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Subject: ESU 9 Nine's Lines - Spring 2024 Newsletter
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Spring 2024 Newsletter



Nine's Lines Newsletter

From the Administrator

Drew Harris

Retiree: The lone retiree this year at ESU 9 is Jackie Ediger. Jackie has been a part of the ESU 9 Professional Development Team for the past 21 years, serving as the director of that department for the past 12 years. Under her leadership, the department has worked as a very cohesive team, supporting our member schools to a high degree of satisfaction as indicated by our annual survey of services to member districts. Many of her strengths revolve around translating ideas into actions and driving outcomes; she has the ability to get things done, and she will be missed! Amy Schultz will assume that role for ESU 9 on August 1, 2024.



The 2024 Legislature: On April 18, the NE Legislature wrapped up its 108th Session. In 2024, 2,019 bills were introduced in a short, 60-day session. In terms of education, the shift away from local control seems to continue. While every school district has an elected school board to govern their schools based on their local needs and situation, it seems more and more common to create state-level regulations that are applied to all school districts in Nebraska, despite their unique needs created by local factors. This year also saw the continuation of the use of Omnibus, or "Christmas tree" bills. This is the practice of tying several bills together into one bill, often to reduce the time involved in debating several bills. This is a poor practice in the sense that it takes away the opportunity for discussion on each issue. It often allows for poor legislation to sneak through because it is not quite bad enough to outweigh the potential good of other bills that are tied into the legislation.

ESU 9 CIP Accreditation Visit: Similar to schools, ESUs are also on a 5-year accreditation cycle for Continuous Improvement. This year ESU 9 hosted its External Team Visit in March. The visiting team was exceptional to work with and consisted of Kellen Conroy, ESU 1 Teaching and Learning Specialist (team leader); Jen Madison, ESU 4 Teaching and Learning Specialist; John Poppert, ESU 11 Administrator; Dr. Micki Charf, NDE Office of Special Education Assistant Director; Dr. Decua Jean-Baptiste, NDE Director of Accreditation; and Tami Clay, ESU 7 Special Education Director. Over a two-day period, the team met with 81 stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and community partners, as well as

ESU 9 classified, certified, and professional staff. The report was as positive as I have experienced in my nearly four decades in education.

Here are some commendations from the team:

- ESU 9 engaged in a concerted effort to develop continuous improvement processes based on feedback from multiple sources (i.e., strategic plan, revision of mission and vision, annual data review).
- ESU 9 has established committee structures that led to involvement of all staff, connectivity among programs shared leadership.
- ESU 9 has effectively developed, communicated, and prioritized their continuous improvement goal.

And some recommendations:

- Establish a clear, ongoing reflective process to analyze the sustainability and efficiency of programs and services provided to member school districts.
- Continue to operationalize processes and procedures that increase the shared knowledge and leadership within ESU (i.e., "de-silo," manuals, committee leadership).

The visiting team shared these comments they heard from employees:

- We work together to achieve common goals.
- Random acts of improvement are not good enough for us.
- It feels like a family atmosphere.
- I can see a change that there is more of an effort to include staff that aren't always in the office.
- I love the support that you get here. You can tell the minute you walk into a building what the people are like is where I want to be.
- We work hard here, and we have fun.
- All office assistants are rockstars.

They also asked each of the groups to share one word that they would use to describe ESU 9 and created a Wordle that:



Visiting Team



With the ESU 9 Board

Opening Presentation with Steering Team



Exit Report to Staff

What I've appreciated the most about this process over the past five years has been the willingness of all of our employees to be involved in it and to work toward the betterment of our organization. To have such commitment and in is exceptional. I am so proud of our entire ESU 9 staff and Board.

NRCSA Outstanding Board Member 2024: Each year the Nebraska Rural and Community Schools Association (NRCSA) presents their Outstanding Board Member Award at its annual spring conference in Kearney. On March 15, that award was presented to ESU 9's very own Board President Ken Spray. Ken has served on the Board since February 2011. Ken Spray is by far the most committed board member I have had the pleasure of working with in 25 years of district leadership. He is respected by others, he is supportive, he is knowledgeable, and he is involved without being intrusive. He sincerely cares about our organization, our staff, our member school districts, and the students they serve. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!



