External Team Visit:
A Support Guide
for Host Schools
and
External Team Leaders

The Nebraska Framework

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PURPOSE OF AN EXTERNAL TEAM VISIT

The overall purpose of an external team visit is to assist the host school in selecting or fulfilling continuous improvement goals and plans by adding an outside, objective view of the continuous improvement procedures of the school. There is a degree of validation of the work of local committees, but the primary purpose is to enlist the professional advice of colleagues from outside the district. The relationship is therefore collegial, not supervisory nor evaluative. It should result in an increased depth of understanding for moving forward to achieve school improvement goals.

> *Rule 10, Section 009.01B: The school improvement process includes a visitation by a team of external representatives to review progress and provide written recommendations. A copy of the written recommendations is provided to the Department. The external team visits are conducted at least once each five years.*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST SCHOOL STAFF

Planning for the External Team Visit

Step 1: Determine the Purpose for the Visit

The minimum requirement, as specified in Nebraska Accreditation requirements, is one visit each five-years, but schools may request a team visit whenever one would be considered helpful. The steering committee should, therefore, include the external visit dates on the long-range timeline and determine well in advance the intended purpose for each visit.

Team visits typically occur after an action plan has been developed, and again after two-three years of implementation of an action plan. These visits can serve a number of purposes. One purpose may be to review action plan drafts to affirm plans and offer suggestions for implementation. Another purpose may be to recognize progress as visitors verify that goals have been reached and that the process has been successful. By confirming success and congratulating local committees for a job well done, the external team can help energize school staff in the next phases. When the effort has not achieved the planned results, the external team can be helpful in analyzing the process and recommending corrective action for the next improvement plan.

Step 2: Confer With the External Team Leader

The appointed external team leader and the school should be in contact to discuss preliminary information about the school's plans, the timeline (particularly the anticipated dates for external visits), and names of contact persons. Telephone, e-mail, or correspondence all work well for this exchange, but it is also beneficial for the leader to visit the school prior to the first team visit.

The external team leader and host school representative should discuss and jointly plan the visit. This would include the following topics:

1. Purpose of the visit. It is essential that the host school staff have a clear purpose for team visits and that the purpose be communicated to the external leader.

2. Composition of the visiting team (how many people, what is their purpose, what qualifications do they need)

3. Agenda for the visit

4. Logistical and material needs for the team

Step 3: Select and Invite External Team Members (Host School and External Leader)

The external team leader is approved by the Nebraska Department of Education, and team members are selected by the host school in collaboration with the external team leader. The size of the team is determined largely by the number of goals to be reviewed and by the number of school buildings in the district. As a minimum, the team must include two members other than the external team leader. At least one member should be assigned to each goal; optimally, two members will be assigned to a goal. For multi-building districts, larger teams may be needed.

Team members are usually chosen on the basis of their expertise; therefore, host schools should select team members who can be objective in reviewing improvement plans. For example, previous staff members or relatives of current staff members are not appropriate choices. Once the team is agreed upon, the host district should issue invitations.

Step 4: Plan the Agenda for the Team Visit (Host School and External Leader)

The agenda for each visit is a joint responsibility of the host school and the external team leader. A number of factors enter the planning stage, including the purpose of the visit, the number of buildings in the system, and whether this is the initial visit or a follow-up. One of the strengths of the continuous improvement model is the collegial relationship that can and should develop among the local staff and their visitors. A one to two day visit is recommended to afford team members the time needed to develop those relationships.

A number of variations are possible. Two full days (or more) will probably be necessary if several buildings must be visited. The visit can begin with a half-day visit starting after lunch. Team orientation and host presentation can take up much of the afternoon. An optional reception and/or dinner may be provided for visitors and hosts to become acquainted.

The agenda should include time for presentations by host school staff, committee or focus group discussions, and meetings with representative staff members throughout the school. The external team will also need sufficient time, as determined by the external team leader, to meet privately to develop the written and oral reports. (An example agenda is found in Appendix A.)

Step 5: Provide Information to the External Team Prior to the Visit

If the external team is to accomplish its purpose, the host school must provide information the external team needs. The external team leader and host school should confer about and agree upon advance materials to be sent to all external team members. The advance communication should include the following:

1. A letter of invitation from the host school, sent five to six weeks in advance, specifying dates, times, purpose of the visit, intended assignment, and other needed details.

