
Fall 2024 Newsletter



Nine's Lines Newsletter

From the Administrator

Drew Harris

Welcome to the 2024–25 school year! Nine's Lines is ESU 9's communication tool to provide information about the services, events, and happenings within our organization to our stakeholders. Our target audience includes the staff, administration, and board members of our member school districts, as well as the staff and board members of ESU 9 and other service units throughout Nebraska. This newsletter will go out three times per school year: at the start of the year, a midyear update in January, and in May to provide a year-end summary. Our goal is to keep you informed about the many services and activities provided by ESU 9.

This year ESU 9 welcomes 12 new staff members to our organization. Some are replacing employees who have retired or left the unit, and some join us to meet the need for expanding requests for services from our member schools. Our total staff count for the start of this year is 72 employees; that's an increase of nearly 65% over our 2019 initial count of 44 employees. At a time when many organizations are struggling to find service providers and employees, we feel very fortunate to find such great new staff members to join us.

While I will not list all the services provided by ESU 9 in this limited space, in our January edition I will share a link to the *ESU 9 Annual Report to Patrons*, which does outline all the services we provide. Two new offerings through ESU 9 this year are the services of a Behavioral Specialist and the resurrection of Project Search after a short time without it. As our schools are seeing more and more behavioral issues, the addition of Jimmy Brown as a Behavioral Specialist will allow us to provide support to classroom teachers experiencing challenges. Project Search, a program at Mary Lanning, is an opportunity to provide a Capstone experience for special-needs students who are transitioning out of high school into the world of work. Amy Vetter will resume the role of instructor for that program, assisted by Kristen Artl.

In March of 2024, ESU 9 finished its accreditation cycle using the NDE Frameworks model, modified for ESUs, for the

In March of 2024, ESU 9 finished its accreditation cycle using the NDE Framework model, modified for ESU9, for the Continuous Improvement Process model. I've been involved with school improvement for a few decades now, and I would have to say that it was one of the most glowing exit reports that I've had the opportunity to experience. To hear the term *exemplary* associated with so many of our staff and services was truly rewarding. But that report is nothing to rest on. Each year brings new challenges, and education is ever-evolving. This fall we will do a strategic planning session to develop our roadmap for the coming 5 year cycle. We will do our best to rise to the occasion of continuing to serve at a high level.

Every year, I remind our staff about the importance of our mission: **Educate, Empower, and Support**. It's not just about the 72 employees of ESU 9; it's about the nearly 10,000 students, 800-plus teachers, and 15 school communities depending on us. We are here to serve!

I'm looking forward to the 2024–25 campaign, and I wish you all a great school year!



This year 10 staff members were recognized for completing 5 years of service. They are pictured above from L to R: Emily Burr, Carolyn Haney, JoEllen Jones-Steele, Jose Torres, Veronica Estevez, Shannon Klimas-Bernitt, Ita Mendoza, and Drew Harris; Not pictured are Danielle Waite and Mike Tomjack.

ESU 9 Welcomes Mr. Brad Best as the new interim-superintendent at Sutton Public Schools.

Welcome to ESU 9!

Joe Haney

We are thrilled to welcome several new members to our team, each bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to our schools. Please join us in welcoming the following professionals:

- **Jimmy Brown**, our new Behavioral Specialist, who has 31 years of experience in education and behavior treatment facilities.

• **Anna Matton**, who joins us as a District SEADCU Instructor with 18 years of teaching experience at District

- **Amy Vetter**, who joins us as a Project SEARCH instructor with 18 years of teaching experience at Project SEARCH.
- **Taryn Hoelting**, our Early Childhood Specialist, has taught in various educational settings for the past 14 years.
- **Adanijah Gonzales**, an ASL Instructor/Mentor, has been working with CWNP as a Deaf Mentor and American Sign Language Instructor.
- **Heather Hackett**, our State Services Coordinator, works as part of the statewide Title IC Migrant Education program and brings 10 years of experience in education.
- **Kristen Arlt**, the Project SEARCH Job Skills Coach, is part of the Project SEARCH program at Marylanning Medical Center.
- **Taylor Kinding**, a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner (LIMHP), has a broad range of experience in supporting students' mental health.
- **Suyapa Gonzalez**, Title IC Migrant Education ID&R Recruiter, has been with the Title IC program for the past 27 years.
- **Elda Martinez Cruiz**, Title IC Migrant Education Service Provider, has been part of the Title IC program for 2 years.
- **Haidan Swenk-Rivera**, our new Sign Language Facilitator, is joining the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program.
- **Kelly Andrus**, Educational Technology Specialist, lifelong member of the Hastings community and has many years working in the technology field. She is looking forward to helping to support our regional schools.

