

Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS)  
Executive Council Meeting  
November 23, 2020 1:00 p.m.  
Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC), 2021 Transformation Drive, Lincoln, NE 68508  
(Breakout Rooms A1 and A2)

Publicized notice of the Executive Council meeting was given by posting the date, time, and location on the NSWERS.org website.

**1. CALL TO ORDER** – President Dr. Susan Fritz called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

**1.1 Roll Call**

Roll Call showed the following NSWERS members in attendance:

Dr. Susan Fritz, President  
Dr. Paul Turman, Vice President  
Dr. Paul Illich, Member  
Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, Secretary/Treasurer

**1.2 Announcement of the placement of the Open Meetings Act information**

President Fritz announced that information regarding the Open Meetings Act is available at this location as well as posted on the NSWERS.org website.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No one appeared for public comment via ZOOM or in person.

**3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**3.1 Additions or corrections to agenda**

No agenda items were removed, added or corrected.

Approval of the agenda as presented passed with a motion by Dr. Paul Turman, second by Dr. Paul Illich.

Dr. Susan Fritz	Yea
Dr. Paul Turman	Yea
Dr. Matthew Blomstedt	Yea
Dr. Paul Illich	Yea

#### 4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Matthew Hastings, Executive Director, NSWERS made a presentation on behalf of himself and the Management Team.

Dr. Hastings reviewed the 18-month Start-Up Matrix with Executive Council members and an overview of the implementation of same. Dr. Hastings encouraged feedback from the Council members as this Matrix is the key framework to NSWERS organization success. (Please see attached power point presentation.)

**Strategy (Core approach to accomplishing our goals.)** - Quarter 1 is in full swing with the draft of a Strategic Approach document being created from the concepts/discussions of the workshop held with Executive Council and Management Team members last month. A draft is scheduled to be presented to the Executive Council in December for approval. Once approved, in Quarter 2 a NSWERS Strategic Plan will be developed and published in Quarter 3. Quarter 2 will start the development of NSWERS budget FY2021 any by Quarter 3 will start developing a LB 1160 report that is to be submitted to the Legislature by the end of 2021. As these are scheduled for action by the Executive Council, the Management Committee will be continuing work on a POC, a communication strategy, writing job descriptions for professional services related to technical support and other goals to present to the Executive Council at future business meetings for input and approval.

Dr. Hastings has provided the Executive Council with a draft of the NSWERS Strategic Approach (see attached) and Dr. Fritz recommended that each member of the Executive Council read this draft and have their edits, questions or concerns to Dr. Hastings in ten days, or by December 3 so it can be on the December 21 Executive Council Business meeting agenda for final approval.

**Structure (How our work is situated and coordinated.)** - The first two quarters it is recommended that the Executive Council meet every six weeks with the Management Team and the Executive Director meeting every week. By Quarter 3, once the Strategic Plan is published, the meetings of the Executive Council can be quarterly and Management Team meetings bi-weekly. The Management Team will start identifying work group membership, define roles/responsibilities of working groups as well as operational roles and responsibilities of same.

**System (Processes used to add value.)** – By end of Quarter 1 create responsibility matrix, core package, core SOP's, NSWERS Board policies, finalize data sharing agreements and data warehouse for implementation in Quarter 2.

**Skills (The capabilities of our organization.)** – By end of Quarter 1 acquire staff to successfully executive strategic approach and plan and in meantime acquire contract support to fill gaps.

Executive Council members were very pleased with Dr. Hastings accomplishments achieved and are really impressed with his efforts as well as the Management Team in such a short time. Council members feel NSWERS is in a good position for POC and commend the work that has been done with limited staff and are excited for NSWERS in the next year.

**5. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**5.1 Report from the Management Team**

Please see presentation made by Dr. Matthew Hastings in Agenda Item 4.

**6. EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed)**

No Executive Session held.