2. A mailing at least two weeks in advance of the visit that includes a copy of the action plan and any other summary material to assist external team members in preparing for the visit. This should include the following items, as appropriate:

   ___ Agenda for the visitation day(s)

   ___ Summary of school profile

   ___ School mission

   ___ Improvement goals

   ___ Draft of an action plan that includes

       ___ Strategies selected to support the improvement goals

       ___ Related staff development plans

Step 6: Prepare for an Opening Presentation by the Host School to the External Team

The steering committee or other representatives of the host school must orally present information about local continuous improvement planning to the external team. A time for this presentation should be included early in the agenda. This orientation should include the following:

1. A brief history of the improvement process and a description of the committee structure

2. A description of the school profile, including the methods by which it was developed, along with the decisions that grew from collected data

3. An explanation of how goals are related to profile data and how the school staff members plan to measure improvement

4. If the external team is to review the action plan, an explanation of how and why strategies were selected as well as how success is to be measured

5. Staff development activities and plans connected with the continuous improvement process

Some of this information may be included in a written report and sent to the team in advance, but it must also be presented orally so the external team members can gain a deeper understanding and have an opportunity to ask questions about the progress.

Step 7: Arrange for Logistical Matters

Careful attention to visitation logistics will assist the external team in effectively and efficiently carrying out their responsibilities. This should include the following:

1. A room for the external team to meet and carry on discussions in privacy throughout the span of the visit. (Provision of computers is a helpful option.)

2. Specified and scheduled locations for subcommittee or focus group meetings.

3. Work materials and name tags for external team (also name tags for host school staff).

4. Expense reimbursement procedures and forms. (The host district is responsible to reimburse—at rates established by the local board of education—meals, mileage, and lodging expenses of external team members.)

5. It may also be advisable to arrange for procedures to follow in the event weather or other circumstances force a postponement of the visit (calling list, radio stations, etc.).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXTERNAL TEAM LEADER
Preparing for and Conducting the Visit

The NDE Accreditation and School Improvement Section appoints the external team leader based upon input from the schools. It is highly recommended that individuals interested in serving as an external team leader have attended or plan to attend an NDE Continuous School Improvement workshop prior to the visit. While the work of the external team leader is essential, the list of responsibilities is quite short. External team leaders are expected to carry out the following:

- Advise the host school in making preparations for the visit

- Lead the external team visits

- Prepare and send a copy of the written report to the school and to the Accreditation and School Improvement Section, NDE

Sometimes external team leaders are also asked by their host districts to serve as advisors throughout the process. While such arrangements may be helpful to the district and while external team leaders may volunteer to provide such assistance, it is neither a required nor expected part of the responsibilities that one accepts with the external team leader assignment. A checklist (see Appendix B) for team chairs is available on the Accreditation and School Improvement web site: www.education.ne.gov/APAC. Under the topic "School Improvement," links can be found to this checklist and other resources.

Step 1: Duties Prior to the Visit

Advance communication between the external team leader and host school representatives should initiate positive experiences working together and help develop a common understanding of expectations for the visit. It is important to communicate with the host school administrator and/or steering committee chair to confer regarding purpose, plans, and details for the visit. (See Step 2 on page 1.) Sometimes external team leaders also find it helpful and informative to meet with the steering committee on site in advance of the visit.

Step 2: Duties During the Visit

General Duties. During the visit, the external team leader orients, guides and supports the team in carrying out the purposes of the visit. The agenda (see example in Appendix A) should be implemented to help the external team prepare a report of findings and recommendations for the host school. In general, the external team leader should carry out the following overall duties:

- Help all external team members understand the purpose of the visit and their individual roles.

- Organize and facilitate the visit agenda, discussion, and report preparation in order to provide a quality report that will help the school accomplish continuous improvement purposes and goals.

- Assist external team members in preparing oral and written reports.

Specific Duties. The following provides specific suggestions for chairing the visitation day(s):

A. **Conduct an Orientation Meeting.** (A template is available on the Accreditation and School Improvement web site: www.education.ne.gov/APAC. Under the topic "School Improvement," links can be found to this PowerPoint and other resources.) The Orientation Meeting is a time to accomplish the following:

- Provide appropriate background information about the continuous improvement process and the role of the external team as a whole.