We are excited to have these talented individuals as part of our team and look forward to the positive impact they will make in our schools. Please extend a warm welcome to them as they settle into their new roles. We wish them all the best as they support our students across the ESU 9 region.

NEW TO ESU 9

2024



Jimmy Brown
Behavior Specialist

2024



Amy Vetter
Project Search Instructor

2024



Taryn Hoelting
Early Childhood Specialist

2024



Adanijah Gonzales
ASL Instructor/Mentor

2024



Heather Hackett
MEP State Services Coordinator

2024



Kristen Arlt
Project Search Job Skills Coach

NEW TO ESU 9

2024



Taylor Kindig
LIMHP

2024



Suyapa Gonzalez
MEP ID&R Coordinator

2024



Elda Martinez Cruz
MEP Service Provider

2024



Haidan Schwenk-Rivera
Language Facilitator

2024



Kelley Andrus-
Educational Tech Specialist

Tech Tip - Gmail's Undo Send Feature!

Laura Ochsner

Have you ever clicked the send button on an email and realized that you forget to include the attachment? Or realized that you didn't include some important information?

Gmail's Undo Send feature is a great way to eliminate this problem! You can choose to set the undo send option to 5, 10, 20 or 30 seconds. Set it up today with the instructions below!

Gmail - Undo Send

1. Click the gear and then See All Settings

Active

Quick settings

See all settings

Settings

General Labels Inbox Accounts Filters and Blocked Addresses POP/IMAP Download

Language: Educational Service Unit #9 Mail display language: English (US)
 Change language settings for other Google products

Phone number: Default country code: United States

Maximum page size: Show 50 conversations per page

Undo Send: Send cancellation period: 30 seconds

All Settings

2. Under the General Tab, set Undo Send cancellation period to 30 seconds
3. Now whenever you send a message, you will have 30 seconds to click Undo Send and have your message pop back up as editable

Message sent. Undo View message

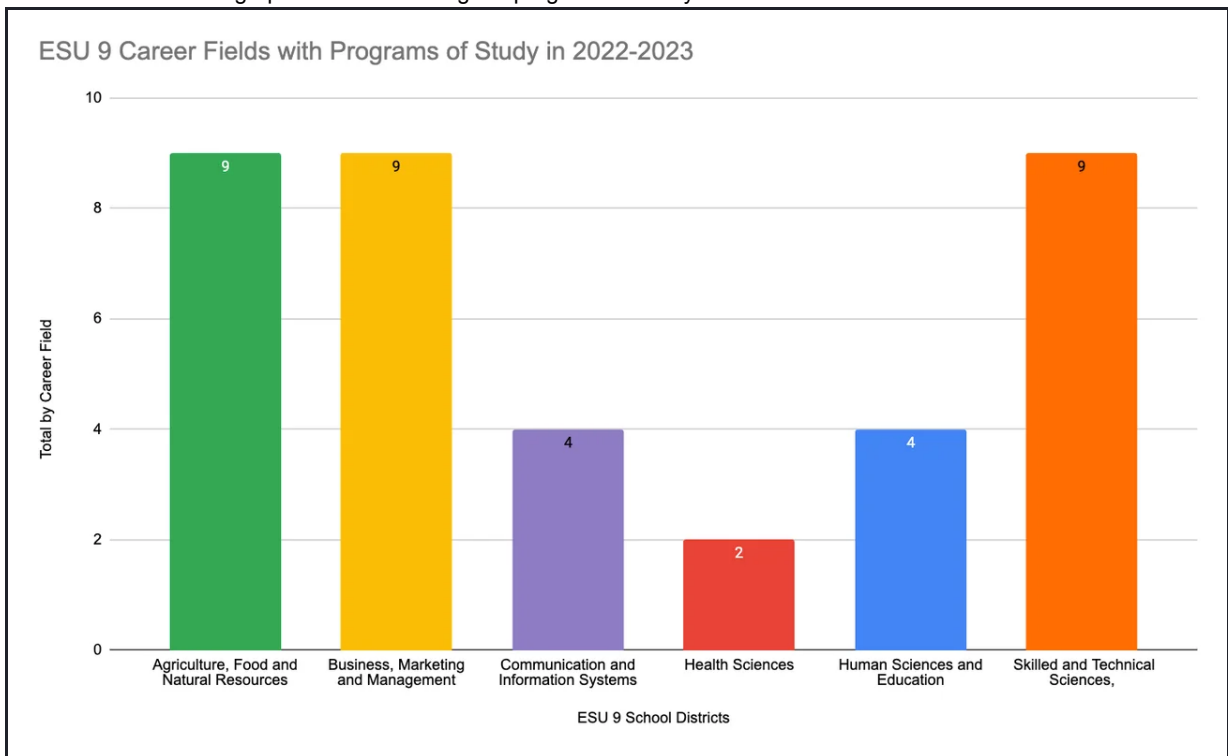
Sending undone.