**7. ACTION ITEMS**

**7.1 Approve Minutes of NSWERS business meeting, October 12, 2020**

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2020 NSWERS Business meeting passed with a motion by Dr. Paul Illich, second by Dr. Paul Turman.

Dr. Susan Fritz	Yea
Dr. Paul Turman	Yea
Dr. Matthew Blomstedt	Yea
Dr. Paul Illich	Yea

**7.2 Approve Minutes of NSWERS Workshop meeting, October 21, 2020**

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020 NSWERS workshop meeting passed with a motion by Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, second by Dr. Paul Turman.

Discussion: Executive Council members felt that the workshop was efficient in time and effort and were really pleased with the outcome and commended Dr. Hastings for same.

Dr. Paul Turman	Yea
Dr. Susan Fritz	Yea
Dr. Paul Illich	Yea
Dr. Matthew Blomstedt	Yea

### 7.3 Approve NSWERS-NDOL Data Sharing Agreement

Motion to approve the data sharing agreement with the Nebraska Department of Labor as it appears in the draft reviewed and considered by the Council and delegate the President the authority to approve, sign and execute this or any such agreement that does not substantially deviate passed with a motion by Dr. Paul Turman, second by Dr. Paul Illich.

Discussion: Dr. Paul Turman wanted clarification that by signing this Data Sharing Agreement, all other agreements with the Nebraska Department of Labor are null and void. It was agreed by Council members that any and all other agreements with the Nebraska Department of Labor from here on out will go through NSWERS.

Dr. Matthew Blomstedt	Yea
Dr. Paul Illich	Yea
Dr. Susan Fritz	Yea
Dr. Paul Turman	Yea

**NOTE/CLARIFICATION:** Since the November 23, 2020 Executive Council business meeting, NSWERS legal counsel has provided clarification on this point. The data sharing agreement is "binding on only NSWERS as an entity and the NDOL, allowing partner entities to still freely work directly with NDOL as they deem necessary and appropriate (probably for purposes separate from the NSWERS objectives). As such, the NSWERS-NDOL agreement, as approved by the Executive Council on November 23, 2020, preserves a healthy flexibility for the partners."

### 7.4 Approve NSWERS Partner Data Sharing Agreement

Motion to approve the data sharing agreement with NSWERS partner entities as it appears in this draft reviewed and considered by the Council and delegate the President the authority to approve, sign and execute this or any such agreement that does not substantially deviate passed with a motion by Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, second by Dr. Paul Illich.

Dr. Paul Illich	Yea
Dr. Matthew Blomstedt	Yea
Dr. Paul Turman	Yea
Dr. Susan Fritz	Yea

## 8. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

No additional business.

**9. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

No special presentations and discussion.

**10. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORT**

No information items and reports.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the NSWERS Executive Council Business Meeting passed with a motion from Dr. Paul Turman, second by Dr. Matthew Blomstedt.

Dr. Susan Fritz	Yea
Dr. Paul Turman	Yea
Dr. Matthew Blomstedt	Yea
Dr. Paul Illich	Yea

President Fritz adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.

A NSWERS Executive Council Workshop will be held on Monday, December 21, 2020 at a time and place to be determined.

# Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS)

## Executive Director's Report

Matt Hastings, Ph.D.

November 23, 2020

# Overview



STRATEGY



STRUCTURE



SYSTEM



SKILLS

# Strategy

Core approach to accomplishing our goals.



