Project #	Agency	Project Title
ESUCC-01*	ESUCC	Nebraska's BlendEd eLearning System

*A voluntary review requested by the submitting entity. Not submitted as an agency budget request.

SUMMARY OF REQUEST (Executive Summary from the Proposal)
[Full text of all proposals are posted at: http://nitc.ne.gov/nitc/documents/fy2013-15/index.html]

The goal of Nebraska's BlendEd eLearning System is to implement instructional and content technologies to enhance teaching and learning to support all modes of blended instruction. Blended education has been promoted by educational researchers as a one of the most promising recent innovations in education because it calls for making strategic choices about when face-to-face (synchronous) instruction is needed and when and how online (asynchronous) instruction can be best used to provide elements of student control over time, place, path and pace and provide more equity, efficiency and flexibility. Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn of the Innosight Institute offer this definition of Blended Learning-

> "Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace."-http://www.innosightinstitute.org

Full text of the proposal: http://nitc.ne.gov/nitc/documents/fy2013-15/ppf/ESUCC-01.pdf

FUNDING SUMMARY

	Estimated Prior Expended	Request for FY2013-14 (Year 1)	Request for FY2014-15 (Year 2)	Request for FY2015-16 (Year 3)	Request for FY2016-17 (Year 4)	Future	Total
1. Personnel Costs		$ 255,000.00	$ 155,000.00	$ 50,000.00	$ 50,000.00	$ 50,000.00	$ 560,000.00
2. Contractual Services							
2.1 Design							$ -
2.2 Programming							$ -
2.3 Project Management							$ -
2.4 Other		$ 40,000.00	$ 10,000.00				$ 50,000.00
3. Supplies and Materials							$ -
4. Telecommunications							$ -
5. Training							$ -
6. Travel							$ -
7. Other Operating Costs							$ -
8. Capital Expenditures							
8.1 Hardware		$ 430,000.00	$ 225,000.00	$ 120,000.00	$ 95,000.00	$ 75,000.00	$ 945,000.00
8.2 Software		$ 645,000.00	$ 875,000.00	$ 1,140,000.00	$ 1,420,000.00	$ 1,500,000.00	$ 5,580,000.00
8.3 Network							$ -
8.4 Other							$ -
TOTAL COSTS	$ -	$ 1,370,000.00	$ 1,265,000.00	$ 1,310,000.00	$ 1,565,000.00	$ 1,625,000.00	$ 7,135,000.00
General Funds							$ -
Cash Funds							$ -
Federal Funds							$ -
Revolving Funds							$ -
Other Funds							$ -
TOTAL FUNDS	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

PROJECT SCORE

Section	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Mean	Maximum Possible
Goals, Objectives, and Projected Outcomes		14	11	13	15
Project Justification / Business Case		23	21	22	25
Technical Impact		19	16	18	20
Preliminary Plan for Implementation		9	8	9	10
Risk Assessment		10	8	9	10
Financial Analysis and Budget		18	16	17	20
			TOTAL	87	100

REVIEWER COMMENTS

Section	Strengths	Weaknesses
Goals, Objectives, and Projected Outcomes	- The stated goals are clear, concise, and challenging but certainly attainable. The core components of the technology needed to support BlendEd are clearly identified and are proven technologies used by educators for several years in the on-line community. The goal of providing face-to-face and on-line instruction to districts facing the challenge of certified teachers especially in the STEM subjects seems an effort deserving support. - Conceptually the right thing to do.	- Limited Scope: Objectives 2 & 3 pg 6 of 34. Consider including higher education entities from the start on the LMS and LDAP implementations or at the very least consult with higher ed when selecting of tools.
Project Justification / Business Case	- The tangible benefits listed on pages 11 & 12 would certainly help the small districts and those that have not made investment in LMS and content management systems to provide learning opportunities of the same quality and rigor statewide. The initiative would utilize the recent investment of high-bandwidth network provided by Network Nebraska, facilitate learning opportunities with Higher Education in Academy and dual-credit classes, and share educational content and expertise of technology champions that currently exist in many districts throughout Nebraska. The intangible are equally important such as student success, sharing resources and experience of educators, improved student engagement, and utilizing proven technologies.	- Cost Effectiveness: Can we show a break-even analysis to add impact to the proposal?
Technical Impact	- The technologies required of the BlendEd proposal are clearly identified and proven technologies that have been used by larger districts and higher education for a number of years. Single sign-on, reliability and availability, virtualization, disaster recovery, servers, software, integrating existing technologies owned and supported through the state to a statewide managed service, security, scalability, NITC standards, etc., all seem to be addressed. The proposal does not seem to require at this point one particular LMS system or content repository/database, but it would be worthy of consideration for maximizing investment and efficiencies down the road.	- Service and Support: Will service levels be improved to provide desired levels while classes are in session? Will extended hours and weekend support be available for the LMS to support online learning?
Preliminary Plan for Implementation	- Many of the stakeholders identified are already working together to better serve the students and	- The statement, "However, it is acknowledged that there will necessarily be some new, additional

Section	Strengths	Weaknesses
	educators throughout the state. The timelines and deliverables are complete and feasible. The training, staffing investment, and management commitment are integral to the success of the proposal.	support resources required." should be stronger! - Staffing for system administration, maintenance and ongoing training appears to be limited. In year 3+ there is only $50k allocated. Depending on number of entities involved this may be inadequate.
Risk Assessment	- I agree totally with the statement "The greatest risk for Nebraska education is to do nothing." The cost of each school and district going their own way will be much greater for the taxpayers of Nebraska than the BlendEd proposal of a statewide eLearning system. Building and growing trust and developing effective channels of communication as noted must be addressed. - Project Leadership	- Limited scope: Should consider including higher ed with LMS and LDAP offering.
Financial Analysis and Budget	- Budget numbers and plan seem reasonable and clear. It would have been nice to compare individual school investment in the same technologies as compared to the Statewide plan.	- The savings/cost avoidance indicated seems logical and I believe is real. It would have been a good exercise to calculate the cost of provisioning the identified technologies for a single school and extrapolate cost to show potential savings of a Statewide approach as presented. - Staffing levels appear to be inadequate to support systems administration, maintenance and upgrades as well as extended hours support needed for online learning.

TECHNICAL PANEL COMMENTS

Technical Panel Checklist	Yes	No	Unknown	Comments
1. The project is technically feasible?				
2. The proposed technology is appropriate for the project?				
3. The technical elements can be accomplished within the proposed timeframe and budget?				