Educational Service Unit 7
Lead Customize Support Innovate

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026

North Building
2657 44th Avenue
Columbus, NE 68601
402-564-5753

Learning Academy
2567 44th Avenue
Columbus, NE 68601
402-564-0815

South Building/Cen7ter/Bridges
2563 44th Avenue
Columbus, NE 68601
402-564-0815

From the Chief Administrator,

Each year, our Annual Report gives us a chance to reflect on the work we've done together and share how ESU 7 is living out its mission: providing strong leadership and customized, innovative support to our member school districts.

ESU 7 covers nearly 3,500 square miles across Boone, Butler, Colfax, Merrick, Nance, Platte, and Polk Counties. Across these 19 public school districts, we are privileged to support more than 13,000 students, 1,000 teachers, 80 administrators, and over 100 dedicated ESU 7 staff members. At our core, we all share the same goal: making sure every student in our region receives the support they need, and that every educator has the support and tools they need to make that happen.

Every year, we take a intentional, data-driven look at our services to make sure our services align what our districts need. That process helps us set clear priorities, adapt our support, and deliver services that strengthen classroom instruction, streamline operations, and open up new opportunities for students. While foundational services like professional development, instructional materials, and technology infrastructure remain at the heart of what we do, programs like special education, mental health support, grant assistance, and our print shop allow us to meet an even wider range of district needs.

This past year, we focused heavily on three main areas: People, Services, and Efficiency. That focus shaped not only how we delivered our programs, but also how we grew internally. Whether that meant investing in staff development, fostering stronger leadership collaboration, or upgrading our facilities and communications to be more responsive.

On behalf of the ESU 7 Board of Directors, thank you to our member districts, educators, and community partners. We truly appreciate your continued trust and collaboration, and we are proud to stand alongside you in service to our local schools and students.
Sincerely,

MARCI OSTMEYER

Chief Administrator, ESU 7



Demographics

Legislative Districts: 6

15 - Senator Wordekemper
22 - Senator Moser
23 - Senator Storm
24 - Senator Hughes
34 - Senator Lippincott
41 - Senator Meyer

Departments: 15

Administration, Bridges, Cen7ter, Early Childhood, Grants, Learning Academy, Mental Health, Title IC Education Program, Print Shop, Professional Development, Psychology, Speech Language Pathology, Technology, and Vision

School Districts: 19

Boone Central, Central City, Clarkson, Columbus, Cross County, David City, East Butler, Fullerton, High Plains, Howells-Dodge, Humphrey, Lakeview, Leigh, Osceola, Palmer, Schuyler, Shelby-Rising City, St. Edward, and Twin River

VISION

Educational Service Unit 7
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Counties: 7

Boone, Butler, Colfax, Merrick, Nance, Platte, and Polk

Board Members: 12

Doug Pauley, President - District 8
Dawn Lindsley, President - District 12
Beth Kabes, Vice President - District 2
Marni Danhauer - Secretary - District 10
Richard Stephens - District 1
Amy Blaser - District 3
Clark Lehr - District 4
Jack Young - District 5
Bob Arp - District 6
Karen Gomez (2025) - District 7
April Emeigh (2026) - District 7
Joyce Baumert - District 9
Donald Graff - District 11

ESU 7 Staff Members: 115

SERVICES

Distance Learning - ESU 7 supports K-12 students through distance learning and offers innovative professional development opportunities for educators through a an online delivery approach.

Grant Facilitation - ESU 7 manages a comprehensive spectrum of state and federal grants, encompassing an array of vital initiatives, such as Title IA, Title IC Education Program, Title IIA, Title III, Title IV, Carl Perkins, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Early Learning Connection (ELC), Planning Region Team (PRT), Transition, Regional Transition, and PEaK (Promoting Engagement and Knowledge), CLSD (Comprehensive Literacy State Development).

Grant Writer - Coordinates and oversees the grant application by researching, identifying potential new funding sources, developing and responding to public and private grant opportunities for ESU 7 and districts. Responsible for writing proposals and other supporting documents at the federal and state level, and with private funding agencies.

