


Frequently Asked Questions

Nebraska Department of Education
Office of Coordinated School and District Support
Updated May 2021

FAQ	Response
<p>What is the S.E.E.D. Instructional System?</p> <p><u>UPDATED</u></p> 	<p>In April of 2020, the Nebraska State Board of Education (SBOE) made a commitment to a common language of effectiveness for all Nebraska school teachers and leaders by approving revisions to the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS). These standards provide a structure designed to address the complexities of teaching and leading. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is committed to organized and intentional collaboration with key partners to develop and implement a system using these standards as the foundation to support the educational community in addressing equity in schools. The system is called Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development (S.E.E.D.) The voices of educators statewide have been a part of the decision-making from the very beginning of the standards revision process and will continue to be included as the S.E.E.D. Instructional System is built out.</p> <p>The entry point for schools/districts into the S.E.E.D. Instructional System requires an awareness that allows each school/district to be empowered to discover their own continuous improvement path in connection to the NTPPS. The pandemic has greatly impacted education in Nebraska and has exposed the inequities in Nebraska's educational system. Educators and the educational system as a whole in Nebraska have been given an opportunity, and the response to this exposure is critical. As education moves into the post-COVID era of schooling, educators and all members of Nebraska's educational system are morally compelled to have intentional conversations about the fact that schooling has barriers, including benefits for some while creating biases toward others. The S.E.E.D. Instructional System is intentional about elevating conversations around equity and data-driven practice to a frequent, regular, reflective space.</p>

What are the major shifts in the revised NTPPS?

The major shifts in the NTPPS are an increased focus on equity and data-informed decision making, allowing districts to more purposefully prioritize the individual needs of each student. The revisions, written by Nebraska educators statewide, provide an enhanced picture of effective teaching and school leadership. The NTPPS demonstrate the commitment to an expectation of **equitable and data-informed practices** for Nebraska's teachers and principals, and intentionally communicate this commitment through these powerful words: "**confront and eliminate institutional bias and student marginalization**". The S.E.E.D. Instructional System begins and ends with individuals and the ability to come together as educators. S.E.E.D. is committed to supporting Nebraska's educators to truly lean into their curiosity and ask questions they might not have otherwise ever asked. This is a complex process that must be supported and developed over time. Research and experience tell us this process of change will take at least 3-5 years to become a statewide mindset. The NDE will work closely with ESUs, higher education institutions, and districts to ensure that a common language derived through collaboration drives the process. Context matters.

RESOURCE:

[Leading for Equity in our Schools](#) is a resource that addresses mindsets and dispositions to help look at students from an asset perspective. and enhance educators' expertise in promoting success for all students, especially for those who have been historically marginalized and oppressed.

What are the core beliefs of the S.E.E.D. Instructional System?



The S.E.E.D. Instructional System uses the following core beliefs:

- The greatest impact is realized when authentic processes in schools are supported.
- Removing compliance barriers creates genuine engagement.
- Both support and development are underpinned by belonging, being seen, and being heard.
- Data exists to inform the system; stories compel the system to act.
- Effective learning is sustainable through how each school/district understands how its education systems connect and how those system connections impact results.
- Collaborative inquiry with NDE/ESUs/higher education/schools/districts and other educational organizations is critical.

What role does the NTPPS serve in the S.E.E.D. Instructional System?

The NTPPS is the instructional model that serves as the foundation for the S.E.E.D instructional System. The previous version of the NTPPS was called the *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework (NTPPF)*, but to avoid confusion with other NDE processes, the revised version is now called *standards* instead of a *framework*. The NTPPS is the instructional model representing the standard for effective

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teaching and leading in Nebraska. This quality instructional model is a critical piece of the S.E.E.D. Instructional System.

