

Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards

Each student deserves equitable access to effective teachers and principals who hold a genuine belief that each child can learn and grow. Teachers are the single most important school-based factor affecting student achievement (McCaffrey et al., 2003), and school leadership is second only to teaching among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn in school (Gates et al., 2019). A shift in how Nebraska supports and develops teachers and principals is essential to ensuring each student has what they need at the right moment, at the right level, and with the right intensity.

The determination of student needs must be rooted in the collection and analysis of multiple sources of relevant data. Meaningful use of data leads to systematic educational decisions, ensuring all students have the opportunity to achieve at high levels (Datnow & Park, 2015). Most importantly, the disaggregation of data to analyze and address the needs of specific student groups is essential to providing equitable access to each student. The enhanced usage of student, teacher, and principal data to make decisions about student needs must be a collective effort among the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), local educational agencies (LEAs), Educational Service Units (ESUs), Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), and other educational organizations.

The *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards* provide an enhanced focus on equitable opportunities for each student. These opportunities become visible through a common language of expectations, a better understanding of the knowledge and skills needed for effective teachers and principals, a commitment to staff support and development, and a focus on family and community engagement.

Statewide Common Language

The *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards* provide a foundation for communicating expectations for Nebraska's teachers and principals and a framework for the alignment of statewide initiatives for the NDE, LEAs, ESUs, and EPPs, and other educational organizations. With the changing landscape in educational roles and responsibilities, courageous and necessary shifts toward consistency in expectations within Nebraska will translate to equitable opportunities for each student.

Knowledge and Skills for Effective Teachers and Principals

The *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards* provide a foundation for the communication of the knowledge and skills effective teachers and principals in Nebraska must demonstrate. This communication will clarify districts' expectations for their teachers and principals, allowing teachers and principals to continue to learn and grow professionally throughout their careers. In addition, this communication will increase the transparency of expectations within the NDE, ESUs, EPPs, and other educational organizations, translating into increased alignment of expectations for teachers and principals and equitable opportunities for each student.

Staff Support and Development

The *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards* provide a foundation for the establishment of a system of support and development for educators. When teachers and principals feel supported and have opportunities to grow within the profession, they are more likely to stay in education (Krasnoff, 2014). Consistent guidelines for effective teaching and school leadership will enhance communication and feedback, which leads to improved education for all students. Using common standards to collect and disaggregate data about teacher and principal performance will allow LEAs to make informed decisions on professional learning needs and placement of teachers and principals based on specific strengths and growth areas, thus improving the equitable opportunities for each student.

Family and Community Engagement

The *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards* provide a foundation for the expectations of family and community involvement. By optimizing family and community involvement, LEAs welcome cultural differences, gain multiple perspectives, enhance opportunities for student and parental involvement, and align community initiatives with school initiatives; thus, improving equitable opportunities for each student.

Performance Standards for Teachers

Planning and Preparation	The teacher plans using district and state standards, district-supported curriculum, instructional materials, and strategies, evidence-based resources, data, and community context to address the needs of each student in achieving rigorous learning goals (Danielson, 2013; InTASC, 2013).
Indicators:	<p>a. Through collaboration with colleagues, prioritizes district and state standards to ensure vertical alignment and appropriate pacing of curriculum</p> <p>b. Utilizes high quality instructional materials within a locally determined curriculum to implement coherent units, lessons, and activities that reflect high expectations and enable each student to achieve district and state standards, learning goals, and instructional objectives</p> <p>c. Supplements locally determined curriculum and district-supported high quality instructional materials by evaluating and selecting resources to support specific student needs, while maintaining challenging, yet engaging learning experiences</p> <p>d. Uses all students' abilities, cultural norms, and personal, family, and community experiences to prepare for differentiated, relevant, and rigorous instruction</p> <p>e. Engages in collaborative school-wide learning communities that meet to reflect on professional practice, examine student data, and identify strategies directly applicable to improving instruction and learning.</p> <p>f. Uses multiple sources of relevant data to tailor culturally responsive learning experiences that address students' academic, physical, social-emotional, and mental health needs, with specific attention toward equitable opportunities and outcomes for all student groups</p>
The Learning Environment	The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment that promotes student engagement and fosters positive relationships, inclusivity, social-emotional development, and academic growth and achievement (Danielson, 2013; InTASC, 2013).
Indicators:	<p>a. Builds and sustains a relationship with each student that results in an accessible learning environment of trust, mutual respect, and support</p> <p>b. Promotes recognition of each student's diverse personal experiences and builds upon those experiences to increase academic success</p> <p>c. Creates and maintains a collaborative learning environment that supports each student's diverse academic, social-emotional, linguistic, and physical strengths and needs</p> <p>d. Establishes, communicates, and maintains high expectations, effective routines, procedures, and clear standards of conduct to create a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment for all students</p> <p>e. Maintains a learning environment that encourages students to reflect on and take ownership of their own learning behaviors and academic progress</p>

