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Subject: ESU 9 Nine's Lines - Fall 2025 Newsletter
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To: laura.ochsner@esu9.us

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Fall 2025 Newsletter



Nine's Lines Newsletter



From the Administrator

Drew Harris

Greetings from the staff of ESU 9. I hope that your 2025-26 school year is off to a great start!

The Nine's Lines newsletter is our communications tool to keep stakeholders informed about happenings in the ESU organization. It comes out at the beginning of the school year, in January, and at the end of the school year. In 2019, the ESU staff comprised a total of 36 employees; this August we are starting the year with 72 employees. This increase is attributed to program growth through grants and to increased requests for services from our member school districts. We proudly support the 15 school districts that comprise the ESU 9 region. We are here to serve!

Two major items that are new to ESU 9 this year are the Summit Academy and Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant. The Summit Academy will bring to the region a day placement option for students with social behavioral needs, something that has been a great need for several years. The CLSD grant, secured through the Nebraska Department of Education, will provide evidence-based literacy instruction, including professional development, high-quality materials, family engagement, and support for struggling learners, aligning with the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act. The grant will provide \$440,000 per year for at least 2 years, potentially for 5 years, to support the ESU 9 schools who partnered to write this grant. You'll learn more about these programs later in this newsletter.

In the fall of 2024, the Board and staff steering committee met for a strategic planning session. As ESU 9 starts its new Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) cycle, this was a logical time to evaluate our priorities and set goals for the future period. The group identified these three goal areas for the organization:

- Innovate to provide opportunities, staffing, and programming to meet the current and evolving needs of our schools
- Continue to improve internal efficiencies
- Recruit and retain staff while staying affordable to our schools

These strategic planning goals led to the creation of this CIP goal for this accreditation cycle: *ESU 9 will develop and strengthen systems that promote innovation, enhance operational efficiencies, and support the recruitment, growth and retention of high-quality staff in order to provide dynamic and effective services to our schools.*

This year we welcome four new school leaders to the ESU 9 region. We wish these superintendents great success and look forward to working with them:



Matt Gordon - Giltner Public Schools



Chris Proski - Hastings Public Schools



Josh Lynch - Lawrence Public Schools



Jason Cline - Sutton Public Schools

At the beginning of each school year we recognize ESU 9 employees for their years of service in the organization in those years end in a multiple of 5. This year's honorees were:

5 years: Krista Karr (Speech Language Pathologist) and LaRaesha Kugel (Professional Learning Specialist/Instructional Coach)

10 years: Cindy Koch (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist) and Gayleen Moeller (Vision Consultant)

20 years: Laura Ochsner (Professional Learning Coordinator)

I wish you all a successful and enjoyable school year!



Welcome to ESU 9!

Joe Haney

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. [Read their individual bios here!](#)





Tanya Lee

Speech Language
Pathologist



Jennifer Arndt

Speech Language
Pathologist



Justin Miller

CBA – Special Education
Teacher



Michelle Stevens

School Psychology
Assistant



Kiarra Biede

School Psychology
Assistant



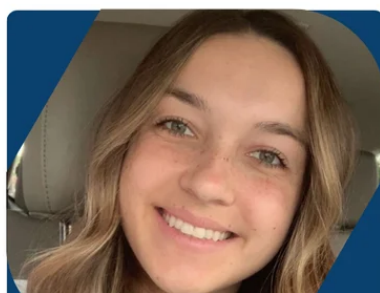
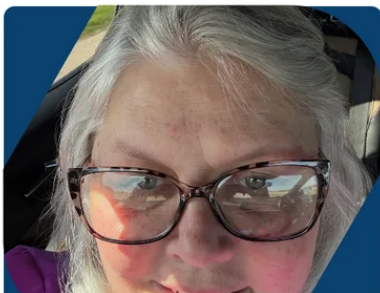
Maggie Keslar

Speech Language
Pathologist

NEW TO ESU
2025-2026



ESU





Amy Reed

18 plus- Special
Education Teacher



Paige Sharp

Speech Language
Pathologist



Kailee Gilliland

School Psychology



Lura Townsend

Sign Language
Interpreter



Shalee Lindsey

Professional Learning
Specialist



Kayla Perry

Reading Specialist

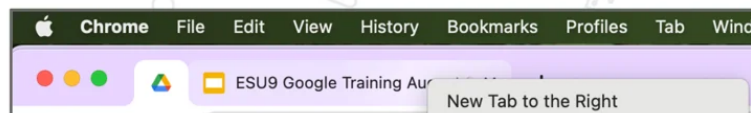
Tech Tip - Chrome Tab Features

Laura Ochsner

Staying organized while browsing the web is easier than ever with Chrome's **Pin/Unpin** and **Tab Groups** features! Pinning a tab keeps frequently used sites, like email or your gradebook, locked to the far left of your browser for quick access while unpinning lets you move it when needed. Tab Groups take organization a step further by allowing you to color-code and label related tabs—perfect for keeping work, lesson planning, and personal browsing separate and easy to find. These simple tools can help streamline your workflow and reduce clutter, making multitasking more efficient and stress-free.

