



Nebraska State Board of Education

Position Statements

Current, as of: March 2024

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PS 1

Nondiscrimination and Equitable Educational Opportunities in Schools

The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

This commitment is reflected in the goals outlined in the State Board’s Strategic Vision and Direction:

- Ensure the education system, including the Nebraska Department of Education, is taking charge of its roles and responsibilities to provide leadership and enhance support systems in the state.
- Ensure all Nebraskans, across all backgrounds and circumstances, have equitable access and opportunities for success.
- Increase the number of Nebraskans who are ready for success in post-secondary education, career, and civic life.

Additionally, the NDE acknowledges a societal history of bias, bigotry, and racism resulting in societal disparities and inequities, and the effects of these disparities and inequities on Nebraskans today. The NDE commits to confronting this history and its negative impact by leading for educational equity. The goal of equity efforts is that all students are known, heard, and supported while having access to the opportunities and resources needed to be ready for success in their post-secondary learning experiences, careers, and civic lives.

The State Board believes that all children enrolled in public schools are entitled to equitable educational opportunity across all races, colors, sexes, and national origins. The same principle has been adopted by the Congress of the United States at 20 U.S.C. 1701. In addition, the Nebraska Legislature has declared, at Section 79-2,116 R.R.S., that it shall be an unfair or discriminatory practice for any educational institution (as defined in Section 79-2,115 R.R.S.) to discriminate on the basis of sex in any program or activity.

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Educational equity is defined by providing each student meaningful access to the educational resources they need at the right moment, at the right level, and with the right intensity. Educational equity means high expectations for learning and student achievement. Educational equity allows students to discover and explore their passions and make meaningful connections within the context of their post-secondary interests. Equity requires that these opportunities and outcomes exist for all Nebraskans, including but not limited to, and unrestricted by age, citizenship status, color, disability, economic status, ethnicity, family mobility, family structure, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, tribal membership, or veteran status. Further, the State Board supports policy that promotes a stable, reliable, and equitable system of funding that addresses both the equity of available funding for schools, as well as the equity of burden on taxpayers.

The State Board further believes that all resident children with disabilities are entitled to special education programs and transportation. The Nebraska Legislature, at Section 79-1127 R.R.S., requires the board of education of every school district to provide or contract for such programs.

Revision History

- Created: 12/10/1976
- Reviewed: 1984, 1995, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2019
- Approved: 09/06/2019
- Expiration Date: 09/06/2023

Board Action History

- 12/10/1976 – Prior JA
(Equal education opportunity for students statement mentoring: race, color, creed, place of residence, or physical or mental handicaps.)
- 12/07/1984 – Prior 0521GP
(Renumbered)
- 12/08/1995 – G1
(Revised to reference federal law section.)

Board Action History (cont'd)

- 09/05/2008 – G1
(Revised)
- 03/06/2012 – G1
(Reaffirmed 3/6/2012)
- 03/06/2015 – G1
(Reaffirmed 3/6/2015)
- 03/03/2017 – G1(S1)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B], and position statements [S]. G1 is now S1.)
- 09/06/2019 – S1
(Added language defining educational equity and the mission and commitment of the State Board to attain the goals outlined in their State Board Strategic Vision and Direction Plan.)
- 12/02/2022 – S1(PS 1)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S1 is now PS 1.)

Cross-References

- 20 U.S.C. 1701
- 79-2,116 R.R.S.
- 79-1127 R.R.S.
- Statement of Principle on Human Dignity, August 2018
- NDE State Board Resolution on Equity Education, August 3, 2018
- Nebraska State Board of Education 2019 Legislative and Regulatory Priorities, Adopted October 5, 2018
- NDE Mission Statement
- NDE Strategic Priorities, 2017-2026 Strategic Vision and Direction
- NDE Leading for Educational Equity Definition

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PS 2

Accountability for Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT)

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), comprised of the State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education, is constitutionally charged with the general supervision and administration of the school system in the State of Nebraska (Nebraska Constitution, Article VII, Sec. 2). The State Board of Education is also to serve as the policy-forming, planning, and evaluative body for the state school program (Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-301-(2)). The State Board strives to sets forth policy, planning, and evaluation systems to allow Nebraska’s school program to meet the diverse needs of its learners.