Instructional Resources - ESU 7 maintains a lending library for district loan and provides access to online research resources.

LANMan Partnership - ESU 7 extends a commitment to deliver ongoing technical services as stipulated in our LANMan Partnership service agreement. Within this framework, ESU 7 appoints a dedicated District Technology Coordinator, employed directly by the ESU, to serve schools that opt to engage with this service.

SERVICES

Print Shop - ESU 7 provides a streamlined and budget-friendly selection of print and art media services, including tasks such as copying, collating, stapling, laminating, binding, folding, and high-quality full-color poster printing.

Professional Development - ESU 7 delivers comprehensive professional development support and technical expertise in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, standards, and continuous improvement. These services are tailored to elevate the quality of learning, teaching, and the planning efforts of schools and districts, ensuring an impact on educational outcomes.

Mental Health - The mental health team diligently seeks tailored solutions for each student and situation, employing an array of counseling strategies to address social and emotional needs effectively. Their collaborative efforts extend to educators, parents, and fellow professionals, culminating in the creation of safe, nurturing learning environments that fortify the bonds between home and school. With a focus on prevention, they provide counseling services to students and engage with individuals and their families, all with the overarching aim of promoting the optimal mental well-being of the student.

Technology - ESU 7 offers a comprehensive set of technology services, including expert support, consultation, hands-on assistance, tailored training, and skill enhancement for both hardware and software. Additionally, we facilitate cost-saving opportunities for internet services and software acquisitions, ensuring technology utilization for our stakeholders.

SERVICES

Special Education

Behavior Specialist - Our services are dedicated to collaborating closely with administration, educators, paraprofessionals, psychologists, students, and families to cultivate and nurture positive social-emotional behavioral skills.

Bridges - The Bridges Autism Program provides specialized educational services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ages 5 and up (Kindergarten-above) , who require intensive behavioral and communication support. Utilizing evidence-based practices and behavior analytic strategies and interventions, the program fosters academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development through individualized instruction, small-group settings, and one-on-one teaching.

Cen7ter - Cen7ter is designed for the unique requirements of individuals aged 14-21, specifically those with developmental disabilities. At the core of Cen7ter's mission lies the commitment to empower students harnessing their innate strengths to facilitate their journey towards acquiring essential employment and independent living skills. Our program places a strong emphasis on a holistic approach, encompassing vital areas such as life skills, academics, social development, independent living, recreational pursuits, and meaningful prevocational experiences. Cen7ter's services are individualized, driven by IEP (Individualized Education Program) considerations, and flexibly available from one to five days a week to suit each student's needs.

SERVICES

Special Education

Deaf Education - Our service delivers specialized deaf education services and offers expert consultation to students who are verified as deaf or hard of hearing. Collaboratively, Deaf Educators partner with audiologists to ensure the provision of tailored services, guaranteeing the most appropriate and effective support for each student.

Early Childhood - Our early childhood services encompass early intervention services targeting children (birth to 3) with disabilities and their families and Part B:619 special education services for children who are of preschool age. These comprehensive offerings encompass comprehensive evaluations, tailored intervention, and evidence-based program planning, all geared towards addressing the unique needs of children facing learning challenges and delays and increasing their participation in general education .

Learning Academy - The ESU 7 Learning Academy is dedicated to empowering students aged 5-21 by fostering collaborative partnerships with stakeholders. We meet students at their individual academic, behavioral, and social levels, leveraging their strengths to facilitate a successful transition back to their original educational setting, thereby helping them to unlock their full potential.

Psychology - ESU 7 School Psychologists partner with educators and families to support student learning, behavior, and social-emotional well-being. They provide assessment, consultation, and intervention services, and help create safe, supportive school environments where all students can thrive.

SERVICES

Special Education

Program Supervision - ESU 7's Special Education department fosters seamless collaboration with our member schools across multiple critical domains. Within this framework, our Special Education Director, alongside the administrative assistant and bookkeepers, extends invaluable financial services tailored to Special Education, including the administration of SPEDFRS, MOE, and IDEA, while also facilitating a vital network for district bookkeepers. As a dedicated liaison between the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and districts, the Special Education Director ensures the alignment of compliance and best practices, offering expert IEP facilitation. Our resource teachers receive robust support through NDE guidance, training, and TIP (Teacher Induction Program) assistance. Furthermore, we extend an array of professional development opportunities to districts, encompassing a wide spectrum of topics catered to both teachers and paraeducators.