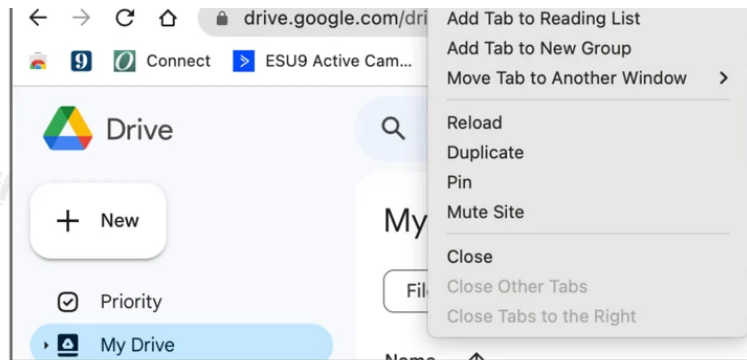
Pin & Unpin a Tab

- Control-Click (or Right-Click) on



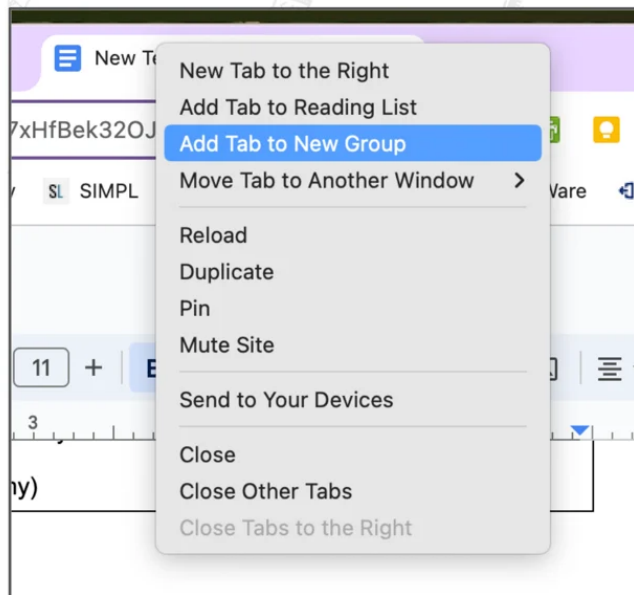
the tab.

- Choose Pin/Unpin tab from menu.



Tab Groups

- Control-Click (or Right-Click) on the tab.
- Choose Add Tab to New Group



WHAT IS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION?

7.8 million high school students and 3.3 million college and adult students participate in CTE, learning skills in the classroom and on the job.

CTE is delivered at comprehensive and CTE-dedicated high schools, magnet schools, area technical centers, community and technical colleges and some four-year universities.

CTE students earn industry certifications and licenses, postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees and higher.

CTE is good for students, good for businesses and good for communities.

CTE high school students are college and career ready – 96% graduate high school and most enroll directly in college.

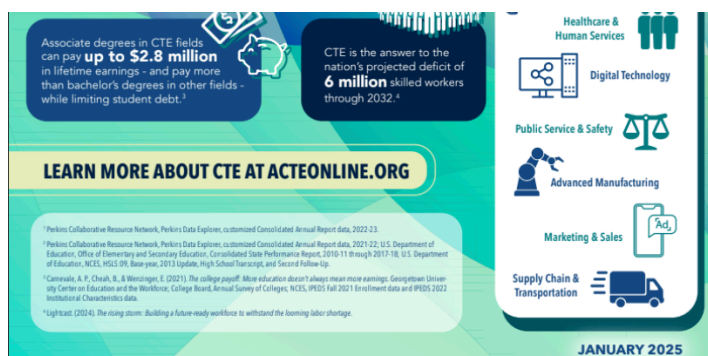
CTE PREPARES THE WORKFORCE ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Arts, Entertainment & Design
- Management & Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Financial Services
- Hospitality, Events & Tourism

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

Shalee Lindsey

I hope everyone has had a great start to the 2025-26 school year! I would like to introduce myself, as I am brand new to this role. My name is Shalee Lindsey and I have had the privilege of joining the ESU 9 Professional Learning Team. I am incredibly excited for this new



challenge. This will be my 25th year in education, I have spent the last 19 years working as an educator at Central Island Public Schools. One of my new responsibilities will be the coordinator for the ESU 9 Perkins V Consortium. I am a huge believer in CTE and the opportunities it affords our students. For this coming school year, the 11 districts in our consortium were approved \$32,000 to spend on items to improve CTE in their schools; from engines to cameras, and even a laser engraver. These were purchased for five of the six career fields. This is a testament to our dedicated CTE teachers taking the

to make their classes as engaging and learning-centered as possible.