Beyond this authority, the State Board seeks to ensure the education system, including the Nebraska Department of Education, is taking charge of its roles and responsibilities to provide leadership and enhance support systems in the state. The clear cohesion of education systems is imperative for the good of Nebraska students and for the state to have a vibrant and economically successful future. It is upon this foundation that the framework of Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) is implemented.

As part of its evaluative processes and duties, the State Board of Education leverages three separate, but interrelated systems to ensure equal operation of schools and equitable outcomes for all students: Approval, Accreditation, and Accountability.

- Approval denotes a school is meeting regulations and procedures outlined in rules promulgated by the State Board of Education and statutes outlining the legal operation, regulations, and procedures necessary to establish safe environments and access to educational opportunity for all students in public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools (Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-703).
- Accreditation emphasizes quality of programming and a focus on continuous improvement. All public schools must be approved and accredited. (Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-703).
- Accountability uses student related outcomes (ex. Graduation rate, student growth and proficiency on assessments) to measure the performance of individual public schools and school districts. (Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-760.06).

The State Board intends for the AQuESTT to serve as a framework for approval, accreditation, and accountability. The tenets of AQuESTT fall within three broad domains: Leadership; Success, Access, and Support; and Teaching, Learning, and Serving. AQuESTT includes tenets designed to address:

LEADERSHIP

Strong leaders, committed to achieving educational equity, are critical to the processes of approval, accreditation, accountability, and continuous improvement. Leaders, from school boards to superintendents, principals to teacher leaders, set a vision for achieving educational equity, which means students have meaningful access to the educational resources they need at the right moment, at the right level, and with the right intensity to not only reach high expectations for learning, but also to discover and explore their passions and make meaningful connections within the context of their postsecondary interests, careers, and civic lives. Leaders must possess the knowledge, skills, and mindset to systematize equity.

SUCCESS, ACCESS, AND SUPPORT DOMAIN

- Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success: Schools and districts implement best practices in student, family, and community engagement to enhance experiences and opportunities that are culturally inclusive and relevant for each student. Student success and engagement relies on positive partnerships and relationships to fundamentally improve the outcomes for each student, school, district, and community.
- Educational Opportunities and Access: Each student has access to effective, comprehensive, and continuous learning opportunities that prepare ongoing school success, postsecondary education, and career goals.
- Transitions: Quality educational opportunities focus on effective supports and high quality collaborations for each student transitioning within, into, and between grade levels, programs, schools, districts, postsecondary education, and careers.

TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SERVING DOMAIN

- Student Achievement and Growth: A balanced assessment system that includes results from multiple sources is used to measure student growth and achievement of Nebraska’s college and career ready standards. A balanced assessment system is a necessary part of the instructional process to improve achievement and growth for each student.
- Effective Educators: Each student is engaged by effective educators throughout their learning experiences, such that schools and districts develop effective teachers and school leaders who establish a culture of success.
- Postsecondary, Career, and Civic Readiness: Each student, upon high school graduation, is prepared for success in postsecondary education, career, and life pursuits.

The State Board believes in the integration of the components of approval, accreditation, and accountability into a system of continuous improvement and more intensive school improvement. This cohesive, streamlined system is critical for the benefit of Nebraska students and for the state to have a vibrant and economically successful future. In the operationalization of this differentiated accountability and support system, the NDE can better deliver upon the commitment for educational equity.

The AQuESTT accountability system will annually recognize and classify schools and districts (Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-760.06) as Excellent, Great, Good, and Needs Support for Improvement based on identified statutory criteria, and other evidence of activities of schools and districts to improve student achievement. The accountability system should be fair, transparent, sensitive to change, and be able to support improvement in schools, districts, and the Nebraska Department of Education to increase achievement for all Nebraska Students.

Revision History

- Created: 2015
- Reviewed: 2015, 2019
- Approved: 10/04/2019
- Expiration Date: 10/04/2023
- Implementation Date: 01/01/2020

Board Action History

- 10/02/2015 – Prior G2
(State Board adopts policy, formerly known as *Health Ed Framework*, expired 10/06/2012)
- 03/03/2017 – G2(S2)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. G2 is now S2.)
- 10/04/2019 – S2
(Update to reflect State Board’s Strategic Vision and Direction, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act and the development of Nebraska’s college and career ready standards.)
- 12/02/2022 – S2(PS 2)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S2 is now PS 2.)