Resource Coach - Collaboratively engages with educators and district personnel to offer expert guidance, tailored training, valuable resources, and effective strategies for effectively working with students. This includes the utilization of specialized programs and materials.

Speech and Language - Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) provide a variety of services to support students' communication needs, including comprehensive evaluations, expert consultation, and individualized intervention. They address a range of communication disorders, including speech sound (articulation), voice, fluency, and language difficulties, to help students communicate effectively and participate successfully in educational settings.

Vision - The ESU7 Vision department supports children and youth (birth to age 21) with visual impairments by providing resources, services, and guidance to help prepare them for lifelong success. In collaboration with schools, families, and community agencies, the team provides individualized support tailored to each student's unique needs.

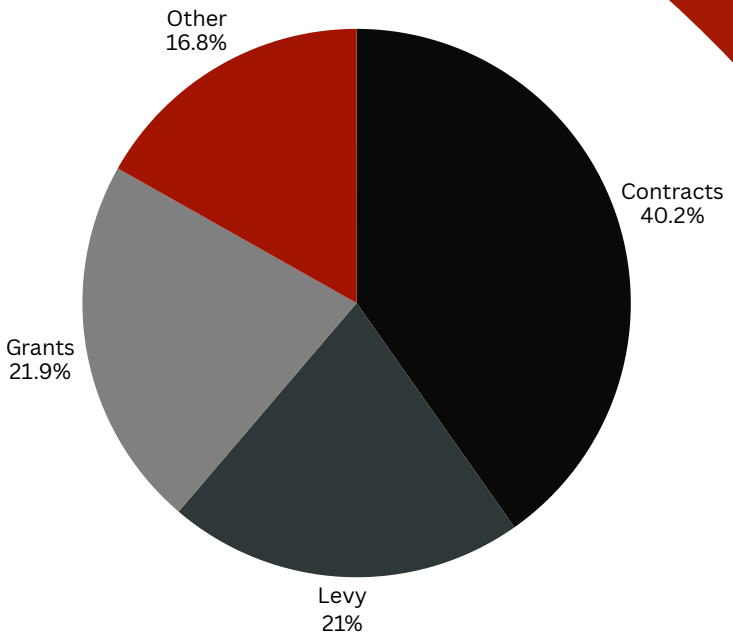
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FINANCIALS

Expenditures

- **Contracts**
  $5,528,790.69
- **Levy**
  $2,886,508.65
- **Grants**
  $3,012,831.59
- **Other**
  $2,312,248.30

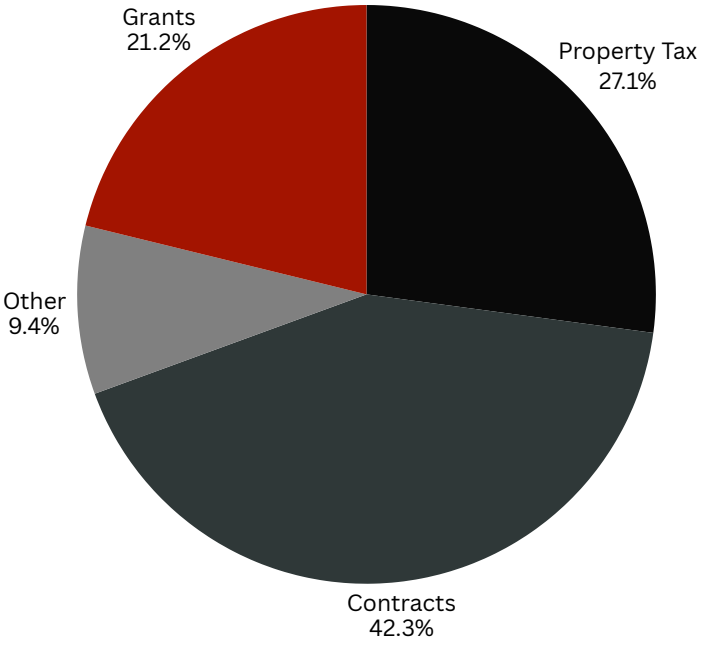
Total $13,740,379.23



Receipts

- **Property Tax**
  $3,573,712.27
- **Contracts**
  $5,572,833.94
- **Other**
  $1,239,065.17
- **Grants**
  $2,789,776.61

