




Nebraska's Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Nebraska Department of Education

July 8, 2024

Approved: January 3, 2025

Contact Information and Signatures	
SEA Contact (Name and Position): Beth Wooster Administrator, Office of ESEA Federal Programs	Telephone: 402.310.3190
Mailing Address: 500 S 84 th St., 2 nd Floor P.O. Box 94987 Lincoln, NE 68509-4987	Email Address: beth.wooster@nebraska.gov
<p>By signing this document, I assure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct. • The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304. • Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers. 	
Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name) Dr. Brian L. Maher Commissioner of Education	Telephone: 402.471.5021
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative 	Date: January 6, 2025
Governor (Printed Name)	
Signature of Governor	Date:

Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

Instructions: Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the SEA included in its consolidated State plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated State plan, but is eligible and wishes to receive funds under the program(s), it must submit individual program plans for those programs that meet all statutory and regulatory requirements with its consolidated State plan in a single submission.

☒ Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated State plan.

Or

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below that the SEA includes in its consolidated State plan:

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below that the SEA includes in its consolidated State plan:

- ☐ Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- ☐ Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children
- ☐ Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- ☐ Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- ☐ Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- ☐ Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- ☐ Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- ☐ Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
- ☐ Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (McKinney-Vento Act)

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory and Regulatory Requirements	Item(s) from Revised Template	Item(s) from Original Template
Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)	Citation to ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, and Part 200 regulations		
Eighth Grade Math Exception	1111(b)(2)(C); 34 CFR 200.5(b)	A.2.i-iii	3.A
Native Language Assessments	1111(b)(2)(F); 34 CFR 200.6(f)(2)(ii) and (f)(4)	A.3.i-iv	3.B
Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities (1111(c) and (d))			
Subgroups	1111(c)(2)	A.4.i.a-d	4.1.B
Minimum N-Size	1111(c)(3)	A.4.ii.a-e	4.1.C
Establishment of Long-Term Goals	1111(c)(4)(A)	A.4.iii.a-c	1.A-C
Indicators	1111(c)(4)(B)	A.4.iv.a-e	4.1.A
Annual Meaningful Differentiation	1111(c)(4)(C)	A.4.v.a-c	4.1.D; 4.1.G
Identification of Schools	1111(c)(4)(C)(iii) and (D); 1111(d)(2)(C)- (D)	A.4.vi.a-g	4.2.A-B
Annual Measurement of Achievement	1111(c)(4)(E)(iii)	A.4.vii	4.1.E
Continued Support for School and LEA Improvement	1111(d)(3)	A.4.viii.a-f	4.2.A.ii; 4.2.B.iii; 4.3.B-D

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory and Regulatory Requirements	Item(s) from Revised Template	Item(s) from Original Template
Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators	1111(g)(1) (B)	A.5	5.3.B-C
School Conditions	1111(g)(1)(C)	A.6	6.1.C
School Transitions	1111(g)(1)(D)	A.7	6.1.A-B
Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children			
Supporting Needs of Migratory Children	1304(b)(1)	B.1.i-iv	6.2.B.ii –iii and vi
Promote Coordination of Services	1304(b)(3)	B.2	6.2.B.iv
Use of Funds	1304(b)(4)	B.3	6.2.B.viii
Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk			
Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs	1414(a)(1)(B)	C.1	6.2.C.i
Program Objectives and Outcomes	1414(a)(2)(A)	C.2	6.2.C.ii
Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction			
Use of Funds	2101(d)(2)(A) and (D)	D.1	5.2.A
Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools	2101(d)(2)(E)	D.2	5.2.A; 5.3.E
System of Certification and Licensing	2101(d)(2)(B)	D.3	5.1.A
Improving Skills of Educators	2101(d)(2)(J)	D.4	5.2.B
Data and Consultation	2101(d)(2)(K)	D.5	2.C-D
Teacher Preparation	2101(d)(2)(M)	D.6	5.1.B
Title III, Part A, Subpart 1: English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement			
Entrance and Exit Procedures	3113(b)(2)	E.1	6.2.D.i

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory and Regulatory Requirements	Item(s) from Revised Template	Item(s) from Original Template
SEA Support for English Learner Progress	3113(b)(6)	E.2.i-ii	--
Monitoring and Technical Assistance	3113(b)(8)	E.3.i-ii	2.2.B and D
Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants			
Use of Funds	4103(c)(2)(A)	F.1	6.1.A-E
Awarding Subgrants	4103(c)(2)(B)	F.2	--
Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers			
Use of Funds	4203(a)(2)	G.1	6.2.E.i
Awarding Subgrants	4203(a)(4)	G.2	6.2.E.ii
Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program			
Outcomes and Objectives	5223(b)(1)	H.1	6.2.F.i
Technical Assistance	5223(b)(3)	H.2	2.2.D
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B	McKinney-Vento Citation		
Student Identification	722(g)(1)(B)	I.1	6.2.G.i
Dispute Resolution	722(g)(1)(C)	I.2	6.2.G.iii
Support for School Personnel	722(g)(1)(D)	I.3	6.2.G.ii
Access to Services	722(g)(1)(F)(i)	I.4	6.2.G.v.1 and 2; 6.2.G.iv
Strategies to Address Other Problems	722(g)(1)(H)	I.5.i-v	6.2.G.vi
Policies to Remove Barriers	722(g)(1)(I)	I.6	6.2.G.vi
Assistance from Counselors	722(g)(1)(K)	I.7	--

Executive Summary

Nebraska's motto has long been "The Good Life." This sense of the state being a great place to live, learn, and work is driven in large part by a strong public school system. From Falls City to Sioux County, Nebraska public schools serve nearly 330,000 students in 244 public school districts. Each day, 25,000 teachers and school leaders walk into over 1,000 schools to meet the growing needs of our students. And the data show, they are doing a great job.

According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Nebraska:

- Scored the highest among states in 4th Grade Math
- Was second in 8th grade math among states
- Landed fourth in 4th grade reading, and 8th in 8th grade reading.

At the high school level, Nebraska continued to lead. Of states with more than 90% of students taking the ACT, only *two states score* slightly higher than Nebraska.

The state has emerged from the pandemic strong, while acknowledging the need to focus resources even more acutely on schools and for student groups that have not seen the same growth and recovery.

Additionally, in 2022, the Nebraska Legislature introduced LR335, which established a statewide attainment goal. Specifically for the State of Nebraska to ensure at least seventy percent of 25 to 34 year-old Nebraskans have a degree, certificate, diploma, or other postsecondary or industry-recognized credential with economic value by 2030.

To build towards this goal and to focus attention and resources on schools needing additional support to improve, the Nebraska Department of Education will use this plan to share its vision for leveraging Federal funding from the Every Student Succeeds Act to ensure accountability and support for schools, address the educator shortage and ensure all students have access to effective educators, and create a coherent system whereby the myriad programs in ESSA are focused and aligned.

Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations, and Acronyms

Term	Definition
4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	The percentage of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the cohort for the graduating class.
7-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	The percentage of students who graduate in seven years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the cohort for the graduating class.
NSCAS-ACT	Standardized college readiness assessments
AQuESTT	Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow; Nebraska's school and district accountability system
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
Children with Disabilities	Children who require special education services or those who have one or more disabilities such as autism, communication disorders, deaf blindness, emotional disturbances, hearing impairments, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, or visual impairments, including blindness.
Chronic Absenteeism	A student is identified as chronically absent when a district reports they have not been present for 10 percent or more of the days "in membership" at a school. "Membership" is defined as the number of school days in session in which the student is enrolled and registered during the annual reporting period from July 1 to June 30.
CTE	Career and Technical Education
Economically Disadvantaged	Low-income students who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch and students who are homeless, migrant, or runaways.
ELA	English language arts
ELP	English language proficiency
ELPA21	ELPA21 is a group of states that designed and developed an assessment system for English Learners. The system is based on the English Language Proficiency Standards and addresses language demands needed to be college and career ready
English Learner (EL)	Students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses
EPPs	Educator Preparation Programs
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
ESU	Educational Service Unit
Formula Grant	Noncompetitive grant which awards funds based on a predetermined formula
Growth	An adjustment to the Status rating may be made based on the percent of NeSA scores that showed improvement compared to the same individual's performance in the previous year. (Since high school students only take the ACT once, Growth does not apply.)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – law ensuring services to children with disabilities
IEP	Individualized Education Plan – plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services
LEA	Local Education Agency – public school district
NDE	The Nebraska Department of Education
NSCAS	Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System
Non-Proficiency	An adjustment to the overall classification rating is made based on a decreasing or increasing three-year trend of the percentage of NSCAS or ACT assessment scores that are defined as non-proficient.
n-size	Minimum student group size

Term	Definition
NTPPS	Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards
Participation Rate	The percentage of students participating in state assessments
Present	Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 2 states “Students shall be counted in attendance when they are present on days when school is in session. A student shall be counted present only when he or she is actually at the school or is present at a school sponsored activity which is supervised by a member or members of the school staff. This may include authorized independent study, work-study programs, field trips, athletic contests, music festivals, student conventions, instruction for homebound students, or similar activities when officially authorized under policies of the local school board. It does not include "making up" school-work at home or activities supervised or sponsored by private individuals or groups.
Priority School	Nebraska state law allows for no fewer than three schools to be identified as Priority Schools from the Needs Support to Improve classification in AQuESTT These schools receive increased supports and guidance from Nebraska Department of Education, ESUs, and other stakeholders.
Rule 10	All public school districts in Nebraska that provide elementary and/or secondary instruction to children of compulsory attendance age are required to be accredited under the provisions of Rule 10.
SEA	State Education Agency (Nebraska Department of Education)
Status	Rating based on percent of students proficient on NSCAS-ELA and math for grades 3-8, and ACT for high schools.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
Subgroup	A group of students disaggregated from all students. Includes specific racial/ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English Learner students.

Section 1 – Establishment of Long-Term Goals

Establishment of Long-Term Goals (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)):

a. Academic Achievement. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(aa))

1. *Describe the long-term goals for improved academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments, for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.*

The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education is to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living. To accomplish this mission, Nebraska holds high expectations for **all** students, and has set ambitious long-term goals and interim benchmarks to match those expectations.

The NDE has set its target as a **50 percent reduction in non-proficient students** as measured by statewide assessments. To calculate these goals, the current percentage of students proficient for all students and each student group is subtracted from 100 percent and then divided by two. This figure is then added back to the current percent proficient to arrive at the 10-year goal.

Rationale

In August 2023, the Nebraska State Board of Education approved new cut scores for the NSCAS assessment. These cuts were reset due to changes to the administration of the NSCAS-ELA and math, a regularly scheduled update to the content area standards, and constituent feedback. The cut scores established new baselines on which long term goals are based.

The goals established by this model are meant to be ambitious, yet attainable and would narrow the achievement gaps between historically underserved groups statewide over the next 10 years. The interim goal charts show the narrowing of gaps in terms of the percent of students proficient at the state level. Another advantage of this model is that all groups and schools must see improvement in percentages of students proficient regardless of starting point.

Table 1 – Long-Term Goals for English Language Arts

Student Group	2022-23 Baseline	2032-33 Long-Term Goal
All Students	56%	78%
English Learner	29%	64.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	41%	70.5%
Students with Disabilities	25%	62.5%
American Indian/Native American	29%	64.5%
Asian	60%	80%
Black	31%	65.5%
Hispanic/Latinx	38%	69%
Multiple Races	52%	76%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	42%	71%
White	65%	82.5%

Table 2 – Long-Term Goals for Math

Student Group	2022-23 Baseline	2032-33 Long-Term Goal
All Students	58%	79%
English Learner	31%	65.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	42%	71%
Students with Disabilities	27%	63.5%
American Indian/Native American	28%	64%
Asian	62%	81%
Black	27%	63.5%
Hispanic/Latinx	39%	69.5%
Multiple Races	50%	75%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	49%	74.5%
White	69%	84.5%

2. *Provide the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement.*

The interim measures of progress are developed by establishing the 50% reduction goal, and subsequently breaking down the goal into annual benchmarks.