- Assist all external team members in understanding the purpose for the visit and the role of each person.

- Review the agenda for the visit to assure that external team members follow the plan and purpose for the day(s).

- Distribute an outline for the written report and provide directions for completing the report. (See example in Appendix C.)

- If appropriate, distribute the Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric and discuss how it may be used to fulfill the purpose for the visit. If this rubric is used, be sure that the host school staff has also used the rubric in their school improvement discussions prior to the team visit. (See rubric in Appendix D.)

B. **Participate in Small Group Meetings or Focus Group Sections**. It is usually helpful for external team members or subcommittees to discuss accomplishments and plans with local subcommittees, particularly goal committees or focus groups.   Such meetings will enable external team members to develop a fuller understanding of the area to which they have been assigned and will assist them in writing their section of the team report. The external team leader should participate in such meetings as the schedule allows.

C. **Visit in the School**. A school building visit is important in contributing to a useful team report. The external team should be assigned to visit specific buildings, staff members, areas, or functions. This will provide supportive details and additional insight to the school improvement process.

D. **Conduct External Team Meetings.** This is time for the external team to review findings and to discuss and agree upon successes and recommendations to be included in the external team report. This time should be scheduled near the end of the visitation and should be facilitated by the external team leader. It is recommended that each external team member or subcommittee present their preliminary findings to the entire team and that main points be displayed in print (chart paper or electronically) for external team members to see and discuss. This should promote alignment and consistency in the various sections of the report.

E. **Coordinate and Present an Oral Exit Report**. At the conclusion of the visit, the external team leader will coordinate the oral exit report. It may be presented by the external team as a whole or by representatives of the team. The exit report should be presented to the steering committee and administration but is frequently open to anyone interested in hearing it, including faculty, school board, and community members. The oral report is a summary of the external team's impressions, concerns, and recommendations. This should include general commentary about the improvement process, recognition of accomplishments, and recommendations for continued implementation of the improvement plan or process. (An "Oral Exit Report" Powerpoint template is available: www.education.ne.gov/APAC, click on "School Improvement.")

Step 3: Duties After the Visit – Preparing the External Team Report

The external team leader is responsible for editing and preparing the final copy of the report and for forwarding one copy to the host school and one copy to the Accreditation and School Improvement Section, Nebraska Department of Education (see template in Appendix C). Note: External team leaders to schools accredited by the North Central Association should follow reporting procedures established by NCA/AdvancED.

A. **Format for the Report**

A template for the full report is in Appendix C. As editor, the external team leader should proofread team members' contributions to correct for "typos" and mechanical and grammatical errors and also to make such changes as the leader believes will improve the report's cohesion and logical flow. The primary concern is to produce a report that is clear, accurate, and useful to the school.

B. Submitting the Report to the School and NDE

A final report should be sent to the host school within three weeks of the conclusion of the visit.

A copy of the final report should be sent to NDE for documentation purposes. This copy may be emailed to: NDE.Accreditation@nebraska.gov or mailed to:

Nebraska Department of Education
Accreditation and School Improvement
301 Centennial Mall South
Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

APPENDICES

A. Sample Agenda for an External Visit

B. Planning and Conducting the Visit Checklist

C. Outline and Contents for External Team Visitation Report

D. Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric

The external team leader and host school representative(s) should plan for the following components in the agenda. The exact schedule will vary dependent upon the purpose for the visit. See sample below:

Sample Agenda for the External Team Visit

Day 1:

8:30-8:45 a.m.   **Arrival of External Team Members**
Welcome by host school representative, refreshments, pick up materials, greetings, etc.

8:45-9:30 a.m.   **External Team Orientation**
The external team leader discusses the purpose and procedures for the visit, especially emphasizing the external team role as consultants in helping the school achieve success in the CIP, and provides a format for the written report. (If the external leader wishes the external team to use the *Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric* as a device to frame their inquiry and remarks, it should be introduced at this time.)