Instructional Strategies	The teacher implements evidence-based, district-supported instructional strategies to ensure student growth and achievement (Danielson, 2013; InTASC, 2013).
Indicators:	<p>a. Implements a range of evidence-based, district-supported strategies to ensure each student achieves district and state standards, learning goals, and instructional objectives</p> <p>b. Uses a variety of evidence-based, district-supported resources and multimodal instructional tools to engage students in rigorous learning experiences</p> <p>c. Identifies, implements, and evaluates evidence-based, district-supported instructional strategies that are responsive to each student's abilities, cultural norms, and personal, family, and community experiences</p> <p>d. Reflects on classroom observations and assessment data and differentiates instruction by adjusting the pace of instruction, focus of instruction, and method of delivery address each student's strengths and needs</p> <p>e. Engages students in constructing new and meaningful learning through problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, purposeful discourse, and inquiry aligned with locally determined curriculum and district-supported high quality instructional materials</p> <p>f. Models cultural competence and responsiveness by implementing and sustaining evidence-based, district-supported curriculum, instructional materials, and strategies that confront and eliminate institutional bias and student marginalization</p>
Assessment	The teacher systematically uses a balanced assessment system that includes formative, interim, and summative assessments to measure student progress and to inform ongoing planning, instruction, and reporting (Danielson, 2013; InTASC, 2013).
Indicators:	<p>a. Utilizes formative, interim, and summative assessments that align to district and state standards, learning goals, and instructional objectives.</p> <p>b. Uses a variety of district-supported classroom-based assessments that confront and eliminate institutional bias and student marginalization, meet all students' developmental needs, and ensure each student has the opportunity to demonstrate understanding</p> <p>c. Uses formative, interim, and summative assessments and the resulting data to inform instruction, monitor student progress over time, and provide meaningful feedback to each student</p> <p>d. Analyzes formative, interim, and summative assessment data, individually and with colleagues, to ensure alignment to instruction</p> <p>e. Provides students with constructive, specific, and frequent feedback during and after instruction to enable students to assess, adjust, monitor, and reflect on their own progress toward learning goals</p> <p>f. Accurately documents and clearly communicates assessment data about student progress over time to relevant stakeholders</p>

Professionalism	The teacher exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school's vision, mission and goals, participates in professional growth opportunities to support student and self learning, and contributes to the profession (GA DOE, 2017; Stronge, 2011).
Indicators:	<p>a. Adheres to school policies, procedures, and regulations and models ethical behavior and integrity in accordance with the established standards of the district</p> <p>b. Develops and sustains productive and appropriate relationships through communication with students, colleagues, administrators, families, and the larger community in an effort to support and enhance each student's academic success and well-being</p> <p>c. Actively pursues opportunities for professional growth and leadership development both as an individual and as a member of a learning community</p> <p>d. Reflects on professional practices to support and improve student learning and maintains high expectations for self in lesson preparedness</p> <p>e. Advocates for and contributes to the shared mission, vision, and continuous improvement of the school and professional community</p> <p>f. Collaborates to enhance culturally responsive interactions with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement</p> <p>g. Communicates with and protects the established rights and confidentiality of students, families, colleagues, and the larger community</p>