Cross-References

- 92 NAC 10 (Rule 10)

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PS3

Foundational Literacy

The Nebraska State Board of Education supports and encourages systemic efforts to improve foundational literacy, working to ensure that all students become successful readers and writers. The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that all schools should establish policies that promote high-quality early literacy instruction that is grounded in evidence-based practices and that highlights the importance of grade-level reading. Foundational literacy instruction is essential to ensure all children become successful readers and writers. All students, including students with disabilities, English learners, and high-ability learners should have access to high-quality instructional materials and instruction.

All schools should:

- Understand that literacy development begins at birth and partner with families and communities to encourage strong early literacy connections.
- Promote the practice of adults reading aloud to students daily to foster their enjoyment of reading and expose them to rich spoken language.
- Provide tools and resources to students' caregivers and families that support early literacy development.
- Ensure all classrooms are "print-rich" environments, and that students have opportunities to engage with a wide range of high-quality literary and informational texts.
- Select and implement standards-aligned, high-quality instructional materials for English Language Arts.
- Develop and implement a curriculum scope and sequence of foundational writing instruction.
- Guarantee systematic and ongoing professional learning for all educators in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension within standards-based, core instruction.
- Ensure all students receive a strong sequence of explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Use the Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) to identify students in need of intervention that consists of targeted, supplemental instruction and progress monitoring.

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- Consider factors including vision, hearing, dyslexia, and other learning issues that may affect a student’s literacy development.

Revision History

- Created: 2002
- Reviewed: 2011, 2015, 2019, 2024
- Approved: 10/04/2019, 03/08/2024
- Expires: 10/04/2023, 03/08/2028

Board Action History:

- 06/07/2002 – G4
(NEW. Based on policy statement adopted 10/11/1997.)
- 10/06/2011 – G4
(Revised.)
- 04/03/2015 – G4
(Revised.)
- 03/03/2017 – G4(S3)
- (Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. G4 is now S3.)
- 10/04/2019 – S3
(Update to reflect the significant changes that have occurred with the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act.)
- 12/02/2022 – S3(PS 3)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S3 is now PS 3.)
- 03/08/2024

(Title amended from Early Literacy to Foundational Literacy. Content amended to expand scope to be more comprehensive across PK-12 learners).

Cross-References

- 92 NAC 10 (Rule 10)
- 92 NAC 11 (Rule 11)
- 92 NAC 14 (Rule 14)
- 92 NAC 24 (Rule 24)
- 92 NAC 51 (Rule 51)
- 92 NAC 52 (Rule 52)
- Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, Sections 79-2601 through 2607 R.R.S.

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PS 5

Expanded Learning Opportunities

The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that in order to help prepare future generations of Nebraska youth for success in life, Nebraska's schools, families and communities must work together to provide multiple opportunities for healthy growth, development and academic success.

The Nebraska State Board of Education recognizes that the traditional school calendar does not fit all students' needs. The typical school day may not provide adequate time for students needing additional educational and enrichment opportunities in order to experience academic success; particularly students who are limited English proficient, live in poverty, or those who may start the school year learning below their grade level. Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) programs build on, support, and enhance learning during times when students are not in school (before and after school, weekends, and summer) and are, therefore, a critical component of Nebraska's educational landscape and one that should be intentionally supported and developed in communities across our state.

Quality expanded learning principles include the following:

- Administration with sound management and well-developed systems
- College/career awareness and readiness
- Community-school partnerships and resource sharing
- Diverse, prepared staff including certificated educators
- Engaged learning
- Family engagement
- Intentional programming aligned with the school day program
- Ongoing assessment and improvement
- Participation, access and support during transitions

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- Safety, health, and wellness

The Board, therefore, encourages Nebraska school district partnerships with community stakeholders to adopt a vision for quality expanded learning opportunities.