9:30-10:30 a.m.   **Host School Presentation** (More time may be needed for this session)
This is a relatively formal presentation by the steering committee and others that includes a chronology of the CIP, committee structures, an overview of data-gathering procedures and instruments, decisions, goal overviews, strategies, issues, questions, etc.

10:45-Noon   **Small Group Meetings**
Host school committees such as goal committees and others meet with external team members to present and to discuss details of the local improvement plan.

Noon   **Lunch**

1:00-3:00 p.m.   **Interviews**
Visit the school building and interview representative staff. Some teachers not included in the CIP committee structure should be contacted so the external team may gauge the degree of involvement, understanding, and participation in the improvement process.

3:00-4:00 p.m.   **External Team Meeting**
The external team should compare notes and impressions, identify areas for further review or inquiry, and discuss how to handle any problematical matters that have arisen in their meetings with staff members. This would be an appropriate time to review the *Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric* or to use it to frame part of the discussion.

Sample Agenda for the External Team Visit. . .continued

Day 2

8:30-10:30 a.m.	**Interviews, Report Drafting**

The external team follows up on matters discussed at the conclusion of day 1 or begins drafting the written report. If more than one external team member is to draft a section, it is critical that they have time to plan the report.

10:30-Noon   **External Team Meeting**

The external team meets to review and concur on the major content of the visit report. This is a sharing and strategy session during which individual external team members outline orally or on chart paper what they intend to include in their sections of the report as recommendations to strengthen the SIP or move to next steps. In addition, the external team leader should determine who will participate in presenting the oral exit report and provide a due date for submitting the written report.

The final report is due back to the school and to NDE within **three weeks** of the visit, so a one-week deadline is appropriate for external team members to have their reports to the external team leader. If the written remarks are not received by the deadline set by the external team leader, identify which external team member should be contacted.

NOTE: Before adjourning the external team, the leader should determine that expense vouchers (if any) have been turned in appropriately.

Noon   **Lunch and Oral Exit Report**

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THE VISIT
THE NEBRASKA FRAMEWORK: A CHECKLIST FOR EXTERNAL TEAM LEADERS

The *External Team Visit: A Support Guide for Host Schools and External Team Leaders* may be accessed at: http://www.education.ne.gov/APAC/SchoolImprovement.html. (Page numbers and appendices referenced in this checklist are found in that document.)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXTERNAL TEAM LEADER (page 6)

1. Advise the host school in making preparations for the visit
2. Lead the external team visits
3. Prepare and send a copy of the written report to the school and to the Nebraska Department of Education

Step 1: Duties Prior to the Visit (pages 6 and 1-3)

A. Confer with host school to discuss the following preliminary information:
☐ Timeline (the anticipated dates for the external visit)
☐ Name(s) of host school's contact person(s)
☐ Date to meet with the host school's team prior to the visit (optional)

B. Confer with host school to discuss and plan the following concerning the visit:
☐ Purpose of the visit
☐ Composition and selection of the external team
☐ Agenda (Appendix A) for the visit including:
   ☐ Arrival
   ☐ External Team Orientation
   ☐ Host School Presentation
   ☐ Small Group Meetings
   ☐ Visits in the School(s)
   ☐ Interviews
   ☐ External Team Meeting(s)
   ☐ Report Writing
   ☐ Oral Exit Report
☐ Letter of invitation sent to external team members in advance (at least five to six weeks) of the visit. The letter includes dates, times, purpose of the visit, intended assignment, and other details.
☐ Information provided to the external team at least two weeks prior to the visit including:
   ☐ Agenda
   ☐ Summary of school profile
   ☐ School mission
   ☐ Improvement goals
   ☐ Action Plans including improvement goal strategies and staff development plans

☐ Procedures to follow if the visit is to be postponed
☐ Other materials or information as agreed upon by the host school and external team leader

☐ Logistical and material needs for the external team:
  ☐ Private meeting room available throughout the span of the visit including access to computers
  ☐ Schedule of times and locations for meeting with small groups
  ☐ Work materials and name tags for external team and host school staff
  ☐ Expense reimbursement procedures and forms

☐ Download the Orientation and Oral Exit Report PowerPoint presentations. Populate them with information concerning the external visit. (Optional)

Step 2: Duties During the Visit (pages 7-8)