Table 3 – Interim Benchmarks for English Language Arts

School Year	All Students	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	American Indian / Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple Races	Pacific Islander	White
2022-23 Baseline	56	29	41	25	29	60	31	38	52	42	65
2023-24	58.2	32.55	43.95	28.75	32.55	62	34.45	41.1	54.4	44.9	66.75
2024-25	60.4	36.1	46.9	32.5	36.1	64	37.9	44.2	56.8	47.8	68.5
2025-26	62.6	39.65	49.85	36.25	39.65	66	41.35	47.3	59.2	50.7	70.25
2026-27	64.8	43.2	52.8	40	43.2	68	44.8	50.4	61.6	53.6	72
2027-28	67	46.75	55.75	43.75	46.75	70	48.25	53.5	64	56.5	73.75
2028-29	69.2	50.3	58.7	47.5	50.3	72	51.7	56.6	66.4	59.4	75.5
2029-30	71.4	53.85	61.65	51.25	53.85	74	55.15	59.7	68.8	62.3	77.25
2030-31	73.6	57.4	64.6	55	57.4	76	58.6	62.8	71.2	65.2	79
2031-32	75.8	60.95	67.55	58.75	60.95	78	62.05	65.9	73.6	68.1	80.75
2032-33	78	64.5	70.5	62.5	64.5	80	65.5	69	76	71	82.5
Growth per Year	2.2	3.55	2.95	3.75	3.55	2	3.45	3.1	2.4	2.9	1.75

Table 4 – Interim Benchmarks for Math

School Year	All Students	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	American Indian / Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple Races	Pacific Islander	White
2022-23 Baseline	58	31	42	27	28	62	27	39	50	49	69
2023-24	60.1	34.45	44.9	30.65	31.6	63.9	30.65	42.05	52.5	51.55	70.55
2024-25	62.2	37.9	47.8	34.3	35.2	65.8	34.3	45.10	55	54.1	72.1
2025-26	64.3	41.35	50.7	37.95	38.8	67.7	37.95	48.15	57.5	56.65	73.65
2026-27	66.4	44.8	53.6	41.6	42.4	69.6	41.6	51.2	60	59.2	75.2
2027-28	68.5	48.25	56.5	45.25	46	71.5	45.25	54.25	62.5	61.75	76.75
2028-29	70.6	51.7	59.4	48.9	49.6	73.4	48.9	57.3	65	64.3	78.3
2029-30	72.7	55.15	62.3	52.55	53.2	75.3	52.55	60.35	67.5	66.85	79.85
2030-31	74.8	58.6	65.2	56.2	56.8	77.2	56.2	63.4	70	69.4	81.4
2031-32	76.9	62.05	68.1	59.85	60.4	79.1	59.85	66.45	72.5	71.95	82.95
2032-33	79	65.5	71	63.5	64	81	63.5	69.5	75	74.5	84.5
Growth per Year	2.1	3.45	2.9	3.65	3.6	1.9	3.65	3.05	2.5	2.55	1.55

3. *Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for academic achievement take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps.*

Nebraska’s ambitious state goals are designed to ensure high expectations for all learners and all student groups. All groups share the overarching goal to increase the number of proficient students by 50% in 10 years. This goal is grounded in baseline data specific to each student group, resulting in unique goals and interim progress necessary for each group. The approach relies upon a foundation of understanding that less proficient student groups are more likely to improve at a faster rate when compared to those student groups with already high proficiency rates. Ultimately, this approach ensures a high degree of rigor and substantially closes the achievement gap.

b. Graduation Rate. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(bb))

1. *Describe the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.*

*Table 5 – Long-Term Goals for Four-Year Graduation Rate**

Student Group	2023 Baseline	2033 Long-Term Goal
All Students	87	93.5
English Learner	53	76.5
Economically Disadvantaged	79	89.5
Students with Disabilities	67	83.5
American Indian/Native American	74	87
Asian	88	94
Black	76	88
Hispanic/Latinx	77	88.5
Multiple Races	81	90.5
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	85	92.5
White	92	96

*These data represent the adjusted cohort graduation rate of students who were set to graduate in 2023.

2. *If applicable, describe the long-term goals for each extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, including (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious; and (iv) how the long-term goals are more rigorous than the long-term goal set for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.*

Nebraska uses the seven-year graduation rate in accountability. The data below represent the 7-year cohort graduation rate for the 2020 graduating class.

Table 6 – Seven-Year Graduation Rate

Student Group	2023 Baseline	2033 Long-Term Goal
All Students	91	95.5
English Learner	65	82.5
Economically Disadvantaged	86	93
Students with Disabilities	79	89.5
American Indian/Native American	78	89
Asian	91	95.5
Black	82	91
Hispanic/Latinx	83	91.5
Multiple Races	87	93.5
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	76	88
White	94	97

3. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

Table 7 - Interim Benchmarks for Four-Year Graduation Rates

School Year	All Students	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	American Indian / Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple Races	Pacific Islander	White
2022-23 Baseline	87	53	79	67	74	88	76	77	81	85	92
2023-24	87.65	55.35	80.05	68.65	75.3	88.6	77.2	78.15	81.95	85.75	92.4
2024-25	88.3	57.7	81.1	70.3	76.6	89.2	78.4	79.3	82.9	86.5	92.8
2025-26	88.95	60.05	82.15	71.95	77.9	89.8	79.6	80.45	83.85	87.25	93.2
2026-27	89.6	62.4	83.2	73.6	79.2	90.4	80.8	81.6	84.8	88	93.6
2027-28	90.25	64.75	84.25	75.25	80.5	91	82	82.75	85.75	88.75	94
2028-29	90.9	67.1	85.3	76.9	81.8	91.6	83.2	83.9	86.7	89.5	94.4
2029-30	91.55	69.45	86.35	78.55	83.1	92.2	84.4	85.05	87.65	90.25	94.8
2030-31	92.2	71.8	87.4	80.2	84.4	92.8	85.6	86.2	88.6	91	95.2
2031-32	92.85	74.15	88.45	81.85	85.7	93.4	86.8	87.35	89.55	91.75	95.6
2032-33	93.5	76.5	89.5	83.5	87	94	88	88.5	90.5	92.5	96
Growth per Year	0.65	2.35	1.05	1.65	1.3	0.6	1.2	1.15	0.95	0.75	.4

Table 8 – Interim Benchmarks for Seven-Year Extended Graduation Rate

School Year	All Students	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	American Indian / Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple Races	Pacific Islander	White
2022-23 Baseline	91	65	86	79	78	91	82	83	87	76	94
2023-24	91.45	66.75	86.7	80.05	79.1	91.45	82.9	83.85	87.65	77.2	94.3
2024-25	91.9	68.5	87.4	81.1	80.2	91.9	83.8	84.7	88.3	78.4	94.6
2025-26	92.35	70.25	88.1	82.15	81.3	92.35	84.7	85.55	88.95	79.6	94.9
2026-27	92.8	72	88.8	83.2	82.4	92.8	85.6	86.4	89.6	80.8	95.2
2027-28	93.25	73.75	89.5	84.25	83.5	93.25	86.5	87.25	90.25	82	95.5
2028-29	93.7	75.5	90.2	85.3	84.6	93.7	87.4	88.1	90.9	83.2	95.8
2029-30	94.15	77.25	90.9	86.35	85.7	94.15	88.3	88.95	91.55	84.4	96.1
2030-31	94.6	79	91.6	87.4	86.8	94.6	89.2	89.8	92.2	85.6	96.4
2031-32	95.05	80.75	92.3	88.45	87.9	95.05	90.1	90.65	92.85	86.8	96.7
2032-33	95.5	82.5	93	89.5	89	95.5	91	91.5	93.5	88	97
Growth per Year	0.45	1.75	0.7	1.05	1.1	0.45	0.9	0.85	0.65	1.2	0.3

4. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide graduation rate gaps.

c. English Language Proficiency. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii))

1. Describe the long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the State-determined timeline for such students to achieve English language proficiency; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

In the 2023-24 school year, 9 percent of Nebraska students were considered English learners. The NDE uses the ELPA21 to measure students' abilities to read, write, speak, and listen to English. A student's proficiency level on their first ELPA21 assessment sets the baseline level, and expected progress toward proficiency as detailed below.

Table 8 – English Learner Progression Chart

Baseline Year	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Emerging Low	Emerging High	Progressing Low	Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient
Emerging High	Progressing Low	Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient	
Progressing Low	Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient		
Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient			
Progressing High	Proficient				

A student is considered “On Track” when they move up a proficiency level based on their individual expected progress or path toward proficiency. A student will be considered for “Partial Progress” if they are off track, but still moved up a proficiency level. For the purposes of calculating this long-term goal, On Track and Partial Progress are combined.

Table 9 – Long-Term Goals for English Learners

	2022-23 Benchmark	2032-33 Goal
Percent of ELs making Progress Toward Proficiency	46%	73%

Table 10 – Interim Benchmarks for English Learners

School Year	Percent English Learners On Track or Making Partial Progress
2022-23 Baseline	46
2023-24	48.7
2024-25	51.4
2025-26	54.1
2026-27	56.8
2027-28	59.5
2028-29	62.2
2029-30	64.9
2030-31	67.6
2031-32	70.3
2032-33	73
Growth per Year	2.7

Section 2 – Consultation and Performance Management

Instructions: Each SEA must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with stakeholders in developing its consolidated State plan, consistent with 34 C.F.R. §§ 299.13 (b) and 299.15 (a). The stakeholders must include the following individuals and entities and reflect the geographic diversity of the State:

- *The Governor or appropriate officials from the Governor’s office;*
- *Members of the State legislature;*
- *Members of the State board of education,*
- *LEAs, including LEAs in rural areas;*
- *Representatives of Indian tribes located in the State;*
- *Teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals;*
- *Charter school leaders, if applicable;*
- *Parents and families;*
- *Community-based organizations;*
- *Civil rights organizations, including those representing students with disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved students;*
- *Institutions of higher education (IHEs);*
- *Employers;*
- *Representatives of private school students;*
- *Early childhood educators and leaders; and*
- *The public.*

Each SEA must meet the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(b)(1)-(3) to provide information that is:

- 1. Be in an understandable and uniform format;*
- 2. Be, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and*
- 3. Be, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12102, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.*

Consultation for the ESSA plan has come in two parts – the original ESSA plan consultation in 2017 and 2018 and more recent consultation, pertaining specifically to updates to long term goals and accountability and school support.

Public Notice. *Provide evidence that the SEA met the public notice requirements, under 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), relating to the SEA’s processes and procedures for developing and adopting its consolidated State plan.*

The NDE posted the draft ESSA plan amendment, executive summary, and link to provide comments on its federal programs webpage (<https://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/>) for

nearly three weeks. Notification of this posting was emailed to public and non-public school leaders, and also included on the home page education.ne.gov.

Outreach and Input. *For the components of the consolidated State plan including Challenging Academic Assessments; Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools; Supporting Excellent Educators; and Supporting All Students, describe how the SEA:*

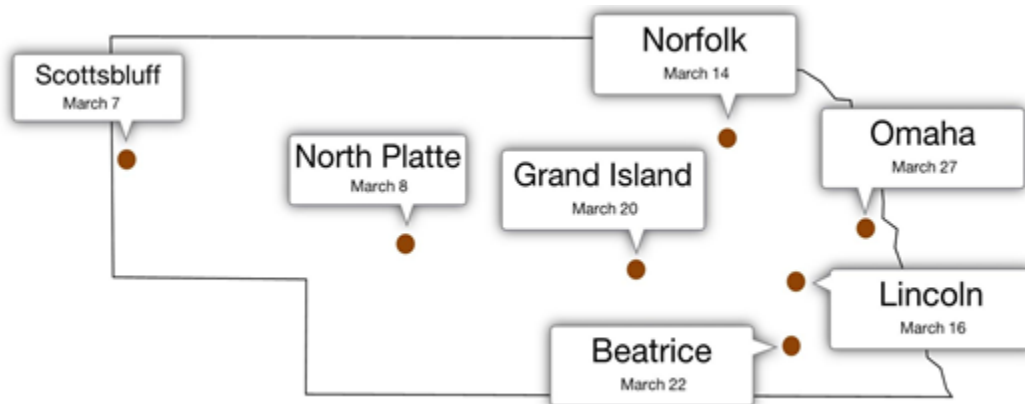
Conducted outreach to and solicited input from the individuals and entities listed above, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), during the design and development of the SEA's plans to implement the programs that the SEA has indicated it will include in its consolidated State plan; and following the completion of its initial consolidated State plan by making the plan available for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days prior to submitting the consolidated State plan to the Department for review and approval.