The S.E.E.D. Instructional System is very intentional in the communication of two words: **support and development**. The word **evaluation** was intentionally left out of the acronym S.E.E.D. **Evaluation** is one essential component that enables the support and development process to be tailored to individual needs; however, **evaluation** is not an effective strategy to support the support and development process if used as a stand alone indicator of one's abilities. An evaluation tool needs to be utilized in tandem with other tools, policies, and protocols to support the growth of teachers and principals. An example of a tool that has traditionally been used with evaluation in Nebraska is **rubrics** that align to the standards.

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Will rubrics be provided that are aligned to the NTPPS?



Yes, rubric documents aligned to the NTPPS will be made **available to districts on May 10, 2021**. Two opportunities to attend an NDE webinar for an explanation of the rubrics will be made available to districts on **May 14 (10:00-11:00 am CST)** and **May 17 (3:00-4:00 pm CST)** at this link: <https://educationne.zoom.us/j/4024714351>

The rubrics will serve as a **continuum of support and development** within the S.E.E.D. Instructional System. Rubrics typically provide a roadmap to show people where they need to go to be successful. The **continuum of support and development** concept takes this process one step further than rubrics, and will serve a specific purpose within the S.E.E.D. Instructional System.

What role do the **S.E.E.D. rubrics** serve in the S.E.E.D. Instructional System?



The S.E.E.D. Instructional System is designed to support the individual strengths and needs of Nebraska's teachers and principals and promote their growth. The concept of a continuum of support and development may be a shift from how districts traditionally use rubrics. Typical standard-related rubrics consist of descriptors ranging from ineffective to highly effective for each standard indicator. This rigid structure provides little distinction for novice educators versus more experienced educators. Also, traditional rubrics may lend themselves more to compliance processes and evaluation of educators rather than on the actual determination of what supports and/or development are needed for the individual growth of the person being evaluated. Finally, traditional standards-aligned rubrics may not provide opportunities for conversations about how an individual's growth applies to systemic change. Compliance-driven evaluation activities are contradictory to the intent of the S.E.E.D. Instructional System. This concept of a continuum of support and development is a shift toward formative assessment, provides support in real time,

	<p>and leads to reflective partnerships in professional practice. This concept will allow districts to promote growth and maximize the impact of their teachers and school leaders. An important step schools/districts/ESUs could take is to utilize the rubrics provided on May 10, 2021, to drive a reflective process (EX: coaching, mentoring, PLC dialogue, or others) with their teachers and principals to lay the groundwork for the identification of the support and development needs of their educators and to determine clarity in context of educator effectiveness within their systems. Districts should then work with their ESUs to determine if the professional development scheduled for this summer and/or next fall aligns with the NTPPS and the needs of the district's teachers and principals.</p> <p>The NDE's Office of Coordinated School and District Support understands the significance of context; therefore, the work districts have done with their chosen instructional models must be integrated with conversations about educator effectiveness and its connection to continuous improvement.</p> <p>Surface-level crosswalks for Danielson and Marzano are available; however, crosswalk activities exist to support the low-impact leverage points designed only for alignment of documents. The S.E.E.D. Instructional System requires a deeper understanding of the distinction between the words <i>alignment</i> and <i>connection (or integration)</i>. Instructional model <i>alignment</i> activities, such as crosswalks, are only the first step to Instructional SYSTEM CONNECTION. Crosswalk alignment documents provide readable, linear, nicely-ordered information. However, for systems to truly function, more than just alignment of instructional models and/or initiatives is needed. System connections (or integration) must exist. For example, a school's MTSS system should connect to the school's instructional model. And these two things should also connect to the school's system of support, development and evaluation. The difference is in how the purpose and function impact the results. An effective system understands the connections between and among systems in addition to sequential alignment such as a crosswalk.</p>
<p>Have crosswalks between the NTPPS and the Danielson and Marzano instructional models been developed?</p>	<p>Danielson and Marzano crosswalks were created and made available as a surface level alignment in June of 2020. While the crosswalk process is an effective starting point, the stronger leverage is in the conversations about the practices that connect and the gaps revealed. Both crosswalks, Danielson and Marzano, show areas of alignment with the NTPPS and areas of weak alignment. Local school districts should strike a balance with the effective practices in the existing models and deeper shifts found in the NTPPS.</p>

Is there a timeline for the S.E.E.D. Instructional System Implementation?