Have a wonderful summer!





ESU 9 Summer Professional Learning Opportunities

Amy Schultz

As I considered what to share about our ESU 9 Summer Professional Learning Opportunities, I wanted to do so in a way that would GRAB your attention! We have SO much going on this summer, and you don't want to miss it! So, what's the best way to communicate that? How about a few 'did you know' statements and a fun poem about our summer opportunities?

Did You Know?

- Did you know that ESU 9 offers workshops every summer, tailored for our area educators' professional development needs?
- Did you know that some ESU 9 workshops offer college credit, allowing educators to further their education while participating in summer learning?
- Did you know that by attending select ESU 9 workshops, you could be eligible for a stipend, rewarding your commitment to continuous learning and growth?
- Did you know that our summer workshop offerings are determined by feedback from YOU and your school district leadership? Your input shapes our offerings to best meet your needs and interests!

And now let's dive into some excitement with a fun poem!

In the summer breeze, educators find their place,
At ESU 9, in learning's embrace.
Comfy clothes and eager minds,
Seeking knowledge of all kinds.

Inclusion workshops, a beacon of light,
Guiding us through inclusion's might.
Continuous school improvement/MTSS, we strive,
In the summer months, we come alive.

HQIM Implementation, a path to explore,
Restorative Practices, opening doors.
Empowering Educators with engagement anew,
In classrooms vibrant, and hearts true.

And don't forget the **Classroom Make-n-Take**,
Where creativity's fire, we stoke and wake.
Summer's the time for growth and fun,
At ESU 9, the learning's just begun!

So join us this summer, where dreams take flight,
At ESU 9, it's a pure delight!
With workshops aplenty, and camaraderie rare,
Come learn, come grow, and together, we'll dare!

Full Summer Line-Up [HERE](#). This site includes PDF flyers, video descriptions, dates, times, locations, etc.
Register [HERE](#)

register [HERE](#)

College credit through Hastings College is available for the following summer workshops: *Restorative Practices, Empowering Educators, HQIM Implementation Support, and Inclusion Training*

Inbox Management over the Summer

Gary Needham

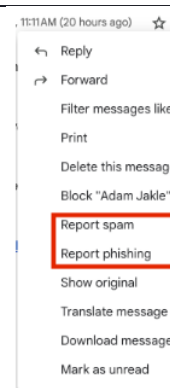
Summer break is both a blessing and a curse when it comes to technology. The technology never stops working, so you take a break, the e-mail continues to pile up. Here are some tips to help things be manageable when you get back the swing of things.

1. Utilize Google's Inbox categories. If you'll be checking your email daily or weekly over the summer, this helps you focus. If you won't be checking your mail at least weekly (and I mean actually going through it rather than scanning for important messages), then you should also admit you won't get to all those promotional, social, update, and forum messages. Book an hour or two at least monthly to focus only on those and get rid of everything except the amazing you want to hold onto. That way you won't be overwhelmed by all those messages come August.



2. Keep a list of priority items to address when you come back to work. My method is to separate this list from my inbox. You might be OK just starring / flagging certain items, or setting reminders to pop up. It's not so important how you do it; just do it.

3. Stay vigilant for phishing and spam. Historically, we have seen three important trends. First, that the perpetrators know the education schedule and send more messages when they know you won't be interacting with your administrator and tech department. Second, you are more apt to click when you are in a hurry to get through your mail (think August). Finally, the "Nigerian Prince" now has a pyramid scheme, and the senders use artificial intelligence tools to write more effective messages now. When you run across these messages, continue to use the built-in features to report them; that trains the mail system to automatically filter / delete those types of messages



Tips for Device Migration

Gary Needham

Summer is frequently a time for new devices, whether for work or school. Here are some tips for a smooth migration the old device to the new one.