Outreach During Initial Planning Stages

Significant stakeholder feedback was conducted during the original submission of Nebraska's Consolidated State Plan. Thousands of stakeholders participated in on-site listening sessions, public surveys, and targeted feedback on specific sections of the plan. Highlights of this outreach are detailed below.

ESSA Stakeholders Listening Tour

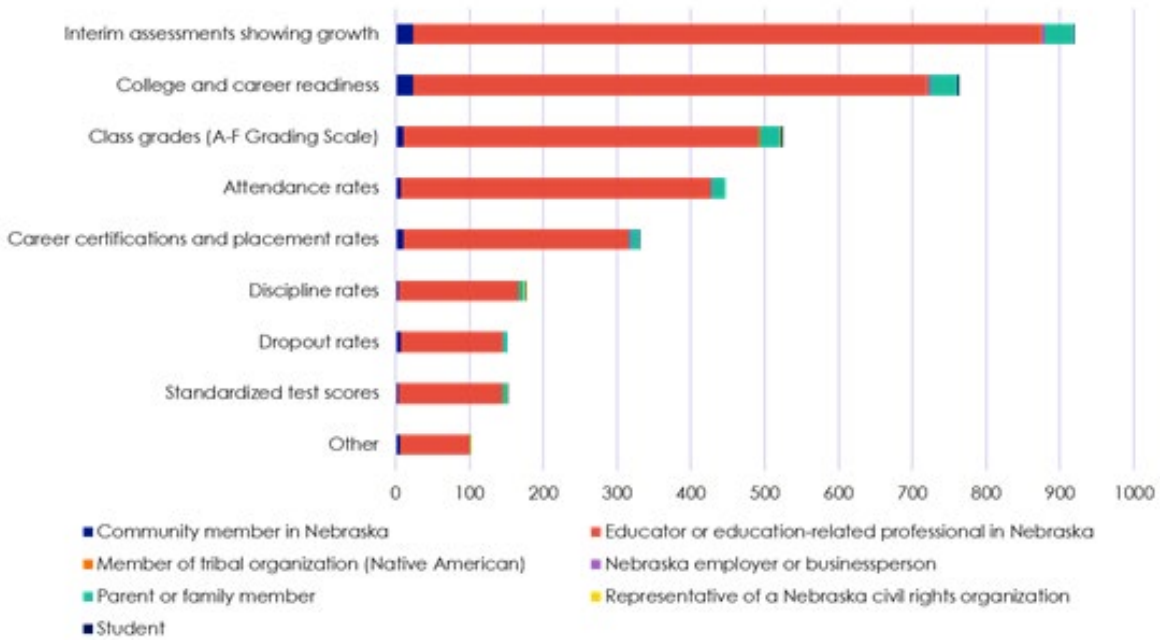
Meetings were held in March of 2017 at seven locations across the state.



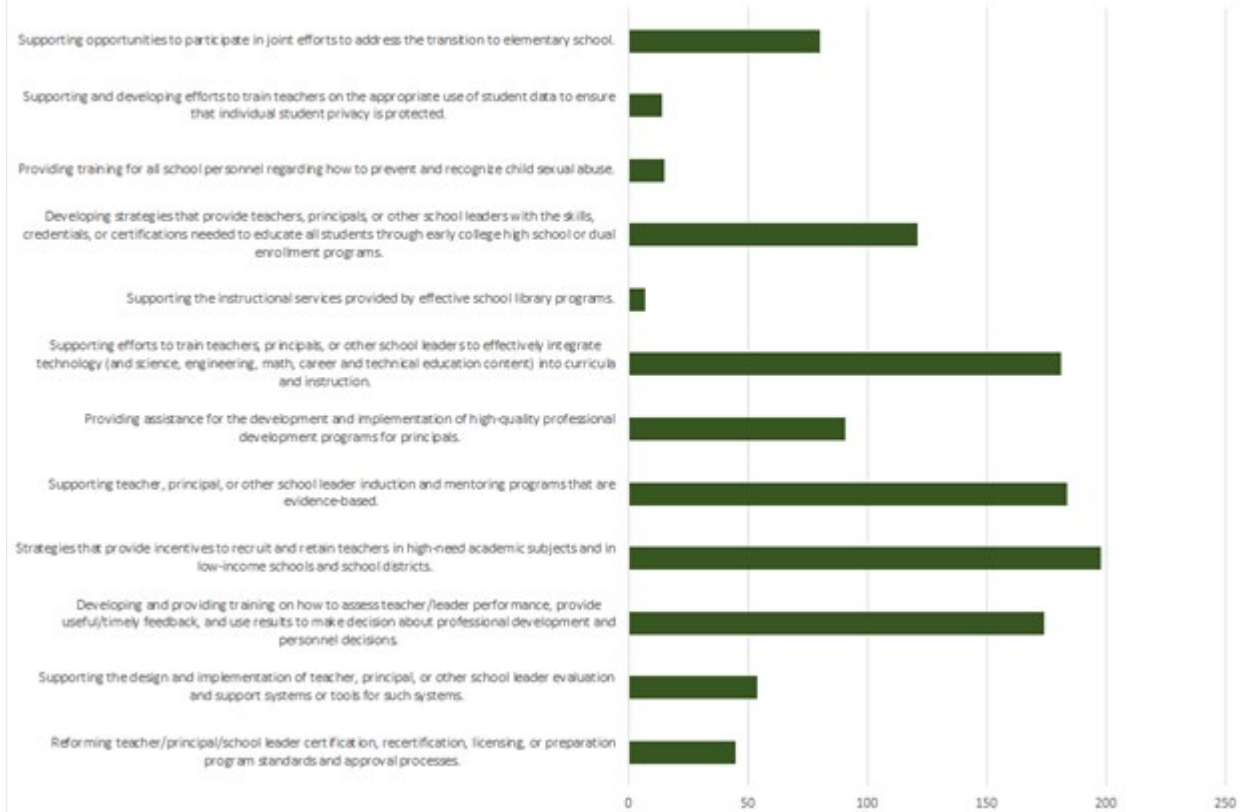
Stakeholder Survey

A stakeholder survey received almost 1400 responses from constituents. Subsequent feedback impacted design of the accountability system and use of set aside funds. Screenshots of the findings can be seen below.

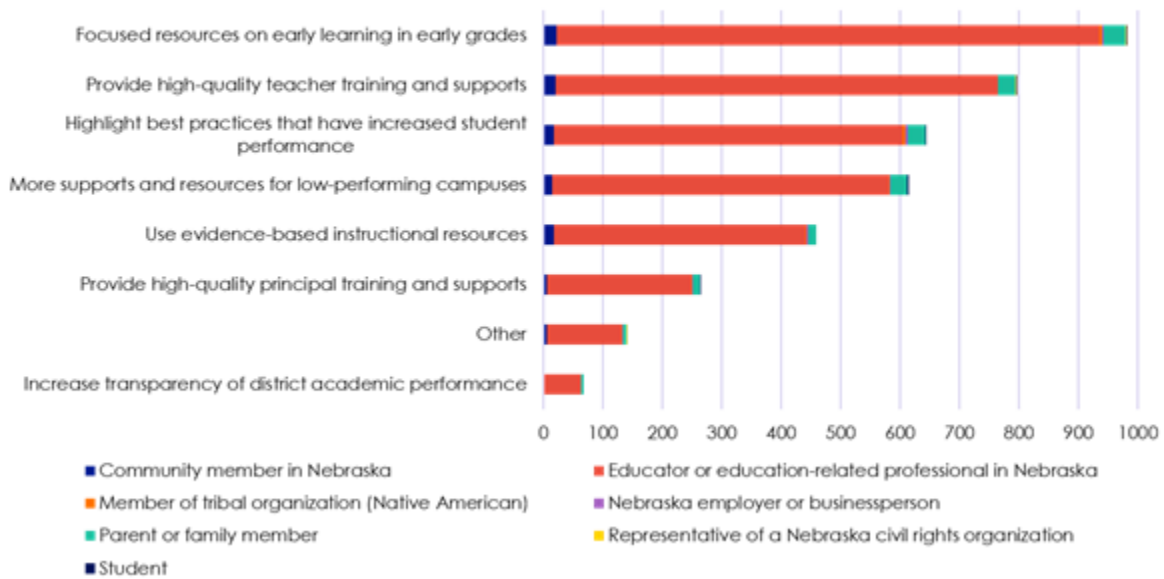
"How should student success be measured?"



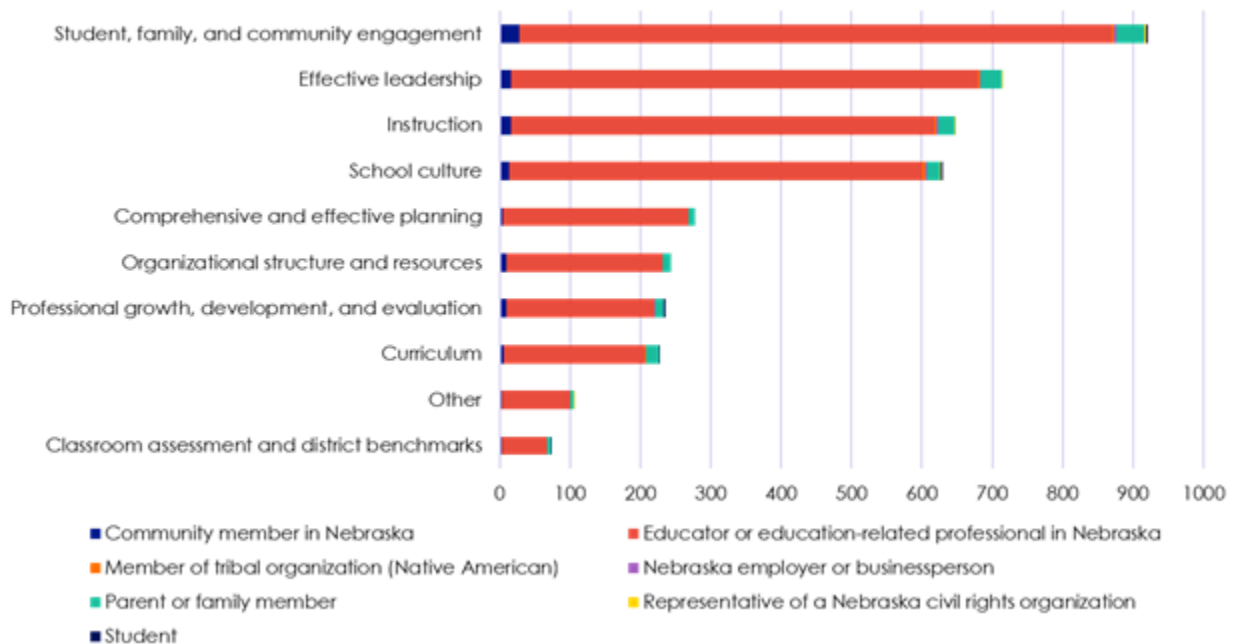
Frequency of Preference for Utilization of SEA Title II-A Funding



"How can we ensure that all Nebraska students, especially those with disabilities or those who are historically disadvantaged, have quality education that prepares them for success?"



"Which of the following are most critical to improving a low-performing school?"



Engagement Beyond 2018

Since the approval of Nebraska's State Plan in 2018, the NDE has delivered upon much of the original plan, including the designation of schools for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) for the first time in December 2018 and targeted support and improvement (TSI) and additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) beginning in 2019.

The NDE also established two positions and offices to deliver upon the promises outlined in the ESSA plan: School Transformation Officer and Equity Officer and Offices of School and District Support and Student Support Services. These designations and supports have created a tiered system to differentiate, focus, and intensify assistance for schools with varied needs.

Furthermore, since its plan acceptance in 2018, the NDE has deepened its supports to building effective educators through the revisions of the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS) and development of the Nebraska Leadership and Learning Network (NLLN). The NTPPS and NLLN put a premium on building equity-driven educators and sharing a common vision for teaching excellence.