Total $13,175,387.99



Educational Service Unit 7

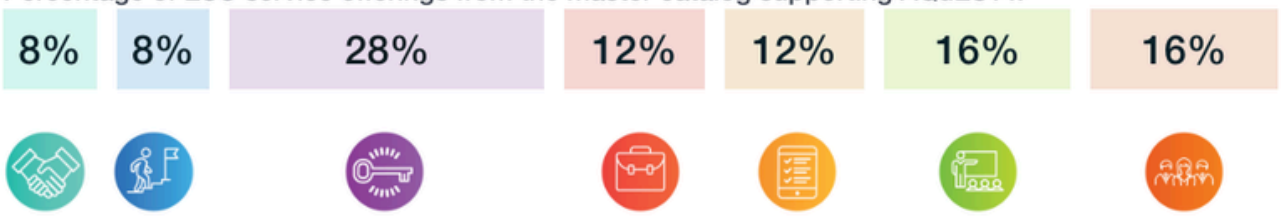
ESU SMART

Service Management and Reporting Tool

Working Together Towards SMARTer Solutions!

AQuESTT for Nebraska

Percentage of ESU service offerings from the master catalog supporting AQuESTT.



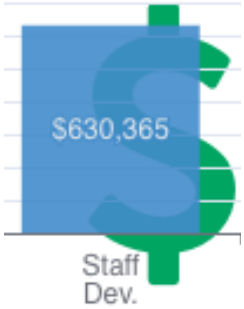
This visual represents how the ESU services align with AQuESTT Tenets.
(see more real-time data about the AQuESTT implementation)

Services
68

Service Participants
14,413

ESU Hours
12,365

Dollars Saved Through Cooperative Purchasing (2024-2025)
$858,152



Dollars Saved Through Efficient Service Delivery

ESU 7 takes the time necessary to assess data identifying areas needing support, develops a service plan to address those needs, and customizes services for each district. This comprehensive service planning process is called SMART (Service Management and Reporting Tool). Information related to SMART is available at www.smart.esucc.org