A. Conduct an Orientation Meeting. This is a time to accomplish the following:
  ☐ Provide appropriate background information about the school improvement process and the role of the external team
  ☐ Assist all external team members in understanding the purpose for the visit and their role (Make or alter team assignments at this time)
  ☐ Review and make adjustments to the agenda for the visit
  ☐ Distribute an outline for the written report (Appendix C) and provide directions for completing the report and establish responsibilities for preparing each section
  ☐ If appropriate, distribute the Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric (Appendix D) and discuss how it may be used to fulfill the purpose for the visit
  ☐ Attend, with external team, the host school presentation
  ☐ Use the Orientation PowerPoint to guide the orientation (Optional)

B. Participate in Small Group Meetings or Focus Group Sections
  ☐ Discuss accomplishments and plans with subcommittees, goal committees and/or focus groups
  ☐ Participate in such meetings as the schedule allows

C. Visit in the School
  ☐ Follow-up with the external team in their assignments to visit specific buildings, staff members, areas, or functions. Answer questions concerning the assignments including the schedule and locations.

D. Conduct External Team Meetings
  ☐ Schedule this meeting near the end of the visit
  ☐ Facilitate the external team reviews and findings
  ☐ Discuss and agree upon successes and recommendations to be included in the report
  ☐ Identify team members who will be responsible for sending you the written report sections (if not completed during the visit)

E. Coordinate and Present an Oral Exit Report
- ☐ At the conclusion of the visit, coordinate the oral exit report
- ☐ Decide who will present the oral exit report
- ☐ Check the oral exit report to make sure that it is a summary of the external team's impressions, concerns, and recommendations
- ☐ Include general commentary about the improvement process, recognition of accomplishments, and recommendations for continued implementation of the improvement plan or process
- ☐ Present the oral exit report to the steering committee, administration, and anyone interested such as faculty, school board, and community members
- ☐ Use the Exit Report PowerPoint to guide the exit report. (Optional)

Step 3: Duties After the Visit – Preparing the External Team Report (pages 8-9)

A. Format for the Report
- ☐ A template for the full report is available in Appendix C
- ☐ Correct for "typos," mechanical, and grammatical errors
- ☐ Check report for clarity, accuracy, and usefulness to the school

B. Submitting the Report to the School and NDE
- ☐ A final report should be sent to the host school within three weeks of the conclusion of the visit.
- ☐ A copy of the final report should be sent to NDE for documentation purposes. This copy may be emailed to: NDE Accreditation@nebraska.gov or mailed to:

> Nebraska Department of Education
> Accreditation and School Improvement
> 301 Centennial Mall South
> Box 94987
> Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

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│              OUTLINE AND CONTENTS               │
│     FOR THE EXTERNAL TEAM VISITATION REPORT     │
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(Template available at: **http://www.education.ne.gov/APAC/SchoolImprovement.html**)

Each report should contain the following:

A. **Title Page** (school name, date of visit)

B. **Table of Contents**

C. **External Visitation Team** (names, positions, schools or agencies)

D. **Onsite Review Agenda**

E. **Introductory Comments** (including: purpose of the visit; description of visitation process; background information; additional remarks)

F. **Overview of Improvement Process.** This section of the report should assist the steering committee in continued leadership of the school's continuous improvement process.

   I. **Description of the Continuous Improvement Process:** (team membership, timelines, summary of activities, and for public schools, a description of how multicultural education is incorporated into the process.)

   II. **Commendations** (successful activities, procedures and accomplishments in the overall progress of the school improvement process)

   III. **Recommendations** (next steps in the overall school improvement process)

G. **School Improvement Goals** (a list of the goals identified by the host district)

H. **Report for Each Goal and Action Plan.** Each goal/action plan should be addressed separately by the member(s) of the external team assigned to that goal. The external team report should include separate sections that correspond with each school improvement goal, and each report should include the following:

   I. **State the Goal**

   II. **Comments about the student performance goal.** This section should include comments about goals, assessments, interventions/strategies, and/or staff development.

   III. **Successful activities or strategies.** This section should affirm for the host school those activities that have been successfully accomplished or hold promise for success.

   IV. **Recommendations for next steps.** This section provides advice and suggestions for consideration by the local district staff.

Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric

The Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Rubric** is based upon the following seven standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

By examining the individual components of the educational system that the standards describe, the school develops a comprehensive look at themselves as a whole.

These seven standards may be used to guide the continuous improvement process. The completion of this rubric by individual stakeholders or district-wide participants will generate rich and formative discussion about the school's continuous improvement process.

Using the rating scale of "Not Evident," "Emerging," "Operational," and "Highly Functional" for each standard provides the school with a baseline in which to assess their progress. A "Highly Functional" rating in all standards should be the school's goal.

It is an option for the external visitation team to complete this rubric as part of the visit and provide their ratings and insights for comparison to the school's ratings.

**As adapted from NSSE – National Study of School Evaluation Research April 2010

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RUBRIC

STANDARD	NOT EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL
VISION AND PURPOSE ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• Stakeholders (students, staff, parents and community) are not collaborating in the development, communication, and support of the vision and purpose. • The school district has little or no evidence that expectations for student learning are aligned with the school district's vision with little support by school district personnel and external stakeholders. • Expectations for all students learning do not serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school district effectiveness. • The school district's vision has little influence on allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.	• Stakeholders (students, staff, parents and community) are beginning to collaborate in the development, communication, and support of the vision and purpose. • The school district has begun the process of engaging its stakeholders to commit to a shared purpose and direction. • The school district is developing expectations for student learning aligned with the school district's vision that is supported by school district personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations will serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school district effectiveness but the process is not fully in place. • The school district's vision has some influence on allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.	• Stakeholders (students, staff, parents and community) are collaborating in the development, communication, and support of the vision and purpose. • The school district has committed to a shared purpose and direction. • The school district has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school district's vision that is supported by school district personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school district effectiveness. • The school district's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.	• Stakeholders (students, staff, parent and community) are highly engaged in the development, communication, and support of the vision and purpose. • The school district has achieved a wide commitment by all groups of stakeholders to a shared purpose and direction. • The school district has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school district's vision that is fully supported by school district personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school district effectiveness. • The school district's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.
GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• The school district has leaders who have not established or are currently establishing processes to develop the school district's vision and improvement efforts. • The leaders' process of allocating resources provides little support to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. • Leaders do not encourage or promote collaboration and shared responsibility for school district improvement among stakeholders. • The school district's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions have little influence and impact on equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.	• The school district has leaders who have established processes to develop the school district's vision and improvement efforts. • The leaders allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. • Leaders allow collaboration and shared responsibility for school district improvement among stakeholders. • The school district's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions attempt to create equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation, but implementation of these processes and conditions is sporadic, and results are varied.	• The school district has leaders who are advocates for the school district's vision and improvement efforts. • The leaders provide direction and systematically allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. • Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school district improvement among stakeholders. • The school district's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation. • While these processes and conditions are being implemented, the implementation is not systemic across the school district, and the results are varied.	• The leaders provide stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership that facilitates exemplary performance from all staff and students. • The school district has leaders who are advocates for the school district's vision and improvement efforts. • The leaders provide direction, lend support, and systematically allocate resources for systemic and sustainable implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. • Leaders ensure collaboration and shared responsibility for school district improvement among stakeholders with clearly defined expectations for each stakeholder group. • The school district's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation and are deeply embedded in the way the school district functions.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RUBRIC