Throughout all of these processes, significant and sustained input, outreach, and feedback from stakeholders have been leveraged.

AQuESTT Advisory Group (2021-22)

The NDE worked with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) from 2021 to 2022 to design a next-generation school accountability system that is balanced, coherent, and technically defensible. The Center's approach to such work started with a broad-based design group comprising individuals with both policy and technical expertise. To this end, NDE re-established the AQuESTT Advisory Group (AAG), with a purpose of identifying key design priorities and directions for the AQuESTT system. The resulting design should singularly satisfy state and federal requirements while also serving as a more stable system, intended to be predictable and unchanging.

NDE staff identified a broadly representative group of stakeholders from large and small schools and districts, regional service agencies, called ESUs, school boards, higher education, parents, advocacy organizations, and the state board to participate in the AAG. Facilitated by Center staff, the group convened remotely and in person seven times between June 2021 - June 2022 to help the NDE identify the key priorities guiding the revision of the state's accountability system under the ESSA.

The focus of the meetings were:

- Meeting 1: Advisory group process; overview of AQuESTT; considerations for school accountability
- Meeting 2: Theory of action; design priorities
- Meeting 3: Theory of action and design, continued
- Meeting 4: System components: academic achievement and academic growth
- Meeting 5: System components: academic achievement and post-secondary readiness
- Meeting 6: System components: academic growth, post-secondary readiness, graduation rate, aggregation and identifications

- Meeting 7: System components: post-secondary readiness, school quality and student success, progress in attaining English language proficiency, aggregation, identification, and reporting

Feedback from the AQuESTT Advisory Group was used to inform the state's accountability addendum in 2022, and amendment in 2023. The full report can be found [here](#).

Superintendent Advisory Committee

In 2023, the Superintendent Advisory Committee was reestablished. This group is comprised of 32 superintendents or ESU leaders representing the state's geographic diversity. The Superintendent Advisory provides expert input and feedback to the Commissioner on myriad topics, but recently have shared input on the state's assessment and accountability systems. Most of the feedback will be incorporated into future accountability revisions.

Committee of Practitioners

The Committee of Practitioners (COP) has provided significant feedback, specifically on the state's long-term goals and plans for use of Title II funds to support the recruitment, retention, and development of teachers.

The COP met to provide feedback and affirmation of the ESSA plan in Spring 2024. Small group teams provided minor feedback on wording, sought clarity on calculations for designations, and asked questions about specific programmatic updates in Section 6.

Higher Education Engagement

The Nebraska Colleges of Teacher Education (NCTE) is a state body comprised of educators and higher education representatives. This entity provided feedback on the Title II provisions detailed below.

Nebraska's Supporting Effective Educators through Development (SEED) is focused on implementing the state's teacher and principal performance standards. This team connects often with institutes of higher education as it carries out the majority of work centered on improving access to effective educators.

State Board Engagement and Approval

The State Board of Education has been deeply involved in shaping the contents of the ESSA amendment, beginning last year with major changes to Section 4: Accountability, Support, and Improvement. The State Board continued their review of the ESSA plan, beginning fall 2023, and provided input through a work session in December 2023. The Board approved the plan for resubmission in February 2024.

Governor's consultation. *Describe how the SEA consulted in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor consistent with section 8540 of the ESEA, including whether officials from the SEA and the Governor's office met during the development of this plan and prior to the submission of this plan.*

Governor's consultation is ongoing.

A. Review and Approval of LEA Plans

Describe the SEA's process for supporting the development, review, and approval of LEA plans in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The description should include a discussion of how the SEA will determine if LEA activities align with: 1) the specific needs of the LEA, and 2) the SEA's consolidated State plan.

Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, Nebraska's first consolidated application was put into place. Included in the application were Title I-A, Title I-C, Title I-D, Title II-A, Title II-D, Title III-LEP, Title III-IE, Title IV-A, and Title V. Following a Title I-C federal monitoring visit, it was decided to pull that section of the application and make it a stand-alone application. All other grant programs remained as part of the NCLB Consolidated Application, dependent on continued funding.

Individual LEA formula grant applications are processed by the SEA annually for Migrant, 21st Century, Homeless and RLIS (REAP) funds, via an electronic submission via the state's grants management system.

All funding for Title I -V programs is provided on a reimbursement basis to the LEA, by filing requests for such reimbursement with the SEA. SEA staff members review all requests, accompanied by any required documentation to ensure that approvable expenses align with the original, or subsequently amended version, of the LEA's grant and are allowable expenditures matching federal requirements. Requests for reimbursement of Title I-V funds must be made within the federal deadlines prescribed for the grant period for which the grant is valid.

Each Federal Programs Consultant is assigned to review and recommend for final approval both the ESSA Consolidated Applications and separate LEA applications for other Title programs not contained in the Consolidated Application for their designated LEA. Review and approval of each application is made based on the ESEA Consolidated Application Review Checklist containing all components required under ESEA for each Title program. These Checklists ensure that all goals and activities contained within each LEA application align with the comprehensive needs assessment conducted by the LEA.

LEAs are required to document their identified needs through the collection and reporting of student performance data. Such data must also be linked to a reliable means of evaluating the level of success obtained by the LEA in meeting the goals listed in the ESEA Consolidated Application.

Any corrections or additions required as a result of not meeting all components of these respective checklists are made through returning, correcting, and submitting the entire grant application for another review and approval process. This review/correction and approval process is typically completed within a 30-45-day window to ensure that each LEA can make the most efficient use of the ESEA approved funds and have the greatest amount of time to implement its programs with fidelity. Each LEA application is evaluated on its own merit, with respect to the unique identified needs of the LEA, but regardless of the size of the ESEA allocations, or the capacity of the district to implement evidence-based strategies as a means of addressing its unique needs, all required components of the ESEA Review Checklists must be met before an LEA can receive approval for the use of these funds.

Once the final LEA application is approved by the Nebraska Department of Education Federal Programs Director, or designee, each LEA is allowed to make amendments to their original grant application, as needed, with the technical support of their assigned Federal Programs Consultant. Amendments may be filed at any time during the grant period, prior to submission of the LEA's final request for reimbursement of grant funds. Each amendment is further reviewed upon submission to Nebraska Department of Education, using a specific Amendment Review Checklist, and is forwarded to the Federal Programs Director, or designee, for final approval of the amendment.

2.2(B) Monitoring

Describe the SEA's plan to monitor SEA and LEA implementation of the included programs to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on State and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.

While the Consolidated Grant Application was created, a consolidated monitoring protocol was implemented. This monitoring process has been changed from a 3-year monitoring to a 5-year monitoring cycle. All ESEA programs are monitored at this time and more frequently for districts that are flagged on the high-risk list or any that have had findings from a previous year.

Each LEA has a Nebraska Department of Education Federal Programs staff member assigned to review their application and complete onsite monitoring of their ESEA programs. This was intentional to simplify things for the LEAs, rather than having seven or eight Nebraska Department of Education contacts for all Federal Programs. Each LEA, ESU, and sub-recipient receiving funds from any of the ESEA formula grants is monitored a minimum of once every five years with an on-site visit or desk-audit. LEAs and sub-recipients with multiple programs may have their review spread over more than one year. Each SEA staff member assigned to conduct the 5-year monitoring review is assigned to a varying number of reviews each year based on the size of the districts they serve. Educational Service Units (ESU's) are also reviewed on a 5-year rotation. The 5-year rotation cycle follows two years after the LEA or ESU has had their Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) visit. Monitoring visits are scheduled, whenever possible, to accommodate the LEA's school calendar and to avoid possible conflicts with other critical events occurring throughout the school year at the local level.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Monitoring Guide Checklist provides the requirements of the programs in the ESEA Consolidated Application and other formula grants funded under this legislation. It is provided to each LEA, ESU and sub-recipient in advance of the on-site visit or desk audit as a means to ensure programs are operated in compliance with the law and guidance. All ESEA programs are also monitored through the application and financial reporting approval processes, as well as the state's continuous school improvement process, requiring development and approval of a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

The proposed five-year monitoring schedule is posted on the [Nebraska Department of Education Federal Programs\[i\]](#) webpage. At least one month prior to the visit, the district or ESU will be contacted by the Nebraska Department of Education reviewer to arrange the details of the monitoring. After being notified, the district or ESU is to complete the appropriate sections of

the Monitoring Guide Checklist and submit the completed Checklist to the reviewer (at least one week prior to the scheduled visit). The form is designed to identify areas where technical assistance may be needed, as well as to determine options for documentation to support compliance with the requirements. The SEA requires that some pieces of evidence/documentation be submitted prior to or during the monitoring visit. In some cases, only specified documentation will be accepted to meet compliance requirements of the federal law. These are clearly identified in the Checklist. All other documentation must be available for review. Required components of this monitoring process include the review of LEA report card data and student performance data collected by the SEA and reported on the SEA website.

Monitoring visits include a review of documentation and a conversation with appropriate program directors and/or staff members. Depending on the programs being reviewed, this may also include nonpublic school staff, multi-district project members, parents, and representatives of other agencies. All participants to be involved in the visit are identified during preliminary planning by the LEA, ESU, or agency and the reviewer. Where applicable, the LEA is also required to demonstrate that they have complied with requirements under ESEA for tribal consultation as well as non-public school consultation in the development, implementation and evaluation of its respective program plans.

Following the review, the LEA or other sub-recipient is given 30 days to submit any documentation or evidence that was not available during the review as requested by the reviewer.

The LEA receives a written report within 90 days if additional evidence was submitted. If a review report includes a finding of non-compliance, a plan for correcting the issue is required within 60 days of receipt of the report and may involve a follow-up visit. In unique cases of an LEA that fails to meet a large percentage of the required ESEA components, or has demonstrated a history of non-compliance, additional documentation and/or evidence of how federal funds are being used and monitored may be required, and/or more frequent on-site monitoring may be conducted.

2.3. A. Continuous Improvement

Describe the SEA's plan to continuously improve SEA and LEA plans and implementation. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on State and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.

The NDE has made significant progress distinguishing between “continuous improvement” and “school improvement,” both of which are pertinent to improvement of state and local plans.

Continuous Improvement	School Improvement
Any school or instructional-improvement process that unfolds progressively, that does not have a fixed or predetermined end point, and that is sustained over extended periods of time. The concept also encompasses the general belief that improvement is not something that starts and stops, but it's	Dramatic and comprehensive intervention in low-performing schools. Involves turnaround leadership, culture shift, instructional transformation, and talent development.

something that requires an organizational or professional commitment to an ongoing process of learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and growth.

(<http://edglossary.org/continuous-improvement/>)

(https://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CST_Four-Domains-Framework-Final.pdf)

As part of each public school's accreditation process, outlined in [Rule 10](#), Nebraska requires LEAs to implement a continuous improvement plan. The NDE offers support and resources school districts can leverage grounded in Nebraska's Multi-Tiered System of Support (NeMTSS), such as the NeMTSS Problem Solving Model.



Integral to this process is the collection of student achievement data by the SEA. Student achievement data is reported on State and LEA report through the Nebraska Education Profile, as well as collection and analysis of student achievement data on state assessments (NSCAS) through AQuESTT. In addition, each LEA is required to identify its greatest needs for improvement, and to set goals and activities for utilizing federal funds to meet these needs through a comprehensive needs assessment, as part of the ESEA Consolidated Application and the 5-year, on-site monitoring process.

A systematic, on-going process guides planning, implementation, and evaluation and renewal of continuous school improvement activities to meet local and statewide goals and priorities. The school improvement process focuses on improving student learning. The process includes a periodic review by a team of visiting educators who provide consultation to the local school/community in a continuous review and evaluation of plans, goals, and accomplishments.

B. Differentiated Technical Assistance. *Describe the SEA's plan to provide differentiated technical assistance to LEAs and schools to support effective implementation of SEA, LEA, and other subgrantee strategies.*

The Nebraska Department of Education has created various levels of support for districts and schools based on school performance and classification in AQuESTT.



Differentiated technical assistance to LEAs is based on personalized support and needs of each district. This process begins by the development, implementation and evaluation of Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) in collaboration with SEA staff members. These staff cross-cut the agency and include members from Nebraska Department of Education teams, including, Federal Programs, Accreditation, School Finance, Early Childhood, Special Education, Data Research and Evaluation, Teaching and Learning, and Adult Program Services.