1. Make a backup. Whether it is cloud-based or an external drive, it's always a good idea to have a data backup before making significant changes. Some backup utilities also have features that allow them to help with the migration.
2. Using cloud storage makes the migration easier, as you don't have to copy anything over after logging in with new system. Note that there is a difference between cloud storage and a cloud backup. Cloud storage will synchronize between the systems, so you want to be sure not to delete it off the old one or it will disappear everywhere.
3. If you still want to do things the "old-fashioned way," by choosing and copying over your files manually, many platforms even have migration utilities to help with that. Sometimes, they will also copy over anything that is configured incorrectly in the old system. Copying items over manually creates a cleaner system in the end because it won't migrate the application preferences.

Youth Events Recan

Youth Events Recap

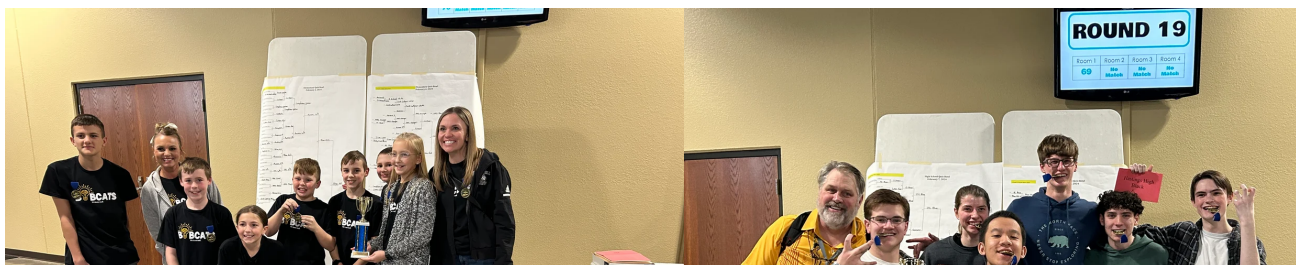
Laura Ochsner

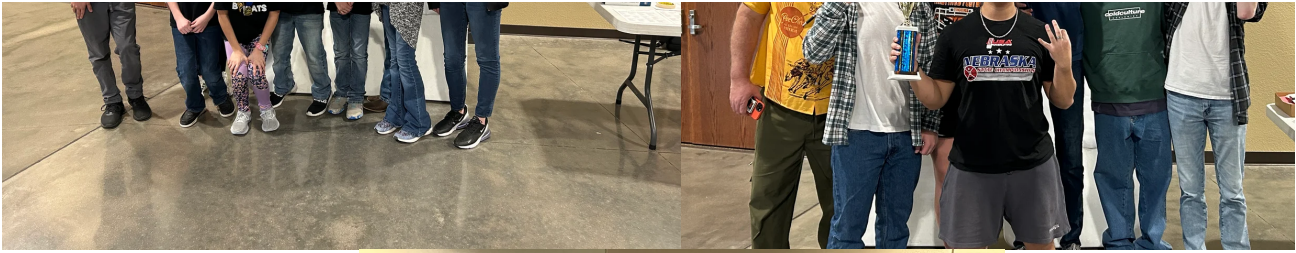
The Professional Learning Team has had a busy semester of Youth Events!

Our second annual STUDENT-LED **Social Media Team Day** on January 31st was a HUGE success! We welcomed 7 school districts, 50+ participants, 4 guest speakers, 2 student presenters, 1 newspaper, 1 TV station, and an enorm amount of learning!



Quiz Bowl week started with **Elementary Quiz Bowl** on February 6th. Blue Hill was the winner, Aurora 6th Grade finished in 2nd place and Hampton finished in 3rd place. **High School Quiz Bowl** was on February 7th. Hastings F Black was the winner, St. Cecilia Blue finished in 2nd place and Red Cloud finished in 3rd place. **Junior High Quiz Bowl** was on February 8th. Kenesaw was the winner, Sandy Creek Red finished in 2nd place and St. Cecilia finish in 3rd place.