## Strategy

- Review status of NSWERS 18-Month Start-Up Matrix
  - Goals:
    - Provide a timeline of key NSWERS activities over the next six quarters
    - Position NSWERS for success
      - Upon the successful completion of these activities, at quarter six, prepared for “Implementation Phase” per NSWERS Interlocal Agreement
  - Framework utilized:
    - Strategy
    - Structure
    - System
    - Skills

**NSWERS 18-Month Start-Up Matrix**

### Begin Interlocal Implementation Phase

# Strategy

NSWERS 18-Month Start-Up Matrix

	October-December 2020 Quarter 1	January-March 2021 Quarter 2	April-June 2021 Quarter 3	July-September 2021 Quarter 4	October-December 2021 Quarter 5	January-March 2022 Quarter 6
System	Define Responsibilities Board Policies Standard Operating Procedures Standard Data Collection Data Warehouse Research Agenda Data Sharing Agreements NSWERS NDOL	Create Responsibility Matrix Create Core Package Create Core SOPs Data Collection for POC Create NSWERS Data Warehouse v0.1 Develop Research Agenda Develop Execute Partners Data Sharing Agreement Develop Execute NDOL Data Sharing Agreement	Implement Core Package Implement Core SOPs Data Collection for Strategic Plan Research Agenda Create NSWERS Data Warehouse v1.0 Publish Research Agenda			
Staff:						
Staffing						
Tier One	Identify Tier One Staff	Onboard Tier One Staff	Onboard Tier Two Staff	Onboard Tier Three Staff	Onboard Tier Three Staff	Onboard Tier Three Staff
Tier Two		Identify Tier Two Staff	Identify Tier Three Staff	Establish partnerships		
Tier Three			Identify partnerships for strategic efforts			
Partnerships						

\*As of 10/12/20

# Strategy

## ◦ Strategic Approach

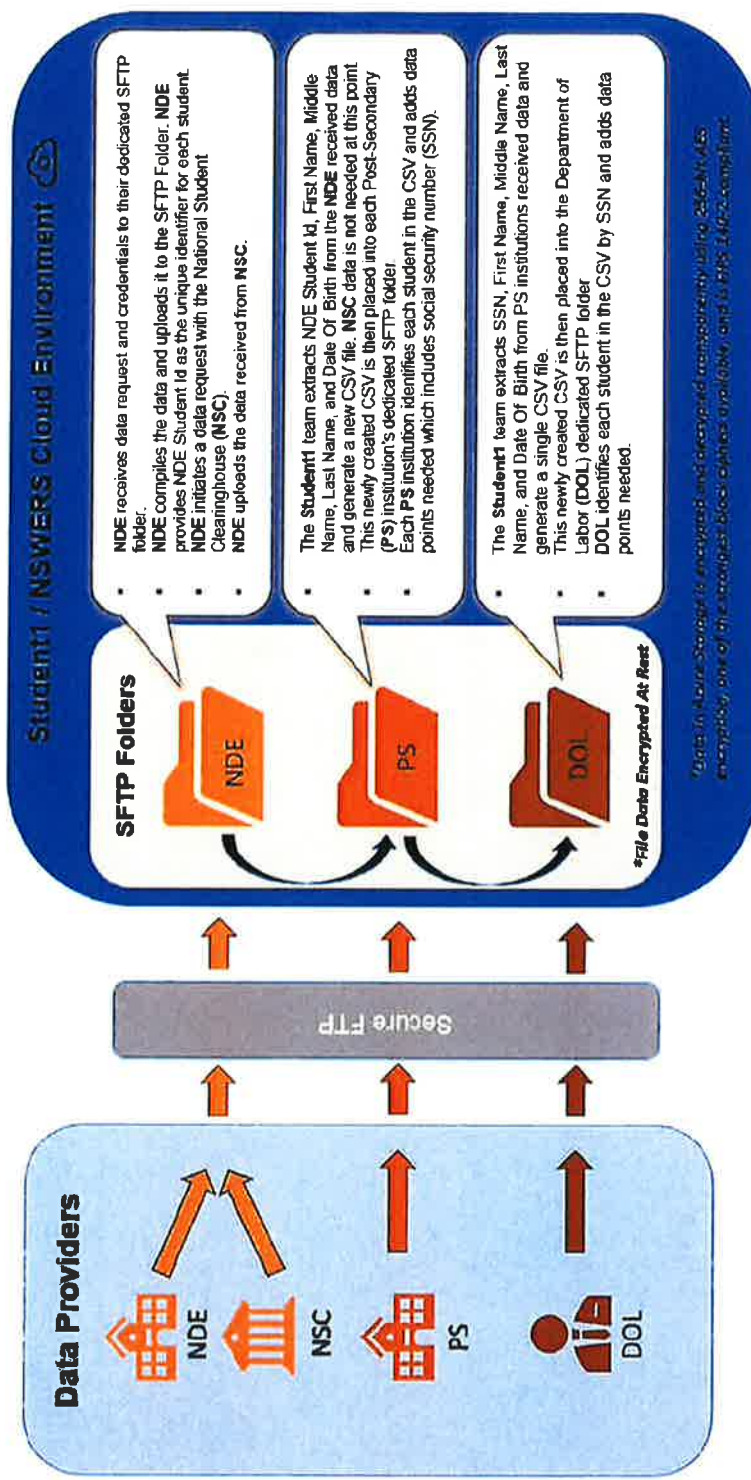
- With feedback from online data collection, NSWERS Strategic Vision workshop of 10/21/20, and in-dept review from the NSWERS Management Council, a first draft is now available.
- Timeline of Events:
  - 11/23/20 - Review DRAFT Strategic Approach with NSWERS Executive Council today
  - 11/23/20 - 12/21/20 - Collect and integrate, where appropriate, requests for edits
  - 12/23/20 – NSWERS Executive Council votes on FINAL draft
- Next Steps:
  - Work with communications staff to make available with release of POC
  - The Management Council will expand to create Strategic Plan (+Objective and Tactics) Q3