SEA staff are assigned to each LEA to address questions and to provide training and on-going technical support in the continuous improvement process. This comprehensive system of technical support to each LEA ensures that a consistent, consolidated model is in place for reviewing data, documenting needs, identifying areas of improvement and evaluating progress, as well as holding each LEA accountable for the efficient use of federal funds in meeting their goals.

Section 3 – Academic Assessments

The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS), pronounced “en-skass,” is a new statewide assessment system that embodies Nebraska’s holistic view of students and helps them prepare for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life. It uses multiple measures throughout the year to provide educators and decision makers at all levels with the insights they need to support student learning. Information on the system can be found at education.ne.gov/assessment

A. Advanced Mathematics Coursework.

Does the State: 1) administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students in order to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA; and 2) use the exception for students in eighth grade to take such assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA?

☐ Yes. If yes, describe the SEA’s strategies to provide all students in the State the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school consistent with section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.5(b)(4).

☒ No.

Nebraska does not administer such assessments.

B. Languages other than English

Describe how the SEA is complying with the requirements in section 1111(b)(2)(F) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f) in languages other than English.

i. Provide the SEA’s definition for “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population,” consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f)(4), and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.

The Nebraska Department of Education definition of “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population” is: *Any language that represents 15 percent or more of the native languages spoken by identified English Learners statewide is considered a language present to a significant extent in the participating student population.*

In the 2022-23 school year, approximately 8% of Nebraska students were English Learners. Of this population, over 2/3 indicated Spanish as their native language. The remaining families reported a variety of languages, however, no other languages represented more than 15 percent of native languages spoken within the English learner population.

Following Spanish, the next largest percentages of languages spoken are Karen, Arabic, Somali, and Kurdish. In reviews of individual districts, none were found to have a language other than Spanish present that would meet or exceed 15 percent of the district’s population.

ii. Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English, and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available

Nebraska currently provides NSCAS Math and NSCAS Science content assessments in Spanish for students in grades 3-8. General directions are provided in Spanish for the NSCAS ELA.

In 2016-2017 the high school content tests were replaced by the administration of the ACT to all students to meet the “once in high school” testing requirement of ESSA. ACT provides translations of assessment directions in 18 native languages, but not translations of the entire assessment. ACT does provide additional accommodations for English learners including small group, extended time, use of an approved word-to-word bilingual dictionary, and test directions in native languages.

LEAs are allowed a local option to translate the NSCAS Math and NSCAS Science content assessments as well as the NSCAS ELA directions into languages other than Spanish for ELs who are literate in their native language.

Additional information on English learner supports can be found in the NSCAS Accessibility Manual here:

<https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/NSCAS-Accessibility-Manual-7-12-2023.pdf>

iii. Indicate the languages other than English identified in B.i. above for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.

None at this time.

iv. Describe how the SEA will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population by providing:

1. The State’s plan and timeline for developing such assessments, including a description of how it met the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f)(4);

State required assessments in the content areas of math and science are currently translated into Spanish and made available to districts by the Nebraska Department of Education. Spanish is the only native language that is present to a significant extent in Nebraska schools. LEAs have the option to translate the NSCAS Math and NSCAS Science content assessments as well as the directions for NSCAS ELA into languages other than Spanish based on local needs.

2. A description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and

On an annual basis, the Nebraska Department of Education gathers data regarding languages spoken in districts. The assessment advisory committee of stakeholders annually reviews data

related to languages spoken that meet the definition articulated above of languages present to a significant extent and makes a recommendation at that time on assessments to be offered in languages other than English. There is currently only one predominant language in Nebraska's population of ELs and the service is already being provided. Nebraska has been providing translated content assessments to LEAs since 2010.

3. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the State has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.

The Nebraska Department of Education has met this requirement.

Section 4 – Accountability, Support, and Improvement

1. Subgroups (ESEA section 1111(c)(2)):

1. *List each major racial and ethnic group the State includes as a subgroup of students, consistent with ESEA section 1111(c)(2)(B).*

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Latinx or Hispanic

Two or More Races

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

2. *If applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students other than the statutorily required subgroups (i.e., economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners) used in the Statewide accountability system.*

There are no additional student groups used in the Statewide accountability system.

3. *Does the State intend to include in the English learner subgroup the results of students previously identified as English learners on the State assessments required under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) for purposes of State accountability (ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(B))? Note that a student's results may be included in the English learner subgroup for not more than four years after the student ceases to be identified as an English learner.*

No. The NDE reports EL student group performance including former ELs, but does not intend to include their results in the statewide accountability system.

4. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:

☐ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or

☒ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or

☐ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) or under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii). If this option is selected, describe how the State will choose which exception applies to a recently arrived English learner.

2. Minimum N-Size (ESEA section 1111(c)(3)(A)):

1. *Provide the minimum number of students that the State determines are necessary to be included to carry out the requirements of any provisions under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that require disaggregation of information by each subgroup of*

students for accountability purposes.

Ten is the minimum number of students necessary to carry out the requirements of any provisions under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that require disaggregation of information by each group of students for accountability purposes.

2. Describe how the minimum number of students is statistically sound.

Ten (10) has been identified as the minimum n-size to maintain consistency between reporting and accountability as outlined in Nebraska's current ESSA plan. The National Center for Educational Statistics indicates that a minimum n-size of 10 is acceptable when applying a population perspective to statistical soundness (NCES, 2010). The decision also aligns with the research found in *Best Practices for Determining Subgroup Size in Accountability Systems While Protecting Personally Identifiable Student Information*.

3. Describe how the minimum number of students was determined by the State, including how the State collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining such minimum number.

There are three reasons an n-size of 10 was selected:

- In 2015, when the AQuESTT system was first developed, a task force was assembled to make important policy recommendations, including n-size and indicators. The taskforce was composed of teachers, principals, district staff, superintendents, members from higher education, community organizations, and the state's intermediary agencies, ESUs.
 - The task force chose to represent n-size with 25 assessment scores, paying special attention to the 130 districts with 400 students or fewer.
 - As our state moved to a system which disaggregates student group performance, stakeholders shared their agreement an n-size of 10 for each student group roughly maintained this decision rule since 10 ELA and 10 math assessments is 20 total assessments.
- Nebraska's 244 school districts vary widely, from the largest, Omaha Public Schools with a student population of 51,966 students to the smallest McPherson County Public Schools with 57 students. Stakeholders were clear that the n-size should protect students' identities but be as small as possible so that as many schools would be included in the accountability system as possible.
- Finally, 10 has been identified as the minimum n-size to maintain consistency between reporting and accountability.

4. Describe how the State ensures that the minimum number is sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information

The Nebraska Department of Education utilizes various procedures and security measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of student records collected and maintained by the agency.

These procedures include assignment of a unique identifier to each student, a system of restricted access to data, and statistical cutoff procedures. More specifically:

- A unique student identification number (Nebraska Department of Education Student ID) is assigned to each Nebraska student. The Nebraska Department of Education Student ID is computer-generated and contains no embedded meaning. After being checked for duplicates, it becomes permanently assigned.
- Security protocols designed to limit who may have access to data and for what purposes.
- Masking rules to ensure that confidentiality is maintained in all public reporting of personally identifiable student information from educational records.
- All Nebraska Department of Education personnel collecting or using personally-identifiable student information are provided instruction regarding procedures adopted in accordance with this policy.
- Nebraska Department of Education maintains a current listing of agency personnel who have access to personally-identifiable student information through authentication and internal link

As it relates to the reporting of data and the identification of schools for additional support based on student group performance, Nebraska Department of Education has adopted the following primary masking rules:

- Rule of 10 – Used to protect personally identifiable information when the number of students in a group is small. Nebraska masks all numbers when there are fewer than 10 in a group. Membership is not masked at the State, district, school and grade level even if fewer than 10 students.
- Performance Level Reporting – When reporting student performance on assessments in levels
 - Only percentages are reported. All percentages are rounded. No counts (number tested) are reported with the percentages.
 - The percentages are displayed when there are 5 or more at a performance level.
 - All data are still masked for groups of fewer than 10.
- Rule of 100% - Used to protect privacy in student performance when all students in a group fall into the same achievement level regardless of the total student count.
- Identification Method - The process used to identify schools for additional support based on student group performance ensures personally identifiable student information is not revealed.

5. *If the State's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for accountability purposes, provide the State's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting.*

Not applicable. The n-size for reporting and accountability is the same.

3. Indicators (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B))

1. *Academic Achievement Indicator. Describe the Academic Achievement indicator, including a description of how the indicator (i) is based on the long-term goals; (ii) is measured by proficiency on the annual Statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments; (iii) annually measures academic achievement for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; and (iv) at the State's discretion, for each public high school in the State, includes a measure of student growth, as measured by the annual Statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments.*

The Status indicator measures Academic Achievement for all elementary, middle, and high schools in Nebraska. Status is calculated by determining the percent of students proficient on state assessments for all available grade levels for Math and English Language Arts for the current year. The long-term academic goals outlined in the state plan are based on the Status indicator.

The NSCAS System has three performance level descriptors:

- Developing
- On Track
- Advanced

Students scoring On Track and Advanced are considered proficient. Cut scores are detailed below.

NSCAS General				
Grade		Scale Score Ranges		
ELA		Developing	On Track	Advanced
3		2220-2476	2477-2556	2557-2840
4		2250-2499	2500-2581	2582-2850
5		2280-2530	2531-2598	2599-2860
6		2290-2542	2543-2602	2603-2870
7		2300-2555	2556-2629	2630-2880
8		2310-2560	2561-2631	2632-2890
Math		Developing	On Track	Advanced
3		1000-1189	1190-1285	1286-1470
4		1010-1221	1222-1316	1317-1500
5		1020-1235	1236-1330	1331-1510
6		1030-1243	1244-1341	1342-1530
7		1040-1246	1247-1345	1346-1540
8		1050-1263	1264-1364	1365-1550
Science		Developing	On Track	Advanced
5 & 8		3000-3099	3100-3149	3150-3250

More information on NSCAS standard setting can be found here:

https://nep.education.ne.gov/content/assets/data/NEP_NSCAS_Data_Definitions_and_Explanations_2021-2022.pdf

A school's Status indicator score is calculated by finding the count of eligible assessments (which includes both ELA and Math assessments for eligible students) that score at a proficient

(On Track or Advanced) level, divided by the total number of eligible assessments in the current school year.

Nebraska also uses the Non-Proficiency indicator as a measure of student growth for high schools. The Non-Proficiency indicator is designed to track the progress schools make in reducing non-proficient scores over time. Non-proficient scores are those in the Developing Range.

The non-proficient rate is calculated by dividing the number of eligible ELA/Math assessments with scores in the lowest performance range by the total number of eligible ELA/Math assessments. For fall 2023 accountability, this indicator will return to using three years of data - 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 data to create a trend line.

A school or district's Non-Proficiency indicator score is defined by the slope of a line that represents the trend in the rate of non-proficient statewide assessments over recent years. This slope value can generally be thought of as representing the change in the percentage of non-proficient assessments at a school/district per year, with a negative slope value (fewer non-proficient tests) being the goal.

The Non-Proficiency indicator uses a linear regression calculation to determine the slope. This formula is below.

The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimators $\hat{\beta}_0$ and $\hat{\beta}_1$ are those values that minimize the residual sum of squares. The intercept, $\hat{\beta}_0$, represents the value of Y when X equals 0, and the slope, $\hat{\beta}_1$, is the rate of change in Y for every one unit change in X.

In the AQuESTT classification process, y_i represents the average assessment score or assessment proficiency rate calculated per the procedures outlined in the indicator descriptions above, and x_i represents time (or school year) where 0 = the school year two years prior, 1 = the prior school year, and 2 = the current accountability school year.