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.



EHA Update

LaRaesha Kugel

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year. I hope that you were able to find moments of rest, joy and activity throughout the summer months. As in the past, Educator's Health Alliance (EHA) is here to support you through your health journey this year.

As you prioritize your health during the school year, EHA has provided some questions for reflection and goal setting. Please take a moment to reflect on these questions.

After reflecting on your answers, identify what **key themes stand out**? What is **one small yet meaningful step** you take this week toward your goal?:

- What does wellness mean to me personally?
- How do I want to feel every day, both physically and mentally?
- What aspects of my health and well-being matter most to me?
- If I could improve one thing about my health, what would it be and why?
- What are the biggest challenges I face in prioritizing my wellness?
- How does my wellness impact my ability to do what I love?
- What activities bring me joy and help me feel my best?
- When have I felt my healthiest and happiest? What was I doing?
- Where do I see myself in 5-10 years, and how does my health play a role in that vision?
- What would my future self thank me for starting today?

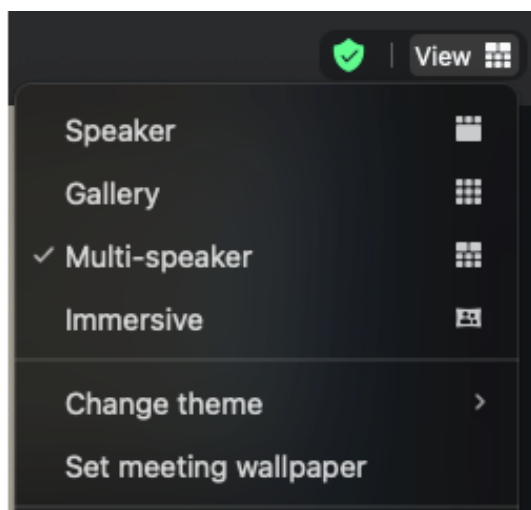
Additionally, EHA has an exciting lineup of challenges this year that you can participate in to enhance your health and wellness! Check them out below, and identify a few that you'd love to participate in!

Upcoming Core Challenges:

- October: Positive Power
- December: Money Mindset Makeover
- February: Tech Timeout
- April: Olive + Ocean
- June: Give + Grow
- August: Nourish to Flourish

Core Wellness Trackers will be available October 1 to track and support healthy habits like hydration, rest, movement, and mindfulness.

I hope you have a wonderful and healthy school year!

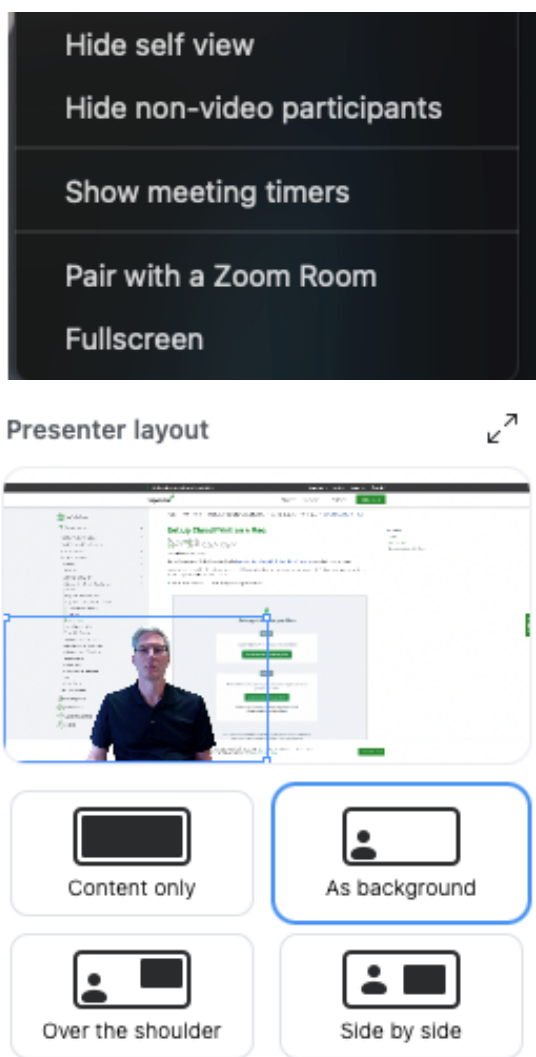


Great New Zoom Feature

Gary Needham

Even if you only join meetings and don't run them yourself, Zoom has introduced some really useful options over the last several upgrades. Don't succumb to the "tyranny of the default"; make the software more useful! Here are some of my favorites. All of these are options that are local to you as a meeting participant and don't affect anyone else:

- **Multi-speaker view:** The choice of views in the top right corner has lots of options. My new favorite is "Multi-speaker." When meetings are highly interactive, several speakers can show across



top in bigger windows, while the silent participants are in a gallery across the bottom.