Revision History

- Created: 2013
- Reviewed: 2017
- Approved: 10/06/2017
- Expires: 10/06/2021

Board Action History

- 09/06/2013 – G7
(NEW.)
- 03/03/2017 – G7(S5)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. G7 is now S5.)
- 10/06/2017 – S5
(Since last revision in 2013, AQuESTT has been adopted and incorporated into the program and the new language reflects same.)
- 12/02/2022 – S5(PS 5)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S5 is now PS 5.)

Cross-References

- Elements adapted from Afterschool Alliance www.afterschoolalliance.org
- Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-2501 through 79-2510
- 20 U.S.C. §7171 through 7176

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PS 10

Coordinated School Health

The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that education and health are intertwined. Healthy children learn better; children must be healthy mentally, physically, and socially. To achieve maximum success schools, families and communities must work together. A coordinated school health approach within the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model is designed to coordinate services, emphasize partnerships, and promote the physical, social, and cognitive development of children leading to improved student learning.

Preventable health risk behaviors formed in childhood persist into adulthood and are frequently interrelated. The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that the education system, in partnership with families and communities, should work together to address these health risk behaviors which, if left unattended, can lead to serious health problems and disabilities that are costly on families and the entire state of Nebraska.

The Board believes coordinated school health positively impacts student academic achievement and empowers students with knowledge, skills, and judgment essential to help them make healthy and responsible choices in life. The Board, therefore, encourages each Nebraska school district/building to adopt its own vision for student health and to plan, adopt, implement, evaluate, and periodically re-examine the effectiveness of coordinated school health within their district/school.

The Board encourages the following:

- I. Each school district/school develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan for coordinated school health based on the “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model” developed by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Components of coordinated school health should include, but not be limited to, health education; physical education and physical activity; nutrition services and environment; health services; physical environment; school counseling, psychological, and

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social services; social and emotional climate, employee wellness; and family and community engagement.

- II. Each school district establish a School Health Council and each school building establish a School Healthy Team that meets four times a year. In the alternative, a district may assign these activities to existing councils, committees or teams.
- III. Each district/school designate a School Health Coordinator to assist with implementing and evaluating coordinated school health.

Revision History

- Created: 2010
- Reviewed: 2013, 2017, 2020
- Approved: 05/05/2017
- Expires: 05/05/2021

Board Action History

- 03/02/2010 – G21
(NEW.)
- 04/09/2013 – G21
(Reaffirmed.)
- 03/03/2017 – G21(S10)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. G21 is now S10.)
- 05/05/2017 – S10
(Revised to include reference to ASCD and CDC “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model”.)
- 12/02/2022 – S10(PS 10)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S10 is now PS 10.)

Cross-References

- 92 NAC 10 (Rule 10)
- 79-712 R.R.S.

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PS 11

Digital Education

The Nebraska State Board of Education set forth a strategic vision and direction to ensure all Nebraskans, regardless of background or circumstances, have equitable access to opportunities for success and to increase the number of Nebraskans who are ready for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life.

The Guiding Principles used in developing the Digital Education Position Statement include:

- Ensure a student-centered approach that incorporates personalized learning to foster deeper learning competencies and greater skill development
- Support a dynamic vision that drives change through proactive leadership to support learning
- Build connections amongst stakeholders to take action in support of success for all learners
- Provide all Nebraskans significant opportunity to receive fair, equitable, and high quality education and services to close achievement gaps
- Allow all learners to achieve their fullest potential in transitioning through phases of school and into civic life
- Ensure all educators are effectively using instructional strategies and monitoring student progress using multiple measures of proficiency
- Prepare all learners to be college, career, and civic ready

Using these guiding principles, the State Board of Education believes that digital education and related supports must provide quality-learning opportunities for all Nebraska students and that Nebraska schools are Ready for the Future (Future Ready).

The State Board defines “digital education” as the teaching and learning through tools, resources, or approaches that are realized or carried out chiefly using or supported by technology. The approaches

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provide access to learners regardless of location and are broadly available through synchronous (real time), asynchronous (on demand), or blended (a combination) delivery models. The digital learning facilitated by technology gives students some element of control over time, place, path, and/or pace in pursuit of increased student engagement personalized learning.