For each school/District included in the AQuESTT accountability system, beta coefficients are calculated as follows:

$$\hat{\beta}_1 = \frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2} = \frac{SXY}{SXX} = \frac{COR}{SXX}$$

And

$$\hat{\beta}_0 = \bar{y} - \hat{\beta}_1\bar{x} = ybar - \hat{\beta}_1(xbar)$$

Where:

$$\bar{x} = \sum \frac{x_i}{n}$$

And

$$\bar{y} = \sum \frac{y_i}{n}$$

Then, the regression equation takes the following form:

$$\hat{y} = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 TIME$$

	Elementary / Middle School Measure	High School Measure
Measure of Academic Achievement (Status)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSCAS Growth - English Language Arts (Grades 3-8) • NSCAS Growth - Mathematics (Grades 3-8) • NSCAS Alternate - English Language Arts (Grades 3-8) • NSCAS Alternate - Mathematics (Grades 3-8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSCAS ACT (English Language Arts & Math) - Third-Year Cohort • NSCAS Alternate Mathematics and English Language Arts - Third-Year Cohort
Measure of Academic Achievement (Student Growth for High Schools)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Proficiency

2. Indicator for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools (Other Academic Indicator). Describe the Other Academic indicator, including how it annually measures the performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. If the Other Academic indicator is not a measure of student growth, the description must include a demonstration that the indicator is a valid and reliable statewide academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance.

There are two Other Academic Indicators for elementary and middle schools (Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools):

- The Growth indicator is defined as the percent of NSCAS/NSCAS-Alt assessment scores within a school or district that showed an increase compared to the same individual's score in the previous year within the same subject area.
 - Only ELA and Math assessments will be used in Growth rate calculations, since Science assessments are not taken in consecutive grades and for grades 5 and 8, the first proctoring of the NSCAS Science occurs in 2022.
 - The Growth rate is the percentage of Growth-eligible assessment scores that are assigned a Growth point as defined in the table below. For all Growth-eligible assessments, the following table is used to determine whether or not that assessment is assigned a Growth point by comparing the current year performance level and score against the previous year for the same subject area.

Previous Year	Current Year				
	Performance Level	Advanced Benchmark	On Track		Developing
	CCR (Advanced) Benchmark	Yes	–		–
	On Track	Yes	Score Gain < 0	Score Gain ≥ 0	–
			–	Yes	
	Developing	Yes	Yes		Score Gain ≤ 0
					Score Gain > 0
					–
					Yes

- The Non-Proficiency indicator is measure designed to track the progress schools make in reducing non-proficient scores over time. Here, Non-Proficiency is calculated using the same methodology as Non-Proficiency in the Academic Achievement indicator section above.

As seen in the filters below, these indicators are not combined, but rather considered as separate steps within the same phase.

3. Graduation Rate. Describe the Graduation Rate indicator, including a description of (i) how the indicator is based on the long-term goals; (ii) how the indicator annually measures graduation rate for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; (iii) how the indicator is based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate; (iv) if the State, at its discretion, also includes one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, how the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is combined with that rate or rates within the indicator; and (v) if applicable, how the State includes in its four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed using an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D) and awarded a State-defined alternate diploma under ESEA section 8101(23) and (25).

The long-term goals specifically address both the 4-year and 7-year cohort graduation rates.

The Graduation Indicator for accountability combines 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rates and 7-year adjusted cohort graduation rates. The cohort graduation rates are the percentage of members in a cohort who graduated with a diploma. The existing rules that NDE uses to define a cohort can be reviewed here: <https://www.education.ne.gov/dataservices/adviser-resources/>

The school year used for Graduation data lags one year behind other accountability data due to the timing of availability of the district-corrected data. Ex. Accountability data for Fall 2022 will use graduation rates from Spring 2021.

The Graduation Indicator is combined by weighting the 4-year graduation rate at 51% and 49% for the 7-year graduation rate.

The NDE does not define a statewide alternate diploma.

4. *Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) Indicator. Describe the Progress in Achieving ELP indicator, including the State's definition of ELP, as measured by the State ELP assessment.*

The Progress toward English Language Proficiency indicator is meant to measure the percentage of English Learner students in a school/district who are on track in their progress towards English language proficiency as measured by the ELPA21 assessment.

Students are Proficient when they attain a level of English language skill necessary to independently produce, interpret, collaborate on, and succeed in grade-level content-related academic tasks in English. This is indicated on ELPA21 by attaining a profile of Level 4 or higher in all domains. Once Proficient on ELPA21, students can be considered for reclassification.

The ELP indicator is based on the percentage of students making adequate progress to proficiency within six years. The ELP will be calculated by comparing each student's current level to their expected level, which is based on their Baseline Year level. A student's overall result from each ELPA21 assessment is categorized as one of these six proficiency levels: Emerging Low, Emerging High, Progressing Low, Progressing Medium, Progressing High, and Proficient.

Within the proficiency determinations of Emerging and Progressing, to further subdivide these proficiency levels, overall scale scores are used to determine Low-High and Low-Medium-High levels. Below are the cut points on the overall scale score for the Emerging Low, Emerging High, Progressing Low, Progressing Medium, and Progressing High. Proficient is defined as scoring 4s or 5s in all four domains of the ELPA21.

ELPA21 Overall Proficiency	Emerging		Progressing		
	Low	High	Low	Medium	High
Kindergarten	<4778	≥4778	<5441	≥5441 <5802	≥5802
1st Grade	<4577	≥4577	<5384	≥5384 <5708.03	≥5708.03
2nd Grade	<4304	≥4304	<5161	≥5161 <5439	≥5439
3rd Grade	<4378	≥4378	<5466	≥5466 <5768	≥5768
4th Grade	<4227	≥4227	<5192	≥5192 <5493	≥5493
5th Grade	<4310	≥4310	<5379.99	≥5379.99 <5664.01	≥5664.01
6th Grade	<4352	≥4352	<5190.66	≥5190.66 <5444	≥5444
7th Grade	<4469	≥4469	<5337.99	≥5337.99 <5623.01	≥5623.01
8th Grade	<4503	≥4503	<5384.99	≥5384.99 <5729	≥5729
9th Grade	<4525.5	≥4525.5	<5388	≥5388 <5625	≥5625
10th Grade	<4704	≥4704	<5331	≥5331 <5627.01	≥5627.01
11th Grade	<4800	≥4800	<5349.66	≥5349.66 <5640.34	≥5640.34
12th Grade	<4828	≥4828	<5340	≥5340 <5615.34	≥5615.34

Table 1: Expected Timeline for Each Baseline Level

<u>Baseline Level</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>	<u>Year 5</u>	<u>Year 6</u>
<u>Emerging Low</u>	Emerging High	Progressing Low	Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient
<u>Emerging High</u>	Progressing Low	Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient	
<u>Progressing Low</u>	Progressing Medium	Progressing High	Proficient		
<u>Progressing Medium</u>	Progressing High	Proficient			
<u>Progressing High</u>	Proficient				

To calculate the percent of students who made progress to proficiency, the number of students for whom we have matching scores (from Current and Baseline years) will be the denominator and the number of students who met or exceeded their expected level (from Table 1) will be the numerator.

5. *School Quality or Student Success Indicator(s). Describe each School Quality or Student Success Indicator, including, for each such indicator: (i) how it allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance; (ii) that it is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide (for the grade span(s) to which it applies); and (iii) of how each such indicator annually measures performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. For any School Quality or Student Success indicator that does not apply to all grade spans, the description must include the grade spans to which it does apply.*

There are two School Quality and Student Success Indicators used by Nebraska for all schools across all grade bands: Chronic Absenteeism and Science Achievement described below.

Chronic Absenteeism

- Every school is required to report attendance data.

- This indicator only applies to grades Kindergarten through 12.
- Students are considered chronically absent when they are absent for 10% or more of their days in membership at a school/district. The chronic absenteeism rate is defined by the number of these students, divided by the total number of eligible students at a school or district. <https://www.education.ne.gov/nderule/uniform-system-of-accounting/>
- Consistent with federal reporting guidelines, if a student is in membership for fewer than 10 days at a school/district, that student is not eligible for this indicator

Calculation of Chronic Absenteeism:

- The NDE will reset the baseline for each school and every student group using the 2021-22 school year. As the long term goal is to reduce chronic absenteeism 50% over 10 years, the target rate for the current year's rate will be a 5% improvement on the baseline rate.
 - Put another way, the NDE will set separate individualized targets for each school and each student group at each school based on baseline data.
- The Chronic Absenteeism indicator is defined by the difference between the percentage of eligible students at a school/district that are categorized as chronically absent, relative to a target percentage.
- For fall 2023 designations, using 2022-23 school year data, the NDE will only use two years of data: baseline from 2021-22 and the school year 2022-23.

Chronic Absenteeism allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance, as school rates for chronic absence vary.

<u>Measure Across All Schools</u>	<u>Rate</u>
<u>Average</u>	<u>22.35%</u>
<u>Median</u>	<u>16.1%</u>
<u>Range</u>	<u>0% to 98%</u>

Science Status

- The Science Status indicator is calculated as the percentage of eligible statewide assessments scored at a proficient level or above based on:
 - NSCAS Science - Grades 5 and 8
 - NSCAS-Alternate Science - Grades 5 and 8
 - ACT Science - Third-Year Cohort
- Science Comparability, Reliability, Validity
 - NSCAS Science underwent a rigorous review of validity and reliability in the summer of 2022.
 - Reliability tests included:
 - Marginal reliability
 - Conditional standard error of measurement review
 - Classification accuracy
 - And specific to science, reliability of fixed forms
 - Validity test included:
 - Discussion of intended purposes and uses of test scores
 - Testing for evidentiary validity based on a framework

- And interpretive argument claims

More information can be found in the technical report here:

<https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-NSCAS-Growth-Technical-Report.pdf>

Final Stage:

In the final stage of the filtering system for CSI detailed below, the SQSS indicators are combined. In determining ATSI and TSI, however, the SQSS indicators are NOT combined but rather considered as separate steps within the same phase.

4. Annual Meaningful Differentiation (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C))

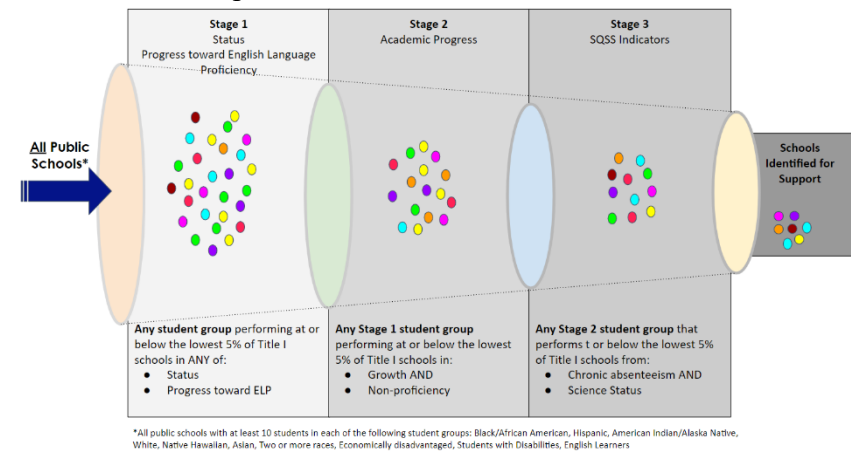
1. *Describe the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the State, consistent with the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA, including a description of (i) how the system is based on all indicators in the State's accountability system, (ii) for all students and for each subgroup of students. Note that each state must comply with the requirements in 1111(c)(5) of the ESEA with respect to accountability for charter schools.*

The following table aligns the Every Student Succeeds Act indicator with the metric utilized in the designation process. Each indicator is utilized for school-level calculations and is able to be disaggregated by student group.

Table 2: ESSA & AQuESTT Indicator Crosswalk

<u>ESSA Indicator:</u>	<u>Academic Achievement</u>	<u>Other Academic Indicator</u>	<u>Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency</u>	<u>Graduation Rate</u>	<u>School Quality & Student Success</u>
<u>AQuESTT Indicator:</u>	<u>Elementary & Middle Schools: Status</u> <u>High Schools: Status & Non Proficiency</u>	<u>Growth & Non-Proficiency</u>	<u>Progress toward English Language Proficiency</u>	<u>4- and 7-Year Cohort Graduation Rate</u>	<u>Chronic Absenteeism and Science Status</u>

Additionally, Nebraska does not rank schools. As such, a three stage filter process is used to designate schools and student groups for additional support. An example of this system is shown below, and detailed further in subsequent sections.