Performance Standards for Principals

Vision for Learning	The principal, as an instructional leader, embodies and inspires all members of the educational community to collectively embrace and actualize the shared vision, mission, and goals of the school and district for high-quality teaching and learning that results in improved student growth and achievement, reduction of opportunity gaps, and enhanced student and staff well-being (CCSSO, 2017; PSEL, 2015).
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leads all constituent groups within the school community in the analysis of multiple sources of relevant data to drive the creation of the vision, mission, and goals of the school, and ensures alignment with district, state, and federal policies b. Establishes high expectations for the well-being and performance of self, students, and staff and widely communicates how the vision, mission and goals of the school align with those expectations c. Leads all members of the educational community in a systematic review of the vision, mission, and goals of the school and adjusts based on the changing needs of the students and the learning community d. Promotes teaching practices based on sound instructional theory and pedagogy, research on student learning and development, alignment to the vision, mission and goals of the school, and the needs of each student and staff member e. Ensures each student's instructional experience is based on intentional and district-supported use of high quality instructional materials and aligned to innovative and impactful programming personalized to the interests and needs of individual students and groups of students f. Implements a systematic plan, using multiple sources of relevant data, to ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes based on instructional priorities and student and staff development and support needs g. Models behavior that demonstrates the belief that all students and staff members can reach their full potential with meaningful access to educational resources they need at the right moment, at the right level, and with the right intensity
Continuous Improvement	The principal, as an instructional leader, leads a continuous improvement process that results in improved student growth and achievement, enhanced student and staff well-being, and greater school effectiveness (CCSSO, 2017; PSEL, 2015).
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In collaboration with the educational community, develops, implements, monitors, and revises a school improvement plan that is aligned with district, state, and federal guidelines and goals b. Adopts a systems perspective and promotes coherence among improvement efforts in all aspects of school organization, programs, and services to align with the school's vision, mission, and goals c. Implements a school-wide documented professional learning plan that is developed based on staff input, aligned to the school's continuous improvement processes, and evaluated and adjusted based on participant feedback and student outcome data

	d. Manages the process of change within the school, communicating the need and process for change so that it is fully understandable, consistent, and transparent, and utilizing the collective efforts of all members of the educational community
	e. In collaboration with the educational community, aligns the school's curriculum and high quality instructional materials to district and state content standards to ensure cultural responsiveness and high expectations for student learning
	f. Creates and sustains strategic partnerships with diverse groups of community leaders, keeping them informed and seeking their perspectives on issues affecting the school
	g. In collaboration with the educational community, monitors the achievement of each student group and other sources of data to make informed decisions about student learning, teacher effectiveness, and school improvement
	h. Coordinates collaborative school-wide learning communities that meet to reflect on professional practice, examine student data, and identify strategies directly applicable to improving instruction and learning
	i. Monitors the effectiveness of family and community engagement efforts and regularly uses results to inform school improvement efforts
Staff Support & Development	The principal, as an instructional leader, develops and supports the professional capacity and practice of personnel to maximize student learning opportunities and outcomes that align with the school's vision, mission, and goals (PSEL, 2015).
Indicators:	a. Builds a climate of trust, responsiveness, and equity in decision making that is based on the needs and voices of each staff member
	b. Implements a performance evaluation system for teachers and instructional support staff based on a common instructional language and effective teaching practices
	c. Observes instructional staff formally and informally and provides specific, actionable, and timely feedback to improve instructional practice, and takes action to provide each instructional staff member with the supports and development needed
	d. Leads efforts for the development and implementation of differentiated learning and growth opportunities in the areas of professional knowledge, skills, and practice for individual teachers and staff members
	e. Engages in ongoing professional dialogue with instructional staff to ensure high quality instructional materials and evidence-based, district-supported strategies are fully implemented as intended, resulting in increased student growth and achievement.
	f. Develops and implements a systematic recruitment and retention plan that includes analysis of multiple sources of data to ensure equitable access to effective educators for each student
	g. Mentors emerging staff leaders to build leadership capacity within the school community

