

## Frequently Asked Questions

Nebraska Department of Education  
Office of Coordinated School and District Support  
Fall 2020

FAQ	Response
<p>What is S.E.E.D.?</p>	<p>In April of 2020, the Nebraska State Board of Education (<b>SBOE</b>) made a commitment to a common language of effectiveness for all Nebraska school teachers and leaders by approving revisions to the <i>Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS)</i>. These standards provide a structure designed to address the complexities of teaching and leading. The Nebraska Department of Education (<b>NDE</b>) 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 (<b>S.E.E.D.</b>)</p>
<p>What are the major shifts in the newly revised <i>Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS)</i>?</p>	<p>The major shifts in the new NTPPS are an increased focus on equity and data-driven decision making. The revisions, written by Nebraska educators statewide, provide an enhanced picture of effective teaching and school leadership. The Office of Coordinated School and District Support within the NDE, along with its educational partners, is committed to supporting Nebraska's teachers and principals in reaching the level of effectiveness in these standards.</p>
<p>How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of NTPPS?</p>	<p>The pandemic has greatly impacted education in Nebraska and has exposed the inequities of 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. A shift is underway to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by rethinking the structures and systems currently in place, not only by the NDE but also by other educational organizations, as well as by districts themselves. Subsequently, these systems can respond proactively and prioritize the necessary supports, while leveraging innovation and progressive thinking.</p>



<p>How has the pandemic shifted the position of Educator Effectiveness regarding evaluation?</p>	<p>A shift is underway to allow teacher and principal evaluation to become part of these expectations represented in the NTPPS, rather than an extra requirement or an unrelated activity. Evaluation should be a part of the growth and development process and not a stand-alone requirement. The goal of S.E.E.D. is to drive conversations and slowly turn the direction away from compliance and more toward support and development through prioritized standards, data-driven decisions, and a focus on equity in policy and actions.</p>
<p>Is the NDE mandating a statewide instructional model?</p>	<p>No. The investments made in work with instructional models must be valued in statewide decisions being made. Some might argue that it would be “easier” to mandate a statewide model. However, the Office of Coordinated School and District Support is committed to the idea that context matters. 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 as the process is developed.</p>
<p>How will the NDE expect schools to report their instructional model?</p>	<p>The NDE will be developing a way for districts to show how their work is equal to or more rigorous than the state model so the work districts have already done will not be lost. The Educator Effectiveness Team is sensitive to current reporting expectations and does not want to overburden districts to the extent that it is possible. Therefore, it may take some time for the NDE and educational stakeholders to develop a way to incorporate district instructional model work into reporting processes in which districts are already engaged.</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-based 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. Conversations about evaluation should be collaborative amongst districts’ teachers and leaders and should focus on equity and data-based decision making, and how these two things impact effective</p>

	<p>teaching and school leadership. Conversations such as these would be extremely valuable for districts, especially now that Covid-19 has brought inequities to the surface that were maybe not apparent before.</p> <p>Now might not be the best time for districts to create and approve a local evaluation instrument, for two reasons: 1.) there has not been specific guidance on instructional models other than the approval of the NTPPS, and 2.) with Covid-19, it is impossible to know what teacher/principal evaluation will really look like in the next year. Much research is being done in this area and districts are advised to have conversations about effective teaching/leading as opposed to making decisions about an actual evaluation instrument that may be changed by either district instructional model adjustments and/or Covid-19 disruptions.</p>
<p>What are the priorities right now?</p>	<p>The most important thing for the state right now is that the NDE, ESUs, Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), and districts have access to support for collaboration about essential standard indicators in the NTPPS.</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.</p>
<p>Are there waivers about teacher evaluation in light of the pandemic?</p>	<p>No. Districts may or may not be adhering to their district policies this year in regards to the evaluation of <u>non-probationary</u> teachers; however, administrators should develop new pandemic-appropriate ways to support the priorities of growth for all teachers, to ensure teachers (and principals) feel supported, trusted, and motivated to elevate their classroom practice, regardless of the physical setting of the school.</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</i></p>

	<p>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. 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>Are the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards an Instructional Model?</p>	<p>Yes. The previous version was called the <i>Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework</i> (NTTPF), but to avoid confusion with other NDE processes, they are now called standards. The performance standards are considered the instructional model representing the standard for effective teaching and leading in Nebraska.</p>
<p>Are there any resources that would provide an introduction to the standards? Where are these housed?</p>	<p>The NDE provides videos of conversations about the standards through the lens of a student, teacher, principal, ESU, EPP, and NDE. Listen to Nebraska educators speak from their perspective about the standards, the support they offer teachers, and the alignment of work across the state educational system.</p> <p>The links will be found on the following webpage when available:</p> <p><a href="https://www.education.ne.gov/educatoreffectiveness/">https://www.education.ne.gov/educatoreffectiveness/</a></p>

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Supporting Effective Educators through Development



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