



NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email (david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)

OCTOBER 9, 2019

NEBRASKA PLACES EMPHASIS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT, CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AMONG STUDENT GROUPS

Accountability results released today include a new level of support for Nebraska schools and districts focused on equity. The Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) designation allows the state to focus resources and support in schools that need it most.

Beginning this year, TSI was introduced in those schools with consistently underperforming student groups. Those 10 student groups are: Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Alaskan, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, two or more races, Asian, White, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged.

TSI designation looks across several indicators including graduation rate, chronic absenteeism, growth, and proficiency, to reveal potential opportunity gaps and provide resources to address those gaps. There were 364 schools designated as TSI this year.

"We are committed to ensuring the equitable distribution of learning opportunities to each and every student in Nebraska," said Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education. "Our accountability results illustrate that not every student group is performing at their highest level. It is our role to give all students the resources they need to succeed and to move all students toward excellence."

Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow, or AQuESTT, helps to ensure all students across backgrounds and circumstances have access and opportunities for success. AQuESTT annually classifies schools and districts as Excellent, Great, Good, or Needs Improvement.

A breakdown of preliminary classification indicated that 129 (12 percent) of schools were classified as Excellent, 468 (42 percent) were Great, 370 (33 percent) were Good, and 139 (13 percent) were designated as Needs Improvement.

AQuESTT values growth, improvement, and best practices. Eighty-four schools are eligible for an Evidence-based Analysis review which may result in an upward adjustment to their AQuESTT classification. The EBA is a survey used to determine practices, policies, and procedures in place aligned to the six AQuESTT tenets of Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success; Transitions; Educational Opportunities and Access; College, Career, and Civic Readiness; Assessment; and Educator Effectiveness. To be eligible for an EBA review, schools must have one of the top total EBA scores in their classification level. All eligible schools may submit evidence to a panel for review and determination.

Schools can also receive credit for growth and improvement within the tenets. Ten percent, or 110 schools, received credit for chronic absenteeism reduction or progress towards English learner proficiency in the Educational Opportunities and Access tenet.

Nebraska provides support in different ways to better target funds and resources to schools that need to improve. Four schools in the Needs Improvement classification have been designated as priority schools and have received professional development, coaching, and new instructional materials. Those schools are Schuyler Central High School in Schuyler and Santee Elementary, Middle, and High School in Niobrara.

In addition to priority school support, 27 schools were named Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) in 2018. Schools with this designation are performing in the lowest five percent of Title I schools or have a graduation rate of 67 percent or below and will continue to receive support from the state.

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

The classification of schools and districts as well as support designations are available at: nep.education.ne.gov.

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David Jespersen
Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education
402-471-4537
david.jespersen@nebraska.gov
@NDE_News