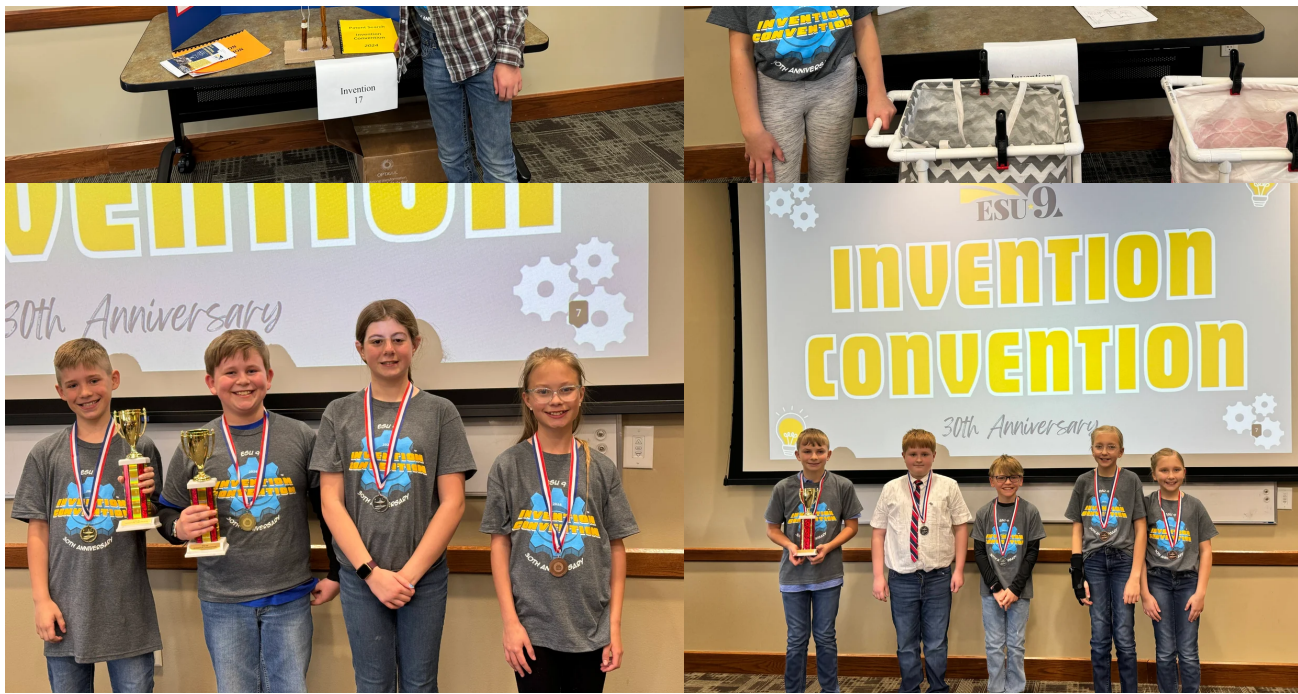


The annual **Chess Tournament** was held on March 27, 2024. Over 170 students in grades 3-12 participated in this event!



Invention Convention is back! Invention Convention was held at ESU 9 on April 17, 2024 after a 5 year break. This was the 30th year of Invention Convention and we are so happy this event is making a comeback!





ESU 9 hosted the 30th annual **Nebraska ESU State Quiz Bowl Tournament** on April 24, 2024. ESUs from across state send 2 teams to represent their area to this tournament. Thirty teams participated. Hastings High and St. Cec represented ESU 9 as the first and second place teams from our local high school tournament. The winner of State Quiz Bowl was Elkhorn North.