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Empowering Career and Technical Education: ESU 9 Perkins V Consortium Update

Kristen Slechta

The Perkins V federal grant continues to be a vital resource for leaders, educators, and career guidance counselors in Career and Technical Education (CTE). The ESU 9 Perkins V Consortium consists of 14 of our 15 school districts. Hastings Public, based on its size and capacity, manages its allocation. Funds must be spent "to develop, coordinate, implement, or improve career and technical education programs to meet the needs identified by a reVISION process. The ESU 9 Perkins V Grant Application for 2024-2028 is 37 pages. It includes the following data provided by all 14 school districts: current state, desired state, and a plan for the next four years to expand and enhance opportunities for students in CTE. Below are two graphics demonstrating the programs of study offered in our consortium in 2022-2023:



Our efforts align with Nebraska CTE's inspiring mission:

To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

Vision for the Future

We're committed to realizing the Nebraska Career & Technical Education vision:

Nebraska Career & Technical Education will deliver coordinated, relevant learning opportunities that engage each student in high-quality, rigorous education. These opportunities will be enhanced by partnerships with business and industry, workforce, and economic development leaders, allowing learners to turn their passion, talents, and strengths into successful careers and fulfilling lives.

ESU 9's Commitment

To meet these ambitious goals, ESU 9 is:

- Making strategic equipment and curriculum purchases
- Offering targeted professional learning experiences
- Distributing an ESU 9 Perkins V Consortium Newsletter to keep all members informed and engaged

Together, we're working to empower, educate, and support CTE education, ensuring a bright future for our students and communities.

ESU 9 NEWSLETTER

Career & Technical Education



Learning that works
for Nebraska

Updated on: 8/21/24

Communication Goal:
Offering up-to-date information, opportunities for professional growth, and resources.
To join the ESU 9 Perkins V Consortium listserv, please visit: <https://esu9.org/contact-us/learning-communities/>



Website



Contact:
Email kristen.slechta@esu9.us with questions, ideas, suggestions, and more!

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding CTE, please reach out to kristen.slechta@esu9.us.



EHA Update

LaRaesha Kugel

Welcome back to the 2024-2025 school year! I have faith that this will be a year of good health and wellness, and best yet - we have amazing access to this through Educators Health Alliance (EHA)! EHA Wellness is a voluntary health improvement program that offers a variety of health and wellness challenges throughout the school year in an effort to increase the health and well-being of our educators.

