



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PRINCIPAL STANDARDS

*Approved by the Nebraska State Board of Education
for Public Comment, May 5, 2011*

Introduction to the Principal Standards

State educational policymakers across the nation are embracing educator effectiveness reforms as one of the keys to improving teaching and learning. These reforms should be predicated on clear standards that define effective practice for teachers and principals.

In January 2011, the Nebraska State Board of Education authorized the drafting of possible performance standards for teachers and principals. This process began with the formation of a 41 member committee drawn from thirteen of the state's educational stakeholder groups representing teachers, principals, higher education representatives, school board members, and parents. The purpose of this committee was to prepare a set of draft standards for consideration by the State Board.

The committee determined that the purpose of the Nebraska Standards is to define effective practice in order to improve teaching and learning. Therefore the draft standards address the roles of teachers and principals, defined as those educators whose primary task is working directly with students in a school setting. Local districts may wish to create standards for educational specialists not covered by the Teacher and Principal Standards.

Following the structure of Nebraska's curriculum standards, the draft Teacher and Principal Standards are organized into two elements: a broad standards statement followed by several example indicators. The indicators are designed to be examples of effective practice that clarify and develop the standards; they are not an exhaustive list and can be enhanced by local districts as they use the standards.

The committee's development of standards and indicators was informed by the profession's national standards. For teachers, these include the 2010 Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards and the Framework for Teaching developed by Charlotte Danielson. For principals, these include the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 policy standards. In addition, standards developed by other states served as a valuable resource.

The standards are designed to encompass a broad range of effective practice that characterizes our state's best teachers and principals. Three vital themes recur throughout both sets of standards rather than being contained in single statements. These include the appropriate use of technology for students living in an online world, cultural competence and a respect for diversity in our increasingly multicultural state, and a commitment to teacher and principal accountability for the growth and maintenance of high levels of student achievement.

The draft standards are being considered by the State Board of Education with the intent that they be viewed not as a state mandate, but rather as a useful resource which provides a framework of effective practice to voluntarily guide local districts, institutions of higher education, and state and local policymakers as we strive together to ensure Nebraska's continuing commitment to improve educational achievement for all of our children. The State Board reaffirms its fundamental view that curriculum and instruction are best left to individual districts, and that the Nebraska Department of Education should serve as a resource for districts in that regard.

Nebraska Principal Standards Draft

Standard 1: Vision for Learning - The Principal establishes and communicates a vision for teaching and learning that results in improved student performance.

Example Indicators: The Principal

- Uses varied sources of information and analyzes data about current practices and outcomes to shape the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Engages constituent groups within the school community to develop commitment to the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Aligns the school's vision, mission, and goals to district, state, and federal policies.
- Communicates the vision in order to establish high expectations for student performance.
- Reviews the vision, mission, and goals systematically and revises as appropriate.

Standard 2: Continuous School Improvement - The Principal leads a continuous school improvement process that results in improved student performance and school effectiveness.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Develops and implements, in collaboration with the school community, a strategic school improvement plan that is aligned with district, state, and federal guidelines and goals.
- Maintains comprehensive and current information about students, academic achievement, school effectiveness, and the school community.
- Makes informed decisions based on student achievement data, research, and best practices to improve teaching and learning.
- Uses technology to increase school efficiency and effectiveness.
- Revises the school improvement plan based on a systematic review of progress toward its goals.
- Uses the continuous improvement plan to guide professional development within the school community.

Standard 3: Instructional Leadership - The Principal provides leadership to ensure the implementation of a rigorous curriculum, the use of effective teaching practices, and accountability for results.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Promotes teaching practices based on sound pedagogy, professional collaboration, and instructional interventions designed to meet the learning needs of all students.
- Ensures that the instructional program is aligned with content standards, includes effective instructional and assessment practices, and protects instructional time to maximize learning.
- Supports instructional content that reflects the perspectives of a diverse society.
- Uses data from multiple assessments of student performance to evaluate the curriculum and instructional program.
- Assumes responsibility for the continued improvement of student learning within the school and holds staff accountable for the growth of student achievement within their assigned areas.

Standard 4: Culture for Learning - The Principal creates a school culture that enhances the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of all students.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Provides full and equitable access to educational programs, curricular, and extra-curricular opportunities that address the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.
- Develops a culture of high expectations for self, students, and staff.
- Fosters an environment of respect and rapport based on clear guidelines for appropriate behavior.
- Uses multiple indicators of student success to encourage the development of the whole child in a manner consistent with academic achievement.
- Identifies barriers to student learning and development and devises strategies to reduce or eliminate them.
- Engages in the activities of the school, recognizes the accomplishments of students and staff, and maintains a high level of visibility within the school community.
- Leads the assessment and continuous improvement of the school climate and culture.

Standard 5: Systems Management - The Principal manages the organization, operations, and resources of the school to provide a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment for all students and staff.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Allocates financial, material, and human resources to support the educational program.
- Monitors the school's site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe and orderly environment.
- Identifies and resolves problems, manages conflict, and builds consensus to achieve the efficient operation of the school.
- Communicates with community agencies to provide a safe school environment.
- Develops procedures for the effective use of technology among staff, students, and the school community.
- Understands school law and its impact on staff, students, and families, and complies with local, state, and federal mandates.
- Guides and influences policymakers as they develop regulations, policies, and laws that impact the school.

Standard 6: Staff Leadership - The Principal uses effective practices to select, develop, support, and lead high quality teachers and other staff.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Recruits, hires, develops, and retains high quality professional and support staff to realize the school's vision.
- Develops and supports an effective learning environment for teachers and other staff.
- Mentors emerging staff leaders in order to build leadership capacity within the school community.
- Supervises the school's staff members and holds them accountable for results based on high expectations and professional standards.
- Implements a performance evaluation system and a professional development program for teachers and instructional support staff based on a common instructional language and effective teaching practices.
- Models continuous learning and provides professional development opportunities for all staff.

Standard 7: Developing Relationships - The Principal promotes and supports productive relationships with students, staff, families, and the community.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Builds professional relationships that support the school and its vision.
- Uses the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources to strengthen the school community.
- Encourages active family and community participation in the learning process in order to enhance student achievement.
- Solicits information from families and community members to strengthen the educational program.
- Uses effective public information strategies.
- Creates strategic partnerships with business, religious, political, and other community leaders in order to carry out the school's mission.
- Develops an understanding of diversity among staff and students to create an appreciation of a global society.

Standard 8: Professional Ethics and Advocacy - The Principal advocates for policies of equity and excellence in support of the vision of the school, and acts with fairness, integrity, and a high level of professional ethics.

Example Indicators: The Principal:

- Responds to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural influences affecting the school.
- Advocates for public policies that ensure appropriate and equitable resources for the education system.
- Protects the established rights and confidentiality of students and staff.
- Models and articulates reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior in accordance with established standards.
- Holds others in the school community accountable for demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior.
- Treats others with dignity and respect.
- Seeks to make decisions that are just, fair, and equitable.

Nebraska Teacher/Principal Standards Stakeholders Group

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