The full S.E.E.D. Instructional System implementation will take 3-5 years. The NDE rules that govern public and non-public school systems, **Rules 10 and 14**, are under revision at this time. Potential revisions to these rules will impact the S.E.E.D. Instructional System timeline. Because of the tentative nature of rule revision timelines, it is difficult for the S.E.E.D. Team to provide exact dates. However, the S.E.E.D. Team is committed to supporting districts as they become familiar with the NTPPS and the S.E.E.D. Instructional System. The S.E.E.D. Team utilizes the NDE's [Educator Effectiveness website](#), as well as emails to district superintendents, ESUs, and higher education, when new information becomes available. The Team also has purposeful partnerships with key groups leading the work across the state and is in regular conversations with districts/ESUs/higher education to both seek feedback and share updates.

What are the phases of the S.E.E.D. Instructional System roll out and what are the clear outcome(s) for utilizing the educator effectiveness standards?



S.E.E.D. is an instructional SYSTEM that provides purposeful guidance of the learning process. (The NTPPS is the instructional model within the S.E.E.D. Instructional System.) The S.E.E.D. Instructional System has four phases of implementation:

Phase 1: From Evaluation to Support and Development: A collaborative inquiry-based examination of current policies and protocols, and systems) to determine a baseline of educator effectiveness and the necessary supports required.

Key Outcome: Establishing a foundation to create a path that leads to systematic collaboration with schools/districts/NDE/ESUs/EPPs to maximize educator effectiveness through engagement with the S.E.E.D. instructional system.

Interaction with the NTPPS:

Sowing the Seeds Professional Development Materials: Support educators' awareness and familiarity with the NTPPS.

Phase 2-From Compliance to Support: A collaborative inquiry-based examination of contextual data in relation to each school's/district's unique strengths and needs.

Key Outcome:to establish a culture of support and development to prioritize the growth and impact of effective educators within each school/district.

Interaction with the NTPPS:

Tending to Themes Professional Development Materials: Support educators' awareness and implementation of the equity and data-informed themes within the NTPPS.

Phase 3: From Alignment to Integration: A collaborative inquiry-based integration of all processes, initiatives, programs,

	<p>protocols, and systems to establish clear connections between educator effectiveness with organizational decision-making.</p> <p>Key Outcome: individual schools/districts create their unique school/district portraits designed to reflect the goals, outcomes, and needs of all members of the education community to maximize educator effectiveness.</p> <p>Interaction with the NTPPS: Cultivating Growth Professional Development Materials: support educators in the integration of initiatives and instruction with the NTPPS as a foundation.</p> <p>Phase 4: From Individuals to Organizational Systems: A collaborative inquiry-based statewide system to support schools/districts to utilize the school/district portrait data to build capacity and maximize educator effectiveness.</p> <p>Key Outcome: each school/district is empowered to identify, communicate, and receive relevant support needed to progress as a system.</p> <p>Interaction with the NTPPS: Reaping the Harvest Professional Development Materials: support educators in designing a support and development system with the NTPPS as a foundation for educator performance, talent management, and evaluation.</p>
<p>What will the NDE expect from districts regarding the rigor of instructional models?</p>	<p>The integration process developed must showcase the initiatives in which districts are already engaged. An effective instructional model is one that is created out of the context and needs of individual districts and is grounded in the NTPPS. For example, many districts have adopted a student support model, such as MTSS. Through their work of developing these student support models into district-wide instructional systems, within their own contexts, attention needs to be given to how that work integrates with the instructional models of each district, to realize how the effectiveness of their teachers and principals is related to the instructional system.</p> <p>Districts should focus on identifying their own context, needs, and questions, and reflect on their ability to determine next steps, processes, and tools. How do current programs and processes help to answer those questions? What questions are left unanswered and what will schools do to respond? How will they adjust and adapt their current systems? What role does the instructional model in place play in supporting this process?</p> <p>NDE is committed to guiding the shift necessary for districts to focus on their own context, and their areas of needed support and development, rather than on a form of traditional compliance.</p>