2. Describe the weighting of each indicator in the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation, including how the Academic Achievement, Other Academic, Graduation Rate, and Progress in ELP indicators each receive substantial weight individually and, in the aggregate, much greater weight than the School Quality or Student Success indicator(s), in the aggregate.

The order of stages in the decision process establishes the weight placed on each indicator and allows the state to prioritize and place much greater weight on the academic indicators in the first and second stages.

The first stage of indicators includes academic achievement in math, academic achievement in reading/ language arts, and progress toward English language proficiency. These achievement and English language proficiency indicators are considered to have equal weight to one another and greater weight than subsequent indicators, as low performance on any of them causes a school to progress to the next stage of differentiation.

For elementary and middle schools, the second stage includes the Other Academic Indicators, which are operationalized as two measures of academic progress. These other academic indicators are considered to have equal weight to one another and much greater weight than the subsequent indicator, as low performance on both of them causes a school to progress to the next stage of differentiation.

For high schools, the second stage includes four-year and seven-year graduation rate. Of the two, four-year graduation rate is considered to carry greater weight (51%), while 7-year will be weighted 49%. Both graduation rate indicators are considered to have much greater weight than the subsequent indicator, as low performance on both of them causes a school to progress to the next stage of differentiation.

The third and final stage uses the School Quality and Student Success Indicators: Chronic Absenteeism and Science Status. Since it comes last, this stage carries the least weight while still differentiating between schools that are already low on the academic indicators.

If the States uses a different methodology or methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in 4.v.a. above for schools for which an accountability determination cannot be made (e.g., P-2 schools), describe the different methodology or methodologies, indicating the type(s) of schools to which it applies.

A school building in Nebraska may include all grades K-12, but must be split into three schools for accountability purposes: an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. Each district determines which grades are included in each grade band configuration.

There are four special circumstances on which differing methodologies are employed:

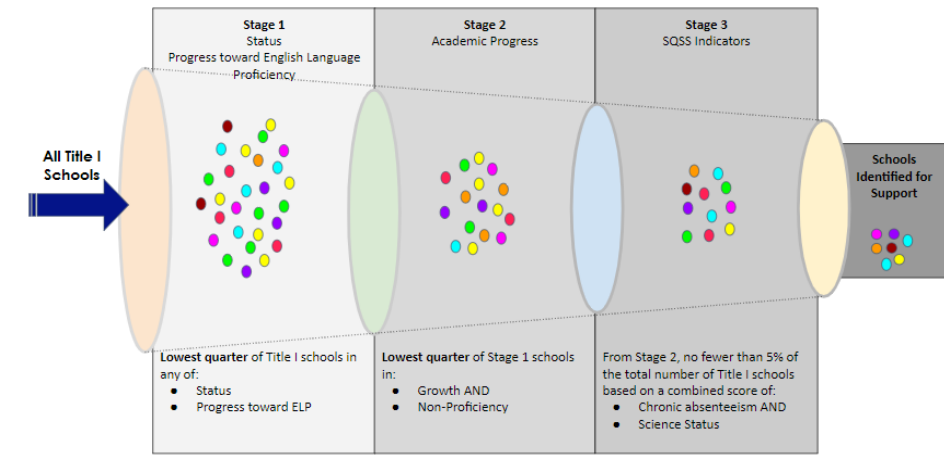
- Title I school buildings with multiple grade bands: For purposes of Title I accountability, the NDE will use codes established by the U.S. Department of Education National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) to identify the building under consideration for CSI status. For example, Nebraska Elementary School consists of grades Pre-k through 8, is in one physical building, and has one NCES code. For state accountability purposes, the school district identifies Pre-k through 6 as the elementary school and grades 7-8 as the middle school. For federal accountability purposes, only one school is considered for CSI.
- High Schools with Fewer than 10 Students Graduating - Nebraska has a few high schools that graduate fewer than 10 students each year. To adjust for this, each indicator pools data from previous years until the minimum n-size of 10 is achieved for all indicators.
- Special Purpose Schools - Special Purpose schools under Nebraska law are not public schools. 20 U.S.C. §6472 defines both “Adult correctional institution” and “institution for neglected or delinquent youth” and three of our special purposes schools would fall into these categories. Additionally, “special purpose” likewise do not qualify as a public school under Nebraska law as they are not governed by a public school board. See e.g. Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-101 and 92 Nebraska Administrative Code 92 Chapter §§ 10-002.21 and 10-002.19.
- Newly Opened Schools - Available data are collected and reported on schools that are newly opened. However, new schools are excluded from designation processes for the first two years. By the third year, new schools will be included in designation calculations since they will have the requisite data for each indicator (eg. three years of data for the Non-Proficiency Indicator, baseline and reduction goals for chronic absenteeism)

5. *Identification of Schools (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D))*

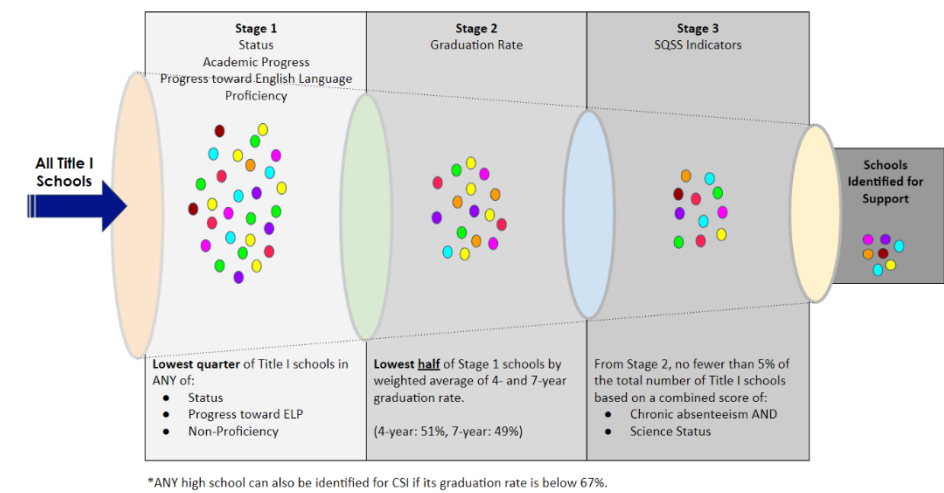
1. *Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the State’s methodology for identifying not less than the lowest-performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in the State for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.*

As previously described, Nebraska uses a filtering system to identify schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement. These filters are below:

Elementary and Middle Schools:



High Schools:



*ANY high school can also be identified for CSI if its graduation rate is below 67%.

The NDE has created a cohort system for schools identified as CSI:

- Cohort 1 - Identified in 2018 (using 2017-18 school year data),
- Cohort 2 - Identified in 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data).
- Cohort 3 - To be identified in fall 2023 (using 2022-23 school year data)

2. *Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the State's methodology for identifying all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one third or more of their students for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.*

If any high school has an adjusted four-year graduation rate below 67%, it is automatically identified for comprehensive support and improvement. Schools identified in this manner follow

the same cohort cycle above.

3. *Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools.* Describe the methodology by which the State identifies public schools in the State receiving Title I, Part A funds that have received additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C) (based on identification as a school in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State's methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)) and that have not satisfied the statewide exit criteria for such schools within a State-determined number of years, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

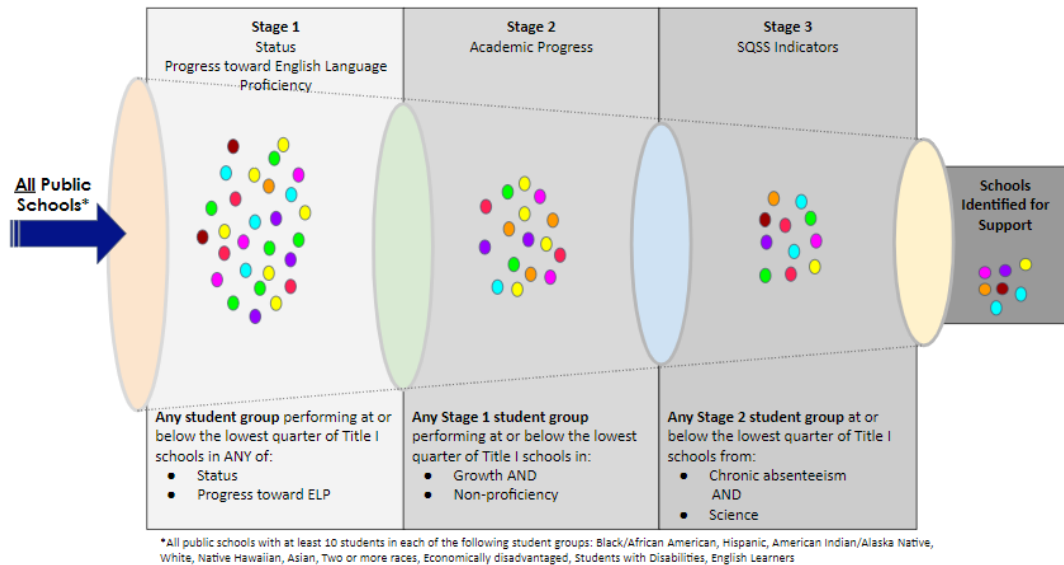
Nebraska's first cohort of ATSI and CSI designations are off by one year. See below:

- Cohort 1
 - Identified in 2019 (using 2018-19 school year data);
 - Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the NDE took available flexibilities through a state plan addenda. For that reason, the 2019-20 school year did not count towards years in status.
 - ATSI schools in this cohort will be designated as CSI in 2023 if they do not meet the exit criteria based on data from the 2022-23 school year data.
 - Cohort 2
 - Identified in 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data)
 - ATSI schools in this cohort have four years to exit status, may exit at any year, and will be designated as CSI in 2026 if they do not meet exit criteria based on data from the 2025-26 school year.
 - Cohort 3
 - To be identified in fall 2023 (using 2022-23 school year data)
 - ATSI schools in this cohort have three years to exit status, and will be designated for CSI in 2026 if they do not meet exit criteria based on data from 2025-26 school year.
4. *Frequency of Identification.* Provide, for each type of school identified for comprehensive support and improvement, the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. Note that these schools must be identified at least once every three years.

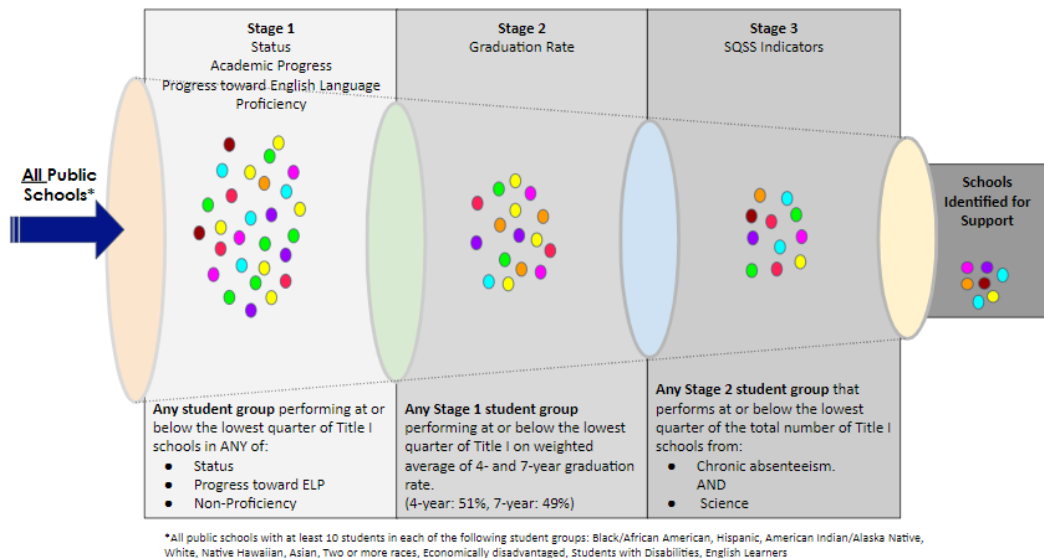
- Cohort 1 - Identified lowest 5% of Title I schools and high schools with low graduation rate in 2018 (using 2017-18 school year data),
- Cohort 2 - Identified Lowest 5% of Title I schools and high schools with low graduation rate in 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data).
- Cohort 3 - Identification in fall 2023 (using 2022-23 school year data) will include:
 - Lowest 5% of Title I schools
 - High schools with a low graduation rate
 - ATSI schools not exiting
- All subsequent cohorts will be identified once every three years, with Cohort 4 identified using 2025-26 school year data