## Strategy

- NSWERS Early Data Product – Proof of Concept (POC)
  - Goals:
    - Develop a POC to identify needed and test existing NSWERS policies, processes and procedures
    - Promote efforts to garner continuous funding
  - Target Date:
    - January, 2021
  - Identified POC
    - Animated Visualization of Single HS cohort
  - Dependencies
    - Data sharing agreement between NSWERS partners / NSWERS and NDOL
    - Contract for professional services related to technical support

## Strategy

- NSWERS Early Data Product – Proof of Concept (POC)
  - Data Collection Instructions:
    - Develop a POC to identify needed and test existing NSWERS policies, processes and procedures
    - Promote efforts to garner continuous funding
  - Target Date:
    - January, 2021
  - Identified POC
    - Animated Visualization of Single HS cohort
  - Dependencies
    - Data sharing agreement between NSWERS partners / NSWERS and NDOL
    - Contract for professional services related to technical support



\*Data in Motion Storage is encrypted and decrypted temporarily using 256-bit AES encryption, one of the strongest block ciphers available, and is FIPS 140-2 compliant.



## Strategy

- Review early web prototype of NSWERS POC

# Structure

How our work is situated and coordinated.

## Structure

- Securing NSWERS Legal Counsel
  - We have secured Karen Haase and KSB Law of Lincoln, NE
  - Items of Business:
    - Data sharing agreements:
      - Data sharing agreement between NSWERS & NDOL
      - Data sharing agreement between NSWERS + NSWERS partners
    - Contract template complete and in-use
    - Guidance related to the operations of interlocal administrative entity

## Structure

- NSWERS Executive Council
  - Business meetings established through June 2021
    - 2020 Dates
      - \*Monday, November 23 @ 1:00 – 3:00
      - Monday, December 21 @ 1:30 – 3:00
    - 2021 Dates
      - Monday, January 25 @ 2:30 – 4:00
      - Monday, March 8 @ 2:30 – 4:00
      - Monday, April 26 @ 2:30 – 4:00
      - Wednesday, June 9 @ 2:30 – 4:00



## Structure

- NSWERS Management Council
  - Currently meeting weekly for 90-minute blocs
    - Additional meetings as needed
  - Beginning 2021 we will look to back off to bimonthly, as needed
  - Thank you!

