



NEWS RELEASE

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STATE BOARD SELECTS NEXT PRIORITY SCHOOL

The State Board of Education has approved the designation of Schuyler Central High School in Schuyler, Nebraska as a priority school under Nebraska's Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT).

All of the state's 1,130 schools and 245 school districts are classified as either excellent, great, good, or needs improvement in AQuESTT based on current status, graduation rates, non-proficiency, and other factors.

In December of 2015 three schools from the 87 schools in the needs improvement category were designated as priority schools. The designation and support of three priority schools most in need of support to improve is a vital part of the AQuESTT system and required by Nebraska legislative bill 438. Those schools were Druid Hill Elementary School, Omaha Public Schools; Loup County Elementary School, Loup County Public Schools; and, Santee Middle School, Santee Community Schools.

In August 2017 the Nebraska State Board of Education voted to approve moving Druid Hill Elementary off of the list of the state's three priority schools after major improvements in attendance, test scores, and the overall culture of the school.

Schuyler Central High School was chosen for a number of reasons including its status as a demographically shifting community. In the last decade the population has changed from predominantly white to almost 90% hispanic. Several other communities and districts in the state are facing similar changes.

"If we can make a difference in Schuyler we can make a difference in all of our other demographically shifting communities," says Deputy Commissioner Deb Frison.

NDE looked at a number of other factors leading to the designation of Schuyler as a priority school including consistent decreases in assessment scores, little change in the percent of non-proficient students, and a 16% absenteeism rate.

As a priority school, Schuyler's staff will collaborate with a Support and Intervention Team to identify and guide school improvement efforts focused on the following key areas of school

effectiveness:

- School Leadership
- Educator Effectiveness
- Improvement of Instruction
- School Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Use of Data for Continuous Improvement

There has been significant improvement at the remaining two priority schools, Santee Middle School in Niobrara and Loup County Elementary in Taylor. They are moving forward with their progress plans and will continue to receive support from NDE by remaining on priority status.

Detailed information on the AQuESTT system is available at www.aquestt.com.

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