strengths: The author of the proposal does point out that a project of this scope will require a great deal of coordination communication and skills from a wide range of participants. I did like the risk sharing comment that NDE and partners are solely responsible for all risks of the shared systems and supports project.
Weaknessess:

Financial Analysis and Budget   Review Score = 20/20

Strengths: Based on the assumptions in the financial analysis and budget portion of the proposal there will be a tremendous amount of savings by moving to this model. the document points out they are estimating a $31.3 million in savings per year after the third year of making the changes, that is rather significant.
Weaknessess:

Goals, Objectives and Projected Outcomes   Review Score = 12/15

Strengths: Goals are clearly articulated and aligned with industry best practices. The proposed project builds atop existing work that requires greater resources if it is to be generalized to provide statewide benefits.
Weaknessess: The goals of the project are clearly defined by the requesting agency, however, it is less clear that those goals have widespread support from the stakeholders as what is most needed to improve teaching and learning throughout the state. That is not to say that the goals aren't appropriate, only that many school districts have not been engaged in the dialogue that arrived at this set of goals.

Project Justification / Business Case   Review Score = 20/25

Strengths: The proposal provides persuasive evidence for the need to streamline the acquisition, reporting, and presentation of data. Consolidation and coalescence of efforts to develop, maintain, train and support a suite of teaching, learning and administrative applications is a necessary step to moving the focus from integrating technology to its integral use where it can be leveraged to obtain desired learning outcomes.
Weaknessess: The proposal language makes it clear that consolidation of efforts can result in greater efficiency, however, it is not clear that the level of savings can be realized. In the opinion of the reviewer, the more likely outcome is that consolidation of efforts will result in higher yield from a like or similar expenditure.

Technical Impact   Review Score = 10/20

Strengths: The merits of consolidating software/hardware/application/platform/services are clear and there is little doubt that the delivery of services across the state is varied.
Weaknessess: The linkage between standardizing and centralizing technology with a shift in the focus of district personnel is an outcome that is not supported by any empirical data presented in the proposal. Additionally, the greatest threat to information security at this time is poor data sharing practices and the lack of security training for end users. There is little doubt that the proposed approach may have the desired impact from a technology perspective but without sufficient preparation of end users the approach is incomplete.

Preliminary Plan for Implementation   Review Score = 8/10

Strengths: The projects seeks to use industry standards for project management, change management, and project evaluation. The proposal outlines a number of additional staff resources assigned to expected outcomes and timelines.
Weaknessess: The project timelines are aggressive and the deliverables are articulated in general terms.

Risk Assessment   Review Score = 6/10

Strengths: The proposed project management practices are designed to identify, mitigate and remediate risk.
Weaknessess: There are a host of technical and human risks associated with a project of the proposed scope. The description of risk associated with district implementation is very limited. If the proposed project is to have the enumerated outcomes, much is dependent upon the implementation with districts.

Financial Analysis and Budget   Review Score = 15/20

Strengths: Intended expenditures are clearly articulated.
Weaknessess: Premised savings to districts are mathematically demonstrable, however, the degree to which they can be achieved is not supported by the proposal.

TECH PANEL COMMENTS

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Is the project technically feasible? Yes
Is the proposed technology appropriate for the project? Unknown
Can the technical elements be accomplished within the proposed timeframe and budget? Unknown

Comments: Unknown until further information is available.

ADVISORY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Advisory Council Tier Recommendation:

Comments:

NITC COMMENTS