Special Services Year in Review

Joe Haney



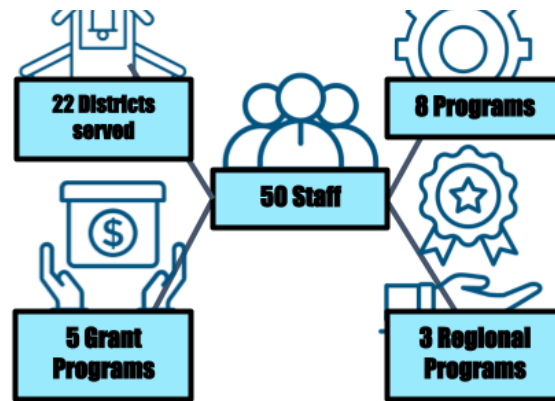
ESU 9 Special Services Department employs 50 staff to provide services to all 14 ESU 9 region



districts and to 8 out of region districts. We have 8 main service areas: Speech Language Pathology, Vision, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Sign Language Interpreters, School Psychology services, LMHP services, Early Childhood Special Education and Special Education Consultation. Added Spanish Interpreting for 23-24 at ESU 9.

ESU 9 hosts 5 grant programs:

- CWNP
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Liaison,
- Title IC ESU 9 Migrant Education Grant Comprehensive Mental Health Grant
- Added in the past year two Deaf and Hard of Hearing grants one for integrated sign practice and the other for a sign language class



Special Services	2023-2024 School Year
ESU 9 Special Services Staff	50
Total districts served	14 in the ESU 9 Region 8 out of Region
ESU 9 Service Provider Programs	8
ESU 9 Regional Programs	3
Grant Programs	5

Professional Learning



ESU 9 was pleased to offer 26 professional development events for Speech Language Pathologist, Early Childhood Teachers, Special Education Teachers and Transition Teachers. We were also able to provide Title IX trainings, MANDT and CPI certifications. We provided training for all of our ESU 9 Region and many out of region school districts with a total of 264 total participants. We were able to provide 4 student events to regional students with a total of 170 participants and 14 regional districts.

23-24

ESU 9 SPECIAL SERVICES



YEAR IN REVIEW



Training groups

15



Participants

264



Districts

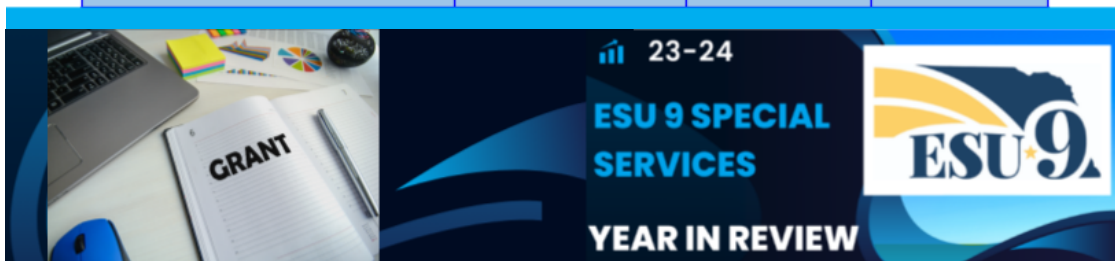
26



Events

26

Professional Development	Total number of Events	Participants	Districts
Service training for: Speech Language Pathology (x3) Early Childhood Special Education (x2) IEP Academy (x3) TAP-(x2) SPED teacher-(x2) Transition Teacher-(x2) TIPS-(x1) 504-(x1) Hope Champion- (x1) Youth Mental Health- (x1) COP Spanish-(x1)	15	195	15
MANDT	5	25	3
CPI	5	37	3
Title IX	1	7	5
Student Transition Events	4	209	14
Total	26 total events (26 days)	264	26



ESU 9 hosts 5 grant programs: CWNP, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Liaison, Title IC Migrant Education Statewide initiative, ESU 9 Migrant Education Project. Comprehensive Mental Health Grant . Added in the past year two Deaf and Hard of Hearing grants for a 4 day ASL immersion event and an ASL I class.



Title IC Migrant Education Program helps migratory children and youth meet high academic challenges by overcoming the obstacles created by frequent moves, educational disruption, cultural and language differences, and health-related problems. It is a federal grant funded via the Nebraska Department of Education consisting of two sections. The Statewide initiative and ESU 9 Project.