***Service hours only include Professional Learning for adults and Technology.**

Service Plan 2025-2026

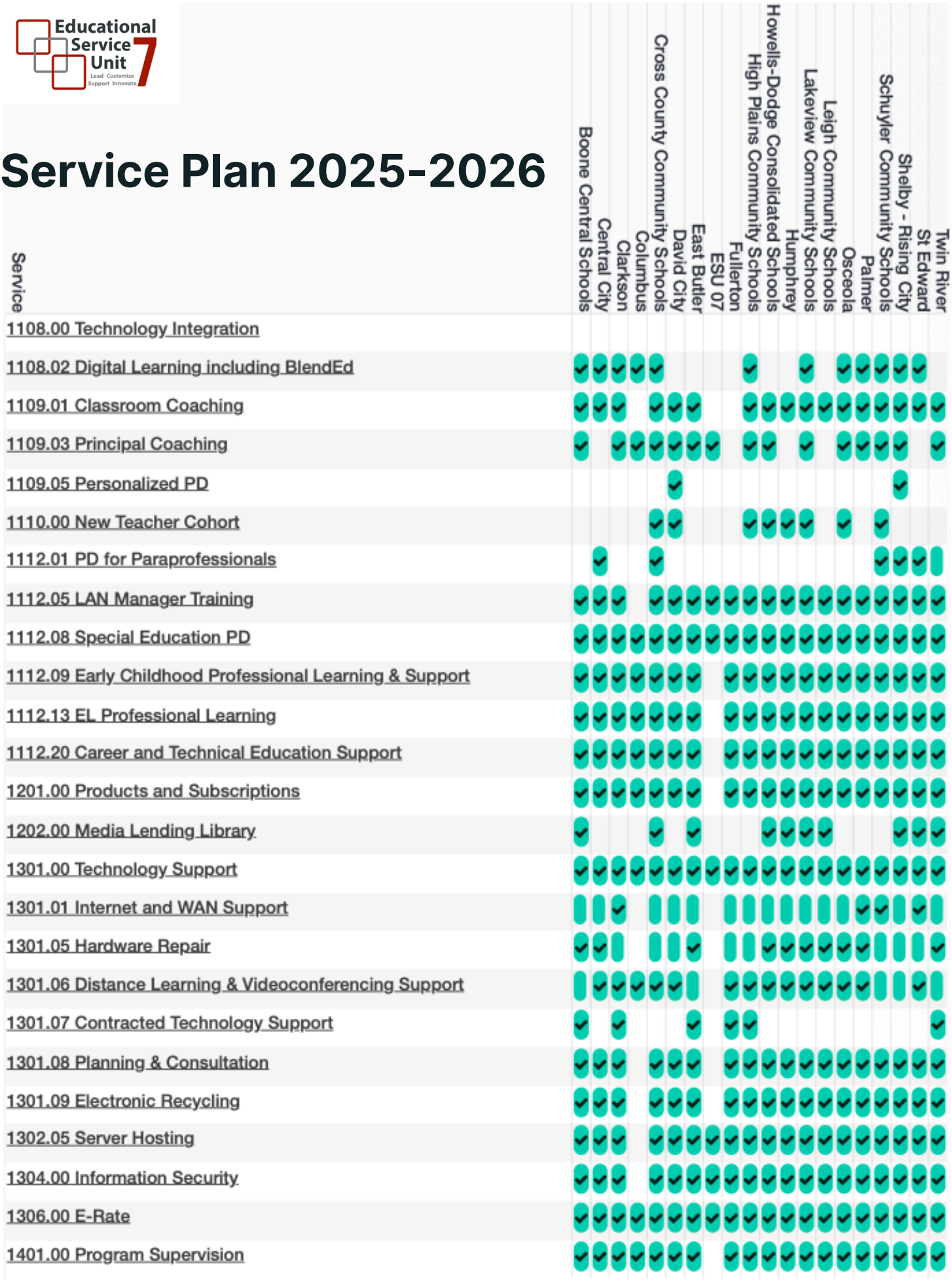
Legend:

Service Planned ✓ Service Accessed

Service	Boone Central Schools	Central City	Clarkson	Columbus	Cross County Community Schools	David City	East Butler	ESU 07	Fullerton	High Plains Community Schools	Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools	Humphrey	Lakeview Community Schools	Leigh Community Schools	Osceola	Palmer	Schuyler Community Schools	Shelby - Rising City	St Edward	Twin River
1101.00 Continuous Improvement Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1101.07 Strategic Planning	✓				✓															
1102.00 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS/RDA)	✓					✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1103.00 Crisis/School Safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
1103.07 BITS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1104.01 Principal Development	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1104.02 Superintendent Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1105.01 Develop, Revise, and Assess Curriculum based on Standards			✓		✓		✓			✓					✓					✓
1105.02 Instructional Materials Adoption	✓		✓				✓						✓	✓			✓			
1106.01 Instructional Models	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1106.02 English Language Arts (ELA) Content Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1106.03 Math Content Training			✓							✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
1106.04 Science Content Training	✓		✓		✓					✓						✓				✓
1106.11 Instructional Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1106.12 Instruction: Other				✓		✓			✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	
1107.01 NWEA Training/Support		✓			✓	✓			✓			✓					✓			