5. Targeted Support and Improvement. Describe the State’s methodology for annually identifying any school with one or more “consistently underperforming” subgroups of students, based on all indicators in the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation, including the definition used by the State to determine consistent underperformance. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii))

Elementary and Middle Schools:



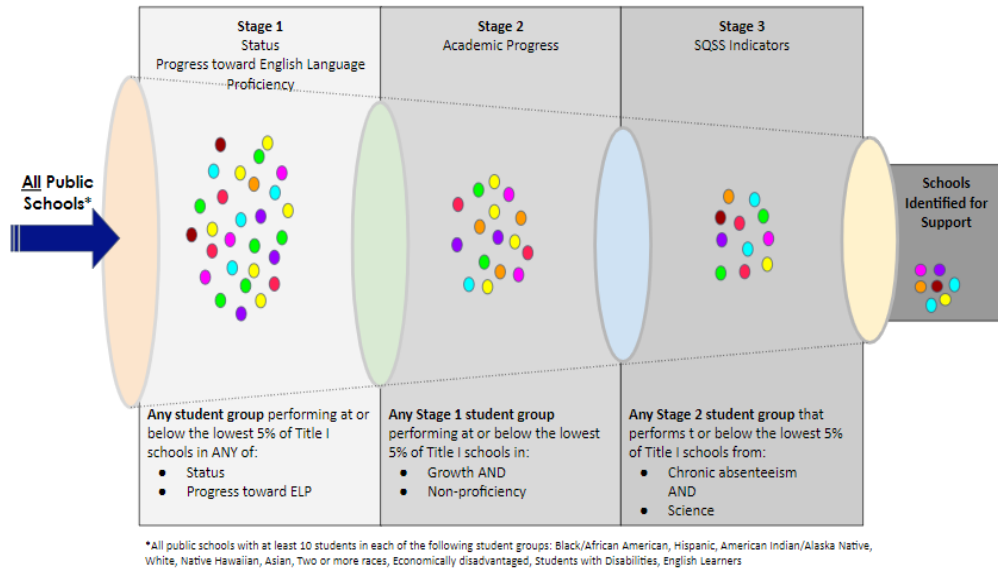
High Schools:



6. Additional Targeted Support. Describe the State’s methodology, for identifying schools in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to

identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State's methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D), including the year in which the State will first identify such schools and the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. (ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D))

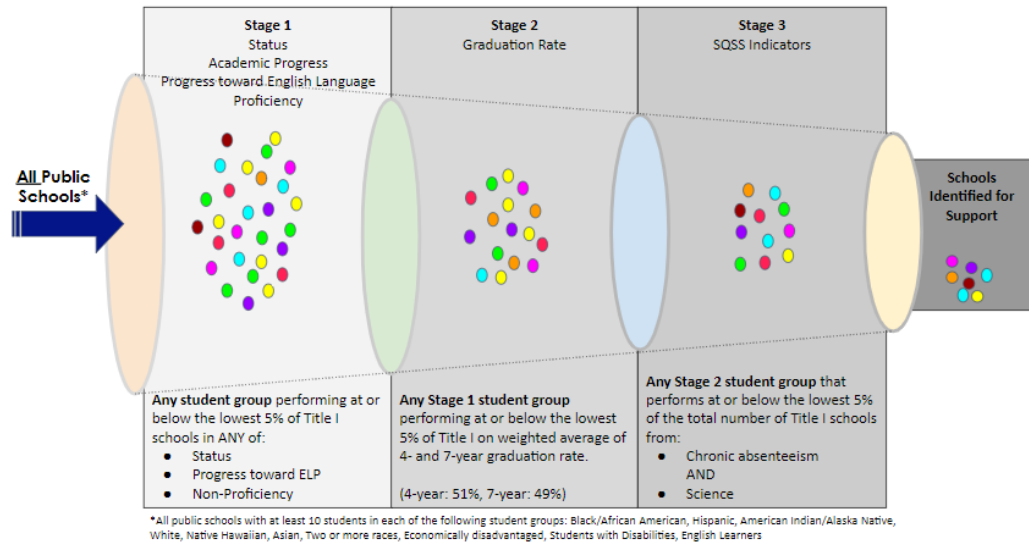
Elementary and Middle Schools:



Cut points represent the highest indicator scores of the Elementary and Middle schools that were designated as CSI in the year they were designated, using the specific indicator scores which qualified schools for CSI.

High Schools:

Cut points represent the highest indicator scores of the High Schools that were designated as CSI in the year they were designated, using the specific indicator scores which qualified schools for CSI.



7. *Additional Statewide Categories of Schools.* *If the State chooses, at its discretion, to include additional statewide categories of schools, describe those categories.*

In a separate process, Nebraska designates Priority Schools in accordance with state statute.

6. *Annual Measurement of Achievement (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(E)(iii)):* *Describe how the State factors the requirement for 95 percent student participation in statewide mathematics and reading/language arts assessments into the statewide accountability system.*

Schools and student groups with lower than 95% participation rate will have their Academic Achievement indicator (Status) adjusted. The NDE will calculate the number of students necessary for the school or student group to have a 95% participation rate, and add that number to the denominator when calculating status (percent proficient).

As an illustration, if a school has 100 eligible students, and only 85 participate in ELA and math assessments, the denominator will artificially be increased to 95. If 50 of the 85 students scored proficient, the Status score will be 50/95 or 52.5%.

Since Non-Proficiency is also considered an Academic Achievement Indicator for High Schools, the same adjustment to the denominator will need to be made.

7. *Continued Support for School and LEA Improvement (ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A))*
 1. *Exit Criteria for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools.* *Describe the statewide exit criteria, established by the State, for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement, including the number of years (not to*

exceed four) over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.

For Cohort 1 (Identified in Fall 2018), the exit criteria are as follows:

- a. not re-identified for CSI, AND
- a. not in lowest 10% of Title I across the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable), AND
- a. made significant progress across all indicators

For Cohort 2 - Identification in Fall 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data). Schools identified in this cohort will first be eligible for exit in fall 2023, and each subsequent year following. Unlike Cohort 1 and 3, Cohort 2 schools have four years to exit status. The exit criteria are as follows:

- a. not re-identified for CSI, AND
- a. not in lowest 10% of Title I across the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable), AND
- b. made significant progress across all indicators

For Cohort 3 - Identification in fall 2023 (using 2022-23 school year data). The exit criteria will be applied using the 2025-26 school year data. The exit criteria are as follows:

- a. not re-identified for CSI, AND
- a. not in lowest 10% of Title I across the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable), AND
- a. made significant progress across all indicators

Across all cohorts, “Significant Progress” is defined as a positive change in performance across each indicator compared to the year in which the school was identified.

CSI – High School Grad Rate - For all cohorts, for high schools identified for CSI for low graduation rate, schools may exit AT ANYTIME once they have

- a graduation rate above 67 percent AND
- have two consecutive years of graduation rate improvement

CSI-Student Group - In Fall 2023, the first cohort of ATSI (those identified in 2019) will become CSI if they do not exit ATSI status. For this cohort, the school may exit CSI AT ANYTIME if the school is:

- Not identified for CSI (i.e. not in the lowest 5% of Title I schools)
- Not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
- Made sufficient growth in the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable)

2. *Exit Criteria for Schools Receiving Additional Targeted Support. Describe the statewide exit criteria, established by the State, for schools receiving additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C), including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.*

For Cohort 1 (Identified in Fall 2019), the exit criteria are as follows:

- a. not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
- a. Made sufficient growth in the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable)

For Cohort 2 - Identification in Fall 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data). Schools identified in this cohort will first be eligible for exit in fall 2023, and each subsequent year following. Unlike Cohort 1 and 3, Cohort 2 schools have four years to exit status. The exit criteria are as follows:

- a. not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
- a. Made sufficient growth in the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable)

For Cohort 3 - Identification in fall 2023 (using 2022-23 school year data). The exit criteria will be applied using the 2026-27 school year data. The exit criteria are as follows:

- a. not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
- a. Made sufficient growth in the first filter (Status & ELPA, and Non-Proficiency as Applicable)

Sufficient Growth is defined yearly by analyzing progress made by each student group in the current accountability year compared to the year the school was identified.

3. *More Rigorous Interventions.* Describe the more rigorous interventions required for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to meet the State's exit criteria within a State-determined number of years consistent with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I) of the ESEA.

- For schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement, the NDE shall annually review improvement plans and determine whether any modifications are needed, with support of the LEA. If a school has not met the exit criteria after three years of identification, the NDE will reevaluate the progress plan, in consultation with the LEA, to determine if
 - a significant revision of the progress plan is necessary,
 - an entirely new progress plan is developed, or
 - an alternative administrative structure is warranted.
- All not-yet-exited schools will be required to complete a new comprehensive needs assessment, engage in an external review of their classroom instructional practices, and receive technical assistance on data interpretation, root cause analysis, and rigorous goal setting and action planning. These schools will also receive periodic implementation visits by an NDE cross-functional team to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and determine if any adjustments to their plans need to be made.

4. *Resource Allocation Review. Describe how the State will periodically review resource allocation to support school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.*
- When engaging in the annual federal accountability cycle, the NDE will review the list of identified schools and provide direct support to LEAs with a significant number of identified schools. The NDE will review resources provided from across the agency and determine next steps based on findings. Next steps could include a desk review of reimbursements for the past year, on-site support with district leaders to understand use/allocation of resources, etc.
 - The NDE has integrated into their five-year federal programs consolidated monitoring process a focus on how an LEA determined resource inequities for the designation they received. Additionally, members from various NDE offices are invited and encouraged to attend these virtual/in-person visits.
 - The NDE has created a supplemental planning document for schools and districts to use when reviewing their data, along with their resources, to better understand school, teacher, and student needs. Schools and districts are not required to use the document but know that any NDE staff member conducting any visit can inquire about their designation and plans put in place, as well as how the school or district has or will address any resource inequities.
5. *Technical Assistance. Describe the technical assistance the State will provide to each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.*

The NDE has determined any LEA serving a significant number (at least 20% of schools) of CSI, TSI, and/or ATSI schools must meet with a cross functional team from the NDE to engage in an accountability data review. The team will support the district in analyzing student group data, data on individual indicators, and non-accountability related data like interim and formative assessment data, teacher quality, and classroom practices. The NDE will also provide support in district improvement planning processes.

6. *Additional Optional Action. If applicable, describe the action the State will take to initiate additional improvement in any LEA with a significant number or percentage of schools that are consistently identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement and are not meeting exit criteria established by the State or in any LEA with a significant number or percentage of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.*

The NDE has determined any LEA serving a significant number (at least 20% of schools) of CSI, TSI, and/or ATSI schools must meet with a cross functional team from the NDE to engage in a state-led improvement planning process and receive support with implementation of improvement efforts.

Section 5: Supporting Effective Educators

Introduction:

The NDE is committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to effective teachers and principals who hold a genuine belief that each child can learn and grow. Teachers and leaders must be well-equipped with the technical and adaptive skills to ensure excellent teaching and leading every day for every learner. 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 develops and supports 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.

To determine student and educator needs, data collection and analysis from multiple sources must occur. 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.

All activities outlined in this section are informed by extensive stakeholder engagement and align with the Nebraska State Board of Education Strategic Vision and Direction, Nebraska's state accountability system, A Quality Education System for Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT), as well as joint work with ESUs and EPPs through different strategic workgroups.

Use of Funds (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(A) and (D)): Describe how the State educational agency will use Title II, Part A funds received under Title II, Part A for State-level activities described in section 2101(c), including how the activities are expected to improve student achievement.

After reviewing multiple sources of data, such as teacher shortage data, state and federal accountability data, