

State Accreditation Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2023

The Nebraska State Accreditation Committee met at Embassy Suites, May 16, 2023. Chair Travis Miller called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., declared a quorum present, and established the legality of the meeting.

Members present were the following: LeeAnn Amm, Susan Christopherson, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Josie Floyd, Jeff Ganz, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Pat Hoehner, Vickie Kauffold, Dan Koenig, Mitch Kubicek (Arrived at 9:45), Travis Miller, Marco Pedroza, Heather Phillips, Dan Schnoes, Bess Scott, and Tiffanie Welte.

Members absent: Wayne Brown, Dale Fornander, and Sarah Salem.

NDE staff members participating in all or some of the meeting were the following: Micki Charf, Todd Wolverton, Sandra Suiter, and Amy Rhone.

Meeting Opening

Following introductions, Travis Miller reviewed with members the purpose of Rule 10 (equity of opportunity, quality of learning, and accountability) and the Committee's role and responsibility. Travis Miller asked for the acceptance of the May 16, 2023, Agenda. Vickie Kauffold moved to approve the agenda and Pat Hoehner seconded the motion.

Voting yes: LeeAnn Amm, Susan Christopherson, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Josie Floyd, Jeff Ganz, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Pat Hoehner, Vickie Kauffold, Dan Koenig, Travis Miller, Marco Pedroza, Heather Phillips, Dan Schnoes, Bess Scott, and Tiffanie Welte.

Voting no: none.

Approval carried 19-0 with 4 absent.

Members were asked to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2023, meeting. Josie Floyd moved to approve the minutes and Brad Dirksen seconded the motion.

Voting yes: LeeAnn Amm, Susan Christopherson, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Josie Floyd, Jeff Ganz, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Pat Hoehner, Vickie Kauffold, Dan Koenig, Travis Miller, Marco Pedroza, Heather Phillips, Dan Schnoes, Bess Scott, and Tiffanie Welte.

Voting no: none.

Approval carried 19-0 with 4 absent.

Presentation of the Annual Report for Accreditation – Micki Charf

The Annual Report is presented to the State Accreditation Committee for review and consideration in fulfilling the responsibilities prescribed in statute. The report provides the status of currently accredited schools, based upon compliance with Rule 10 (*Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools*). It also contains other support information related to school status and accreditation. The Annual Report serves as the basis for State Accreditation Committee action at the May 16, 2023, meeting.

Continuous Improvement Processes and Procedures – Sandra Suiter

Accredited schools are required to conduct a continuous school improvement process focused on the improvement of student learning.

Accreditation Staff, NeMTSS Regional Leads and ESU partners provided Continuous Improvement Support Days throughout state of Nebraska. The day long workshops included information on Rules and Regulations for Continuous Improvement and the new materials developed for Nebraska Continuous Improvement.

The school improvement process includes a visitation by a team of external representatives to review progress and provide written recommendations. The external team visits are conducted at least once each five years.

Schools are also monitored for Rule 10 compliance through:

- Assurance Statements
- Personnel Report
- Curriculum Report
- Counselor/Media Collection
- Instructional Units

Compliance Visits – Todd Wolverton

There were 17 compliance visits made to accredited public and nonpublic schools within the last year. In combination with compliance visits to approved nonpublic schools, a total of 38 schools were visited by accreditation staff.

Compliance visits allow staff to work with schools and assist them to make sure they are meeting regulation.

Following the presentations by Micki Charf, Sandra Suiter and Todd Wolverton, Micki provided an opportunity for any thoughts and questions on the information presented.

Overview of schools recommended for Accreditation

244 Class II through V School Districts, 5 Special Purpose Schools, and 82 Nonpublic Schools.

Action on Accreditation of School Systems

Travis Miller, Chair, asked for a motion to recommend continued accreditation in 2023-2024. Dan Schnoes moved to approve accreditation for the 2023-24 school year and Mitch Kubicek seconded the motion.

Voting yes: LeeAnn Amm, Susan Christopherson, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Josie Floyd, Jeff Ganz, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Pat Hoehner, Vickie Kauffold, Dan Koenig, Mitch Kubicek, Travis Miller, Marco Pedroza, Heather Phillips, Dan Schnoes, Bess Scott, and Tiffanie Welte.

Voting no: none.

Approval carried 20-0 with 3 absent.

Recommendation for SAC Subcommittee

Dan Schnoes suggested the creation of a SAC Subcommittee to further explore more meaningful changes to existing rules rather than a complete restructure.

Subcommittee volunteers: Josie Floyd, Dan Schnoes, Tiffanie Welte, Susanne Cramer, Mitch Kubicek, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Dan Koenig, Vickie Kauffold, and Jeff Ganz. Dan Schnoes agreed to Chair the Subcommittee.

The first meeting was tentatively scheduled for September 2023.

Discussion on Annual Assurance Statement Restructuring – Micki Charf

The major mechanism for communicating compliance is the Rule 10 Assurance Statement. Historically, the Annual Assurance Statement was submitted via fax, PDF attachment, or hard copy via U.S. Mail. The current Annual Assurance statement is in a “survey format” via Qualtrics with “yes/no” options. Time analysis shows a wide range of response times.

Self-reports have increased the past 2 years. The most common self-report in the last year has been regarding properly endorsed teachers. Self-Report Patterns included:

- Instructional Units
- Certification
- Properly Endorsed Percentages
- Board Policies
- 6th grade participation

Difference between Failure to Meet and Violation – Micki Charf

Regulations are monitored through self-reporting, compliance visits and data submitted to the NSSRS. Accreditation staff investigates any areas of noncompliance to determine whether a violation is warranted.

Failure to Meet are mandatory requirements in Section 003 of Rule 10 and are non-negotiable. These requirements must be met at all times by school systems as a condition of accreditation. Any Failure to Meet must be corrected immediately.

Each failure to meet a numbered regulation other than those contained in Section 003 constitutes a separate violation.

Notification process:

-First Notice

Issued by Specialist to Superintendent with a 7-day time frame for correction.

- CORRECTED: (teacher removed from classroom or certificate is issued) Receipt sent to school.

-Second Notice

Issued by Director and Administrator with a 7-day time frame for correction.

- CORRECTED: (teacher removed from classroom or certificate is issued) Receipt sent to school.

-Third Notice

Issued by Deputy Commissioner with a 7-day time frame for correction.

- CORRECTED: (teacher removed from classroom or certificate is issued) Receipt sent to school.

014.02- Inform Commissioner - recommendation to the Board for probation or loss of accreditation.

Current Assurance Structure and new opportunities to self-report – Micki Charf

The checklist structure of the assurance statement does not allow for further explanation on self-reported areas of noncompliance. Some proposed changes include:

- Add “Self-Report” text field to the survey as an option beneath EACH regulation.
- Add a “Self-Report” text field under subsections of regulations. “If you indicated *No* for any regulations above, please self-report the circumstances of the unmet regulation.”
- Add a specific “Self-Report” prompt under the properly endorsed percentages and allow user to narrate circumstances.
- Add a specific Self-Report prompt under the 6th grade participation if enrollment remains above 12 boys and/or 12 girls, but not every student goes out for the event.

The Committee broke out into groups to discuss recommendations on re-structuring the current format of the assurance statement, and if changes are made, how should those changes be communicated. After each group shared their suggestions, the committee agreed the addition of an automatic pop-up box if *No* is checked on any regulation and a self-report text field added under subsections of regulations would be the best options. Changes need to be communicated as soon as possible through email, bulletins, etc.

Working Lunch, Coherence Through NeMTSS - Amy Rhone

The NeMTSS team supports Educational Service Units, districts, schools, and educators in coming together to work toward a common vision of success. NeMTSS is strategically designed to strengthen partnerships among educational stakeholders so that the well-being of each student is prioritized by ensuring safe, engaging, and supportive learning environments

Connections among behavioral support, academics, social-emotional learning, and continuous improvement within a multi-tiered system of support offers ways to promote cohesion among these areas to improve outcomes for students. Coherence increases common language usage, messages from various stakeholders in different offices become streamlined and connections become easily identifiable.

Nebraska Continuous Improvement – Micki Charf

The Nebraska Framework Model was originally released in July 2012 by the Nebraska Department of Education’s Accreditation and School Improvement Section. This initial model focused on four components: “Creating the Profile, Setting the Goals, Planning to Improve, and Implementing the Plan. This linear model was made up of flat forms, not aligned with AQuESTT Accountability. The Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) was established to integrate components of accountability, assessment, accreditation, career education, and data into a system of school improvement and support.

New Resources for This Year– Micki Charf

- A new Continuous Improvement Template is now available for Nebraska school systems to capture all continuous improvement efforts including space for data analysis, action planning, and professional development.
- An NeMTSS Framework Document that corresponds with action plan and Rule 10 Section 009 regulations.
- A Revised NDE Perceptual Survey, which contains updated items and constructs that can be triangulated with the Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2.0.
- Hanover Research
 - Data Literacy Workbook
 - Review of literature
 - In-Depth interview

Perceptual Survey & AQuESTT Coherence- Micki Charf

Nebraska's revised Perceptual Survey is the result of a thoughtful process which included stakeholders from various educational backgrounds. Results from survey respondents inform schools in four different areas: Environment, Relationships, Engagement, and Instruction. These four constructs were developed using word similarities associated with AQuESTT Domains and Tenets.

Deeper Implementation for Year Two – Micki Charf

Team Lead Workshops, explicit practice on essential elements at ESU Continuous Improvement Workdays, and updated qualitative analysis on External Report themes, commendations, and recommendations. Our theme this year is *Coherence is Real*. There is now an Elementary Instruction Planning Guide; Resource Allocation Review; School, Family and Community Framework documents; and an in-depth Interview Project by Hanover Research.

Membership Updates – Micki Charf

Three New Members have joined the committee, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, and Heather Phillips. Travis Miller, current Chair, and Bess Scott will be stepping down. The committee recognized their service and commitment to serving on the SAC Committee.

A nomination was made to elect Dale Hafer as the new Chair of the Accreditation Committee and Josie Floyd as Co-Chair of the Committee.

Voting yes: LeeAnn Amm, Susan Christopherson, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Jeff Ganz, Stacie Hardy, Pat Hoehner, Vickie Kauffold, Dan Koenig, Mitch Kubicek, Travis Miller, Marco Pedroza, Heather Phillips, Dan Schnoes, Bess Scott, and Tiffanie Welte.

Voting no: none.

Approval carried 18-0, with 2 Abstaining and 3 absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:15