ESU 9 staff have continually gone above the minimum requirements and have benefited tremendously from this. For the past several years, at least 50% of our staff have completed the 3 requirements to qualify for extended funding from EHA Wellness through the ELEVATE grant. Those 3 requirements consist of completing a Personal Health Assessment (PHA), completing a minimum of 3 challenges (though most staff far exceed this!), and going to an annual health check up with

completing a minimum of 3 challenges (though most staff far exceed this!), and going to an annual health check up with their doctor. With more than 50% of our staff completing this, they not only get 175.00 in VISA gift cards, but an additional reimbursable amount to purchase a health related purchase of their choosing. **This past ELEVATE term we have once again exceeded our 50% minimum of 34 participants and will be reaping the rewards this Fall.**

One big change to the EHA/ELEVATE program this upcoming year will be the expansion of the ELEVATE program. For many years, a limited number of participating districts and ESUs have been allowed to participate in ELEVATE. And though this has been a direct benefit to our ESU 9 employees, more than 2/3 of the EHA schools have not had access to it. EHA is excited to expand this program to all public educational entities over the next 2 years.

What this means for ESU 9 is that all staff members who meet the 3 requirements of ELEVATE, *which are listed above*, will receive the \$175 VISA gift cards - \$25 for completing the PHA and \$150 for the additional 2 requirements. However, the additional \$5,000 grant will be available through applications, and will only be allotted every other year. I have no doubt ESU 9 staff will continue to be active participants through this program, and we will adapt to the new structure of ELEVATE.

This school year, EHA Wellness is continuing to evolve their work and timelines. In order to best align the change in school years, the 22-23 school year activities are now concluding at the end of August, so that they can move forward with the 23-24 school year in September.

This year employees will have the opportunity to participate in the following challenges:



I hope you have a wonderful and healthy school year!

Data Privacy as a Part of School Culture

Gary Needham

I remember discussing privacy and confidentiality at the beginning of my career, and it was almost enough to simply say "Be Professional." Certainly, that expectation still applies. As staff and student data have become more digital, however, that has become more complicated.

Cyber crime has become rampant in recent years because it can yield big dollars. A few years ago, ransomware was the big thing. More recently, impersonation has become a common method of committing digital fraud. Criminals have access to databases that include answers to all the typical "security questions" that might get asked. Institutions are facing false enrollments, impersonated payroll account changes, and even vendor payments into fraudulent accounts. In addition to phishing email, "vishing" (or voice phishing by phone) has become a significant method of cyber criminals.

Having both protocols and systems to properly handle any processes dealing with school finances will help everyone in the school. If your student data management, HR, or purchasing processes seem like a pain because they can only be done in person or in the designated on-line system, it is because the school administration is working to protect your data. **Some conversations are too important to trust to email**, which is too easily used to trick users and can also be archived to let the data be stolen later. Though it isn't financial in nature, you may also need to consider how you handle conversations with parents.

No system is perfect. Improvements sometimes don't need to be high-tech. As you go about your own work, consider how you handle private data and whether you can be a part of improving your school's culture regarding data privacy.

Technology Service Highlight: Maker Kits

As a component of our Curricular / Media services, the Technology Department has STEM Maker Kits available for K-8 teachers. Teachers can book and check out kits on the topics of circuits, coding, and engineering. Additionally, we have two green screens and some camera / mic systems available for grades 6-12. These may be booked by any teacher in advance to enhance your curriculum!

Upcoming Events

- Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings - September 9
- IDEA Academy - September 11
- GEER Up with Pitsco Robotics - September 17
- Let's Get Cookin' New Teachers Day 3 - September 18
- Transition Student Day - September 25
- FPS #1 - September 25
- Technology Coordinators Meeting - October 2
- Indicator 13 Training - October 2
- High Quality Instructional Material (HQIM) Implementation Support - October 9
- Using the RBI & Quality Home Visits to Develop a Quality IFSP Training - October 10
- A Day at the Museum - HAL Student Cadre - October 11
- 2024 Teaching & Learning Collaboration (TLC) - October 21
- TAP/Transition Teacher Day - October 23
- Title I Cadre - October 29
- Media Specialists Cadre - October 30
- Counselor's Cadre - October 31
- Instructional Strategies for English Learners - November 5
- FPS #2 - November 20
- PE Cadre - December 3
- Technology Coordinators Meeting - December 4

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



Sent to: drew.harris@esu9.us

[Unsubscribe](#)

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