TEACHING AND LEARNING ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• The school district implements a curriculum based on expectations for all students learning that has not been fully aligned with the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. • The school district demonstrates little or no evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices. • Teachers use instructional practices that reflect little engagement of all students in the learning process. • Teachers provide few opportunities for all students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. • Teachers give all students limited feedback to improve their performance.	• The school district implements a curriculum based on expectations for all students learning that provides opportunities for most students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. • The school district demonstrates some evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices, but implementation is not systematic across the school district. • Teachers use instructional practices that actively engage all students in the learning process. • Teachers provide limited opportunities for all students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. • Teachers give all students random or periodic feedback to improve their performance.	• Curriculum is aligned and articulated with Nebraska or locally approved standards at all grade levels. • The school district aligns and implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. • The school district demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the school district. • Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage all students in the learning process. • Teachers provide frequent opportunities for all students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. • Teachers give all students regular feedback to improve their performance.	• Curriculum is aligned and articulated with Nebraska or locally approved standards at all grade levels. • The school district aligns and implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning in all content areas that provides multiple opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. • The school district has a formalized process to align instructional practices with the curriculum and demonstrates results through systemic and sustainable implementation across the school district. • Teachers use proven, research-based, instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process and encourage all students to take ownership of their learning. • Teachers consistently provide opportunities for all students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. • Teachers give all students frequent feedback using a variety of methods to improve their performance.
DOCUMENTING AND USING RESULTS ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• The school district is currently using assessments that are not aligned with student expectations or has no balanced assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. • There is limited capability to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. • The assessments do not yield timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school district leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school district effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for individual students and all groups of students.	• The school district is currently using assessments that have limited alignment with student expectations and/or is developing a balanced assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures and plans to administer the assessments in the near future. • The assessment system has some ability to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. • The assessment system will yield some timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school district leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school district effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for all individual students and all groups of students.	• The school district uses a balanced assessment system which includes national, state, and local assessments, based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. • The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. • The assessment system includes comparison and trend data through summative and formative processes, yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school district leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school district effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for all individual students and all groups of students.	• The school district uses a balanced assessment system which includes national, state, and local assessments, based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results, including multiple measures of individual student achievement that assess higher order thinking skills and are of adequate technical quality. • The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, design and improve instructional strategies and practices, and determine interventions to improve and enhance student performance. • The assessment system which includes comparison and trend data (e.g. national, state, and local summative and formative processes)yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school district leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school district effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for individual students and all groups of students.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RUBRIC

RESOURCE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• The school district allocates minimal human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. • The school district does not systematically employ and allocate staff members who are qualified for their assignments. • The school district provides limited learning opportunities for staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. • There is little or no evidence that the school district integrates resources and support systems and to achieve common goals.	• The school district allocates limited human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. • The school district generally employs and allocates staff members who are qualified for their assignments. • The school district provides learning opportunities for most staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. • There is some evidence that the school district integrates resources and support systems to achieve common goals.	• The school district allocates human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. • The school district systematically employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. • The school district provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. • There is evidence that the school district integrates resources and support systems to achieve common goals.	• The school district allocates human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve and exceed expectations for student learning, to meet special needs of all students, and to comply with applicable regulations. • The school district systematically employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments in all content areas. • The school district provides and fully supports ongoing, job-embedded learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. • There is evidence that the school district fully integrates resources and support systems to achieve common goals.
STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• The school district has little communication with, commitment to, and support of stakeholders. • School district personnel seek few opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts. • The school district demonstrates little or no participation by stakeholder groups.	• The school district has begun the process to gain the understanding of, commitment to, and support of stakeholders. • School district personnel are seeking opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts. • The school district can demonstrate some participation by stakeholder groups.	• The school district has the understanding of, commitment to, and support of stakeholders. • School district personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts. • The school district can demonstrate active participation by some stakeholder groups.	• The school district has the understanding of, commitment to, and support of all stakeholders. • School district personnel actively promote and provide regular, systematic opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among all stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts. • The school district can demonstrate a high level of meaningful participation by stakeholder groups.
COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ☐ Not Evident ☐ Emerging ☐ Operational ☐ Highly Functional	• The school district has not developed a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school district with the expectations for student learning. • The school district cannot demonstrate progress in improving student performance and school district effectiveness. • New improvement efforts are not informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.	• The school district is developing a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school district with the expectations for student learning. • Improvement efforts are being developed, but the school district cannot yet demonstrate progress in improving student performance and school district effectiveness. • New improvement efforts are somewhat informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.	• The school district implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most functions of the school district with the expectations for student learning. • Improvement efforts are sustained and the school district demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school district effectiveness. • New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.	• The school district fully implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns all functions of the school district with the expectations for student learning. • Improvement efforts are systemic, sustained, and fully embedded, and the school district demonstrates significant progress in improving student performance and school district effectiveness. • New improvement efforts are clearly informed by the documented results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of a highly sustained, continuous process of improvement.

Adapted from NSSE (National Study of School Evaluation) research April 2010