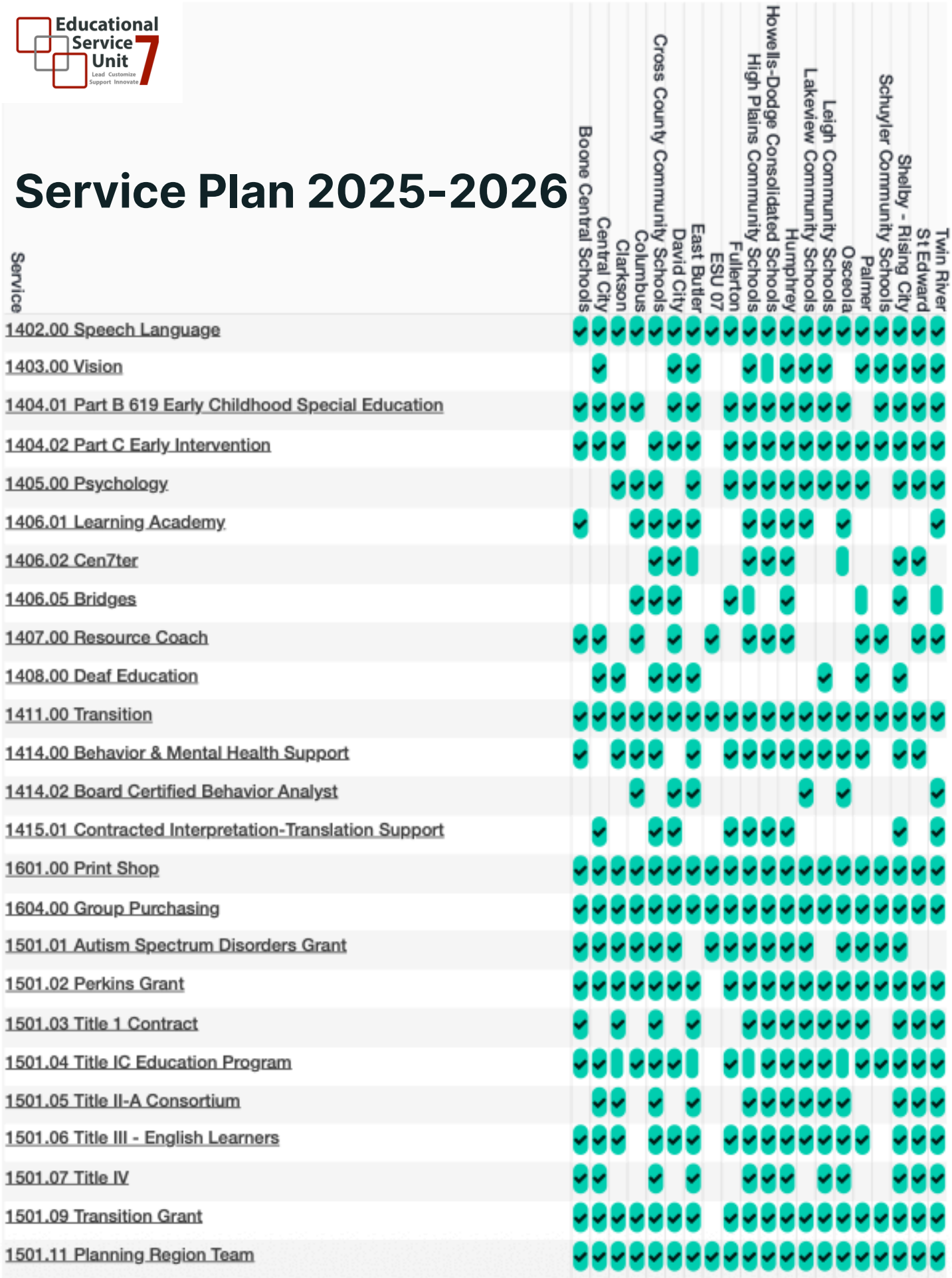
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Service Plan 2025-2026