<p>What does “equal to or more rigorous” really mean? Where did this phrase come from?</p>	<p>The state of Nebraska will not mandate that districts must use the NTPPS as their district instructional model, but the NTPPS sets the standard for expectations of effective teaching and school leadership in Nebraska. Districts will need to show how their instructional models are “equal to or more rigorous” than the NTPPS. <i>The precedent for the phrase “equal to or more rigorous than” has its roots in state statute 79-760.02, regarding content standards, which states in part: ...The standards may be the same as, or may be equal to or exceed in rigor, the measurable academic content standards adopted by the state board.</i> It goes without saying that districts should not settle for lesser than. The expectation is that every Nebraska student has access to effective educators regardless of where they live and which district they attend. Having the standard of “equal to or more rigorous” ensures consistent expectations while also honoring local context and control.</p> <p>At this time, the S.E.E.D. Team has not determined how districts might show how their chosen instructional model is equal to or more rigorous than the NTPPS. However, the Team is working with the NDE/ESUs/districts and higher education institutions to determine how work can be connected in such a way as to be the most efficient and effective, without duplication of efforts.</p>
<p>Are there preferred, instructional models?</p>	<p>No. Districts may choose any instructional model to serve as the common language for effective teaching and leading in their districts. However, any instructional model will need to be equal to or more rigorous than the NTPPS, with an enhanced focus on equity and data-informed decision making.</p>
<p>Does the NDE have deadlines for an updated evaluation instrument to be made available to districts?</p>	<p>No. If districts are at a point where they are ready to start discussing a local evaluation instrument, they should start having those conversations, preferably guided by the concept of a continuum of support and development as mentioned above. Conversations about evaluation should be collaborative amongst districts’ teachers and leaders and should focus on equity and data-informed decision making, and how these two things impact effective teaching and school leadership. Conversations such as these would be extremely valuable for districts, especially since Covid-19 has brought inequities to the surface that were maybe not apparent before. Time must be committed to this reflective process and to gain a clear understanding of each district's current state.</p> <p>RESOURCE: Reflection Questions for Prioritized Indicators within the NTPPS is a resource designed to engage teachers and principals in reflection framed around the identified prioritized indicators. The charts provided in the link above provide an innovative opportunity for evaluators and staff to engage in conversations to develop greater awareness surrounding the purpose and effectiveness of current practices and policies.</p>

<p>What does state statute say about teacher evaluation?</p>	<p>State statute requires districts to conduct classroom observations of <u>probationary</u> teachers once each semester. Districts may need to consider their definition of “classroom observation” depending on the physical setting of the school, as per their district policy. As stated above, the NDE has provided a set of <u>prioritized indicators</u> to support districts in their conversations about teacher/principal evaluation.</p>
<p>Are there any resources that would provide an introduction to the standards? Where are these housed?</p>	<p>NDE has collaborated with ESUs and higher education faculty to create professional development materials to support professional learning colleagues. These materials are intended to build awareness and familiarity with the NTPPS. The first set of materials, <i>Sowing the Seeds</i>, was launched in January 2021. Facilitator materials, participant guides, and slides to support professional learning sessions are part of a series called <u>Growing our Practice</u>.</p> <p>The NDE also provides videos of conversations about the standards through the lens of a student, teacher, principal, superintendent, ESUs, higher education institutions, and the NDE. Listen to Nebraska educators speak from their perspective about the standards, the support they offer teachers, and the integration of work across the state educational system.</p> <p>The links will be found on the following webpage:</p> <p><u>https://www.education.ne.gov/educatoreffectiveness/</u></p>

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