- **Pinned Screens:** To “pin” a screen (available in the top right corner of each participant or content window) is to mark it for the speaker view, or as a larger window. A single pinned screen has always been available, but now you can pin more than one. This would work great to keep the host / presenter more visible or for a sign language interpreter. Combined with the Multi-speaker view, it becomes even more flexible!
- **Customized Screen Sharing:** Zoom has always allowed sharing of a full screen or just a single window. You can also share an additional camera (think document camera or attached tablet) or with a camera from your iPad or iPhone or screen contents. Even more cool, you can now place your own image over the presentation screen! (See the next section.)
- **Captions and Transcript:** Captions and transcripts are great accessibility settings, and when turned on they also work well in case you didn't quite catch what was said in that last statement. (Note: you have to request captions or transcript be turned on by the host.)

There are other useful features for hosts and presenters that won't go over here, but take time to look around the app's preferences if things aren't quite working the way you would like!

Technology Service Highlight: How to Spot a Phishing Email

The beginning of the school year is a prime time of year for educators to fall for phishing email. You have extra work to do and just want to finish up your email so you can get back to it. Being in a hurry is a sure way to not quite think through the email that didn't quite make sense but seemed to need attention.

Here are some of the most common ways to fall for phishing:

- **(DON'T) Process your e-mail in a hurry.** If you aren't taking enough time to think about what is being asked, you are more likely to be tricked.
- **(DON'T) Click the link on your phone.** On your computer, you can hover over the link and find out if it appears to be a legitimate site. Additionally, using your web browser to read an email will present warning banners that can't always appear in your phone app.
- **(DON'T) Fail to verify the request.** You may know the person, but if something is unexpected or seems not quite right, verify. And use a different method such as your messaging app or calling them on the phone. (Don't use that 800 number in the message if it's someone you don't know, either. Look up the number to see if it matches.)

How do you spot a Phish? They have some common characteristics:

- **A sense of urgency.** They can't get you unless you do what you are asked. Urgency can cause us to be in a bigger hurry to get it out of the way. If something bad will happen soon (your transaction will be cancelled, your account will be locked), you should check twice before acting.
- **A request for action.** It's common to have email that requests action, but is this request normal? Is it the right kind of information to submit by email? (You should never send a payroll change request by email, by the way.)
- **Something is unusual.** Frequently it's an unexpected or out-of-character message or attachment. Maybe you have to click a link and enter your login information even though you were already logged in. It could be as simple as a strange message greeting. Does that person usually end a message with “Cheers”?

- **Misspellings, poor grammar, foreign grammar.** Misspellings and grammatical errors are becoming less common with AI, but using some terminology from “across the pond” is still pretty common.

Even in the hurry of the new school year, slow down, practice the critical thinking you want your students to learn, & let that phish swim on by.

Upcoming Events

- Grown Your Own & Ed Rising Student Kickoff - Course 1: Teaching as a Profession - September 5
- Title IX Meeting - September 8
- TAP/Transition Teacher Day - September 10
- PRT Region 9 Training - September 12
- High Ability Learner Identification - September 16
- Let's Get Cookin' New Teachers Day 3 - September 23
- Transition Student Day - September 24
- Future Problem Solvers #1 - September 24
- Youth Mental Health First Aid Program Training - October 6
- Empowering Leaders Zoom Session - October 7
- Ignite Innovation: STEAM & Robotics - October 8
- IDEA Academy Day 1 - October 14
- Teaching & Learning Collaboration (TLC) - October 20
- CPI Training - October 24
- SPED Teacher Cadre - October 28
- Library Media Specialist Cadre - October 29
- Counselor's Cadre - October 30
- PE Cadre - November 6
- Title I Cadre - November 11
- Grow Your Own Course 2 Teacher Institute - November 18
- Future Problem Solvers #2 - November 19
- Supporting Student Behavior - November 19
- IDEA Academy Day 2 - December 9
- See The Sounds Visual Phonics Training - December 11

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



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[Unsubscribe](#)

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