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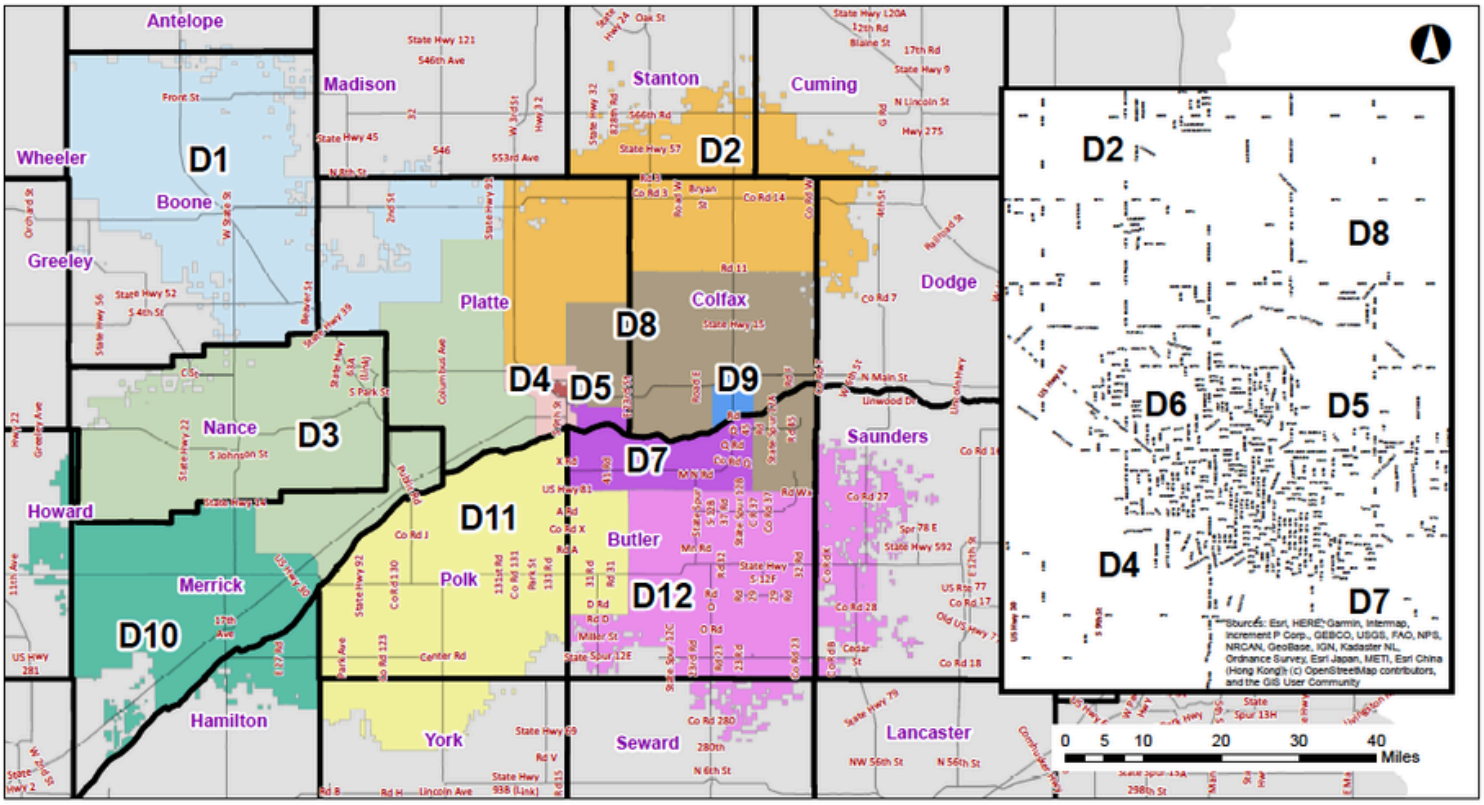
Service Plan 2025-2026

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1501.12 PEaK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1502.00 Grant Writing	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Map & Policy Manual

EDUCATION SERVICE UNIT #7 DISTRICT MAP

LEGEND District D1 D2 D3 D4 D5 D6 D7 D8 D9 D10 D11 D12



ESU 7 POLICY MANUAL

It is the policy of ESU 7 to not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, military or veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, gender identity or sexual orientation, or other protected status in its educational programs, admission policies, employment policies or other administered programs. Persons requiring accommodations to apply and/or be considered for positions are asked to make their request to the Chief Administrator. Positions are subject to a veteran's preference for those who qualify. Please see the policy at www.esu7.org.



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@esu7_ne

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