Operations & 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 (PSEL, 2015).
Indicators:	<p>a. In collaboration with the educational community, establishes, implements, and communicates the school's policies, protocols, and daily operations to promote the vision, mission, and goals of the school</p> <p>b. Creates, implements, and sustains a system of conflict resolution among all members of the educational community that aligns with the vision, mission, and goals of the school</p> <p>c. Promotes the school as a community center and resource for families and community members</p> <p>d. Maintains an organized data system and uses the system consistently to communicate actionable information about classroom and school improvement with the educational community</p> <p>e. In collaboration with the educational community, uses multiple sources of relevant data to ensure academic and social interventions, accommodations, and curricular and extracurricular activities are available to meet the strengths and needs of each student</p> <p>f. Informs the development of, complies with, and helps the educational community understand local, state, and federal regulations, policies, and laws that impact the learning environment</p> <p>g. Engages in responsible, ethical, and accountable budgeting and accounting practices</p> <p>h. Manages and monitors the school's site, facilities, services, and equipment to maintain a safe, clean, healthy learning environment</p> <p>i. Manages staff resources, assigning staff members to roles that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's strengths and needs</p>
Culture for Learning	The principal, as an instructional leader, cultivates and nurtures an inclusive, caring, and supportive learning environment that promotes the academic success and well-being of each member of the educational community (PSEL, 2015).
Indicators:	<p>a. Is consistently visible in the school and community, leads efforts to create and sustain a safe and healthy learning environment of respect and rapport based on clear guidelines for appropriate behavior, and addresses student and staff conduct in a positive, fair, unbiased manner</p> <p>b. Articulates a vision that defines a student-centered school culture, and creates and sustains school conditions that ensure equitable access to learning and development opportunities for each student, staff member, and self</p> <p>c. Implements a systematic process, using multiple sources of relevant data, to provide a layered continuum of support to meet the academic, physical, social-emotional, and mental health needs of each student</p> <p>d. Supports protocols and practices that provide collaboration time among staff, cultivating mutual respect, collegiality, and collective responsibility for meeting student and staff goals</p>

	<p>e. Promotes high expectations and mutual accountability, recognizes successes of students and staff, and uses multiple sources of relevant data to monitor the climate and culture of the educational community</p>
	<p>f. Models cultural competence and responsiveness and collaborates with the educational community to create, implement, and sustain systematic instructional protocols and practices that confront and eliminate institutional bias and student marginalization</p>
	<p>g. Recognizes diversity as an asset, and creates and sustains a learning environment in which all students, staff, and community members are known, accepted, valued, trusted and respected, and encouraged to be active and responsible members of the school community</p>
	<p>h. Utilizes and promotes the cultural, social, and intellectual resources of the community</p>
Professional Ethics & Advocacy	<p>The principal, as an instructional leader, exhibits a high level of professional ethics and advocates for policies of equity and excellence in support of the vision, mission, and goals of the school (CCSSO, 2017; PSEL, 2015).</p>
Indicators:	<p>a. Places students at the center of education and shares a collective responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being</p>
	<p>b. Proactively navigates the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural environment in which the school exists in support of the school's vision, mission, and goals</p>
	<p>c. Protects the established rights and confidentiality of students and staff</p>
	<p>d. Models ethical behavior, acting according to and promoting the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, reflective practice, and personal continuous improvement</p>
	<p>e. Holds self and others in the educational community accountable for adhering to established standards of integrity and ethical behavior and handles conflict resolution with professionalism</p>
	<p>f. Engages in purposeful, positive conversations and activities throughout the educational community to advocate publicly for the importance of education, the needs of students, staff, and self, and educational priorities</p>
	<p>g. Builds and maintains sound relationships with the educational community, including staff and students, based upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect</p>
	<p>h. Assumes responsibility for professional growth and leadership development both as an individual and as a member of a learning community</p>