## Structure

- Other Committees
  - Advisory Committee
    - Executives from other stakeholders to make recommendations to the Executive Council
    - Meet to review progress and provide input to emerging reports, research agenda, and processes associated with the management of NSWERS
      - The intent is to extend participation and visibility to a larger stakeholder community who are potential users of the NSWERS research or have interest in the initiative
    - Panel of candidates being developed by Management Council to align with strategic approach/plan
  - Be thinking of individuals you might want to have included on the NSWERS Advisory Committee
    - Remember, this is a committee designed to be Advisory to the Executive Council

## Structure

- Other Committees
  - Working Groups of the Management Council
    - Data & Technology Group
      - First meeting 11/20/20 to review NSWERS, POC, and related Data Collection document and plan
      - Will meet again 11/30/20 to review and discuss, primarily, the scope of postsecondary data submission
  - Research Review Board
    - Under development in conjunction with administrative policies for data sharing

# System

Processes used to add value.

## System

- Working to establishing standard administrative operations
  - Organizational responsibility matrix
    - Identify at a high-level the roles and responsibilities for:
      - Executive Council
      - Management Council
      - Executive Director
      - NSWERS Staff
  - Executive Council/NSWERS Board Policies
  - Standard Operating Procedures

## System

- Core system components for NSWERS:
  - Standard Data Collection
  - Data Warehouse Design
  - Research Agenda
  - Related necessary legal structures
- By design, create system informed by strategic approach and plan
  - Parallelism
    - Pilot system components by leveraging POC processes
    - Scale up to meet strategic goals, once codified

## System

- Data Sharing Policy and Procedures (DRAFT)
  - Three kinds of data that is stored and used by NSWERS:
    - (1) Highly Restricted-Use Data (Level 1),
    - Restricted-Use Data (Level 2), and
    - Public-Use Data (Level 3)
  - Highly Restricted-Use Data (Level 1)
    - Includes information about the identity of individuals and employers.
    - Strictly confidential and requires specific procedures to protect confidentiality per FERPA regulations and other state and federal requirements.
  - NSWERS uses this information only for record matching purposes.
    - This type of data is very rarely shared (and only under strict protocols) and is kept secure at all times.

## System

### ◦ Restricted-Use Data (Level 2)

- This is data that contains unit records (e.g., individual scores, enrollment and graduation information, etc.), but contains no direct identifiers.
- Though stripped of direct identifiers, this data is still considered potentially identifiable, since it may be possible for someone with direct knowledge of students to identify a student by making inferences (e.g., a person of known race, gender, age, college enrollment, and high school experience might be identifiable).
- Level 2 files are what NSWERS shares with partnering institutions and researchers for research purposes, and strict precautions are undertaken to ensure privacy and security.

## Systems

### ◦ Public-Use Data (Level 3)

- This is data that has been aggregated from Level 2 data, and which contain no unit record data. These forms of data are for public use and can be published.
- Even here, though, precautions are taken to protect individual identities.

### ◦ Additional Considerations:

- Role of the NSWERS Research Agenda in granting access
- Role of the Research Review Board in this process
- Redisclosure to partners entities vs. others
- Redisclosures of data from one NSWERS partner vs all partners

# Skills

The capabilities of our organization.

## Skills

- By design, acquire staff with the unique skills necessary to successfully execute on our strategic approach and plan
- Three-Tiered Priority Hires
  - Tier 1 -- finalizing for posting November/December 2020:
    - Database/ETL Development
    - IT/Web Applications Development
    - Communications
  - Tier 2:
    - Research
  - Tier 3:
    - Line staff

## Skills

- In the meantime, leverage contract support to fill gaps
  - Provide professional technical services related to POC development
- SOW for communications support
  - Working through the NSWERS Management Council to explore interest from NSWERS partners
  - Preliminary Communications Strategy – plan and develop a communications strategy designed to support the NSWERS Strategic Approach and the launch of an NSWERS early data product POC
  - Products and Services – create a package of products and services to advance the communications strategy above
  - Website Development – redesign and implement web content using the existing [www.nswers.org](http://www.nswers.org) website to accommodate POC