The State Board of Education supports the development and implementation of statewide systems supporting quality digital education. These systems should promote effective instructional and assessment practices; enhance student learning; ensure equity of access, regardless of background and circumstances; promote effective evidence based practices for learning; and ensure quality professional digital learning experiences for educators.

The State Board of Education also believes that the pursuit of quality digital education must be supported through a solid infrastructure, including consistent broadband access, uses industry based technology and data standards, and must ensure the privacy and security of student information.

Finally, the State Board of Education supports the Department's creation and implementation of a statewide digital learning and educational technology plan that achieves the priorities of the NSBOE strategic plan and direction including a digital course and content repository, integration of resources for implementation, and addresses the following key areas:

- Budget and Resources
- Community Partnerships
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments
- Data and Privacy
- Personalized Professional Learning
- Robust Infrastructure
- Use of Space and Time

Revision History

- Created: 11/09/2012
- Reviewed: 2016, 2017
- Approved: 10/06/2017
- Expires: 10/06/2021

Board Action History

- 11/09/2012 – G6
(NEW.)
- 03/03/2017 – G6(S11)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. G6 is now S11.)
- 10/06/2017 – S11
(Completely restructured to be a position statement regarding Digital Education. Defines Digital Education, supports development and implementation of statewide systems for quality digital education and achieves the priorities of the State board’s strategic plan and direction.)
- 12/02/2022 – S11(PS 11)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S11 is now PS 11.)

Cross-References/Supporting References

- 79-1302, 79-1303, and 79-1304, R.R.S.
- Future Ready Schools Framework
- Nebraska Instructional Improvement Study Synthesis and Road Map
- ISTE 2016 Standards
- National Educational Technology Plan 2016
- North Carolina Digital Education Study
- LR 264 Study

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PS 12

Assessment of Student Learning

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-760.03 requires the State Board of Education to “implement a statewide system for the assessment of student learning and for reporting the performance of school districts and learning communities...” The assessment and reporting system shall measure student knowledge of the required academic content standards for reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The results of the statewide assessment are publicly reported, provide information to the public and policy makers, and provide a comparison among Nebraska public schools.

The State Board of Education recognizes the importance of assessment within quality teaching and learning systems. In addition to the requirements of law, the State Board of Education believes schools and districts should utilize a balanced assessment system that includes formative, interim, and summative assessments to inform instruction and program development, monitor progress, and evaluate student learning for all content areas and grade levels. Rule 10 highlights the important role assessment plays within the instructional process:

“Assessment procedures and results assist teachers in planning and providing appropriate instruction for all students. Assessment results also provide information for monitoring program success, and for reporting to parents, policymakers, and the community. Schools periodically review procedures to improve assessment quality and improve student learning. The information assists schools in establishing and achieving improvement goals.”

As outlined in the State Board of Education and Nebraska Department of Education Strategic Vision and Direction, assessments are used to measure and help improve student achievement by informing instruction. This outcome statement should be considered when developing, adopting, and maintaining balanced assessment systems. In addition, the following principles guide the continuous improvement of balanced assessment systems utilized by districts and supported by NDE.

Assessment should be:

- Focused on improved student learning: Measures growth to inform and guide instruction
- Purposeful: Utilizes a design that accomplishes articulated purpose(s)
- High quality: Aligns to state-approved content area standards and measures higher order thinking skills
- Time limited: Efficient while maximizing instructional time
- Fair: Free from bias and provides equitable access for all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities
- Transparent to stakeholders: Provides information that is timely, understandable, and easily accessible to students, teachers, parents, and policy-makers

All NDE work undertaken in the efforts to develop, adopt, or maintain a statewide assessment system or support districts in balanced assessment efforts should be informed by these guidelines. The NDE will engage with Nebraska educators to achieve balanced assessment systems for the benefit of all Nebraska students.

Revision History

- Created: 2017
- Reviewed: 2017, 2020
- Approved: 09/08/2017
- Expiration Date: 09/08/2021

Board Action History

- 09/08/2017 – S12
(NEW.)
- 12/02/2022 – S12(PS 12)
(Reorganized Board statements and policies with new designated letters for categories of position statements [PS], model policies [MP], and resolutions [RS]. S12 is now PS 12.)

Cross-References

- [Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-760.03](#)

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