Statewide initiative

The statewide initiative supports all the projects in the state (14) both district and regional projects. This includes supporting family, project reporting, and individual learning events. 4 staff members are part of this subsection of the grant..

ESU 9 Project

The ESU 9 project supports 435 students in a 90 school region. The grant recruits families, provides instructional services and support services to the region. The grant employs 10 staff members. ESU 9 project served 467 students from 76 school districts.

Central Western Nebraska Partnership (CWNP)

The Regional Programs serve as the statewide networking system among students, parents, professionals, and the Nebraska Department of Education and other agencies serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing (B-21). Each Regional Program plans and provides social and educational opportunities for children and families who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (B-21) to interact with others in a language barrier-free environment. They also provide professional development support for Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Sign Language interpreters.

CWNP last year had over 850 participants in their 60 events that covered students from 37 different school districts from the central and western regions of Nebraska. CWNP included staff members from ESU 9, 10, 11, 13 and 16. The grant changed roles with the new hire of the State Coordinator position last year and with the addition of student mentors to the 24-25 school year. Heather Witte is the coordinator for CWNP.

Grow Your Own: Human Science & Education Courses & CTSO

Jackie Ediger

An innovative solution to the teacher shortage in Nebraska

GROW YOUR OWN: HUMAN SCIENCE & EDUCATION COURSES & CTSO

COURSE #350001: TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

This introductory course is designed to introduce students to career opportunities and related skills in the field of education and training. Topics covered include history of education, the philosophy of education, roles of educators, instructional and assessment methods, diversity of cultures and communities, learner development, and professional development.

COURSE #350002: BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH WBL

This intermediate course will focus on best practices in education building on concepts from the introductory courses. Topics covered include instructional and assessment methods, differentiated instruction, development of communication skills necessary for educators, and instruction planning. Knowledge and skills will be applied within a structured work-based learning experience, which may take place in a school, community, or business and industry setting. The focus of the hands-on experience will be immersion in an educational setting.

COURSE #350003: EDUCATION AND TRAINING PRACTICUM WITH WBL

This capstone course will focus on the thought processes needed in education building on concepts from the introductory and intermediate courses. Topics covered include ethics in education, instructional strategies, equitable learning opportunities, and effective, inclusive communication. Knowledge and skills will be applied within a structured work-based learning experience, which may take place in a school, community, or business and industry setting. The focus of the practicum experience will be on the improvement of instructional strategies.

CURRICULUM

Aligned to

- NE CTE Standards for Education and Training
- NE Career Readiness Standards
- Wayne State College Course Outcomes
- InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards

Embedded Throughout

FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING

- Courses in Canvas provide online, hybrid, or in-person options
- Teachers with a secondary endorsement may be the Lead Teacher

BENEFITS

- Work Based Learning (WBL) Experiences
- Educators Rising Competitions Embedded as Evidence of Learning



- Students can earn up to 9 college credits if offered as dual credit (WSC partnership already established)
- Teacher Institutes and Student Kick-Off events provide guidance and resources for successful program implementation



RESOURCE HUB
bit.ly/nebraskagyo



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Upcoming Events

- School Business Office Manager Meeting - May 23
- Docker Training - May 28-29
- Restorative Systems: Building a Foundation for Restorative Practices within Education - May 28-29
- Science Retreat at Morrill Hall - May 28-29
- Empowering Education: Engaging Teaching Strategies - May 30-31
- Administrative Assistants Technology Training - June 4
- CPI Training - June 5
- High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Implementation Support - June 6-7
- Planning for Inclusion through Co-Teaching for Administrators - June 10
- Planning for Inclusion through Co-Teaching - June 11-12
- CIP Support & Guidance - June 13
- Classroom Make and Take - June 17-18
- Youth Mental Health First Aid Training - June 26
- Acadience Reading - August 1
- Let's Get Cookin' New Teaches - August 5-6
- Paraprofessional Training - August 8

Register online at: <https://connect.esu9.org/>.



Sent to: laura.ochsner@esu9.us

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