Thank you

## **Strategic Approach**

Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS)

November 23, 2020

## **Forward**

[insert text here]

Dr. Susan Fritz, President, NSWERS Executive Council

## **Executive Summary**

[insert text to describe purpose and how this document is designed]

## **Introduction & History**

The Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) has its roots in Legislative Bill 1071 enacted by the One Hundred First Legislature, Second Session, signed into law by Governor Heineman on April 14, 2010. This bill directed the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska State Board of Education, the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges, and the Board of Governors for each community college area to adopt a policy to share student data. The resulting Memorandum of Understanding established an agreement “to share student data for the purposes of evaluation of and research related to public prekindergarten, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education to improve education in Nebraska.” In the fall of 2019, these partners advanced this cooperation and completed the legal formation of the NSWERS as a joint public entity under the Nebraska Interlocal Cooperation Act for mutual advantage regarding data initiatives.

Additionally, the Nebraska Unicameral recently passed Legislative Bill 1160. Signed into law by Governor Ricketts on August 10, 2020, this bill – known as the Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Education Reporting System Act (2020) – supports the continued planning and development of the NSWERS, envisioned as a comprehensive, sustainable, and robust lifelong learning and workforce longitudinal data system serving the needs of the people of Nebraska. Further, the bill directs the Nebraska Department of Labor to execute a memorandum of understanding with NSWERS to ensure the exchange of available data from the Nebraska Department of Labor.

The NSWERS Executive Council is led by the Council President, Dr. Susan Fritz, Executive Vice President and Provost for the University of Nebraska. Additional members of the founding Executive Council for NSWERS include: Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education, Dr. Paul Turman, Chancellor of the Nebraska State Colleges System, and Dr. Paul Illich, President of Southeast Community College (representing all six Nebraska community college areas). While NSWERS has been in development for some time, the NSWERS Executive Council began meeting regularly throughout 2020 to formally operationalize NSWERS as an administrative entity.

On September 1, 2020, Dr. Matt Hastings was hired as founding Executive Director for NSWERS. He has begun efforts to establish core operational capacities, build a team of dedicated NSWERS staff, and create the procedural and technical structures necessary for the creation and maintenance of an NSWERS data system. Dr. Hastings works in cooperation with the NSWERS Management Council – the operational board of NSWERS – which includes representatives from the NSWERS partner entities, including Dr. Kristin Yates of the University of Nebraska, Dr. Dean Folkers of the Nebraska Department of Education, Dr. Jodi Kupper of the Nebraska State College System, and Dr. Leah Barrett of Northeast Community College (representing all six Nebraska community college areas).

## **Strategic Approach**

### *Legislative Direction, Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Organizational Scope & Goals*

[Add introductory text here]

#### **Legislative Direction**

From Legislative Bill 1160 (section 2, subsection 3):

The Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Education[al] Reporting System is envisioned as a comprehensive, sustainable, and robust lifelong learning and workforce longitudinal data system to allow for the targeting of resources, and focus data analysis on assessing workforce development and employment success in order to enable the training of tomorrow's workforce.

#### **Vision**

Create a data-informed decision culture capable of supporting actionable insights into pathways of learning and earning for the people of Nebraska.

#### **Mission**

Integrate and organize Nebraska's education and workforce data to create knowledge.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- Quality
- Excellence
- Collaboration
- Kaizen
- Integrity

#### **Organizational Scope**

- As a Data System: organize all elements and functions necessary for a comprehensive, sustainable, and robust lifelong learning and workforce longitudinal data system.
- As an Administrative Entity: manage all matters related to the creation, operation, security, maintenance, expansion and use of the NSWERS data system.

#### **Goals**

1. Establish NSWERS data system for sustainable insights
2. Evaluate the efficacy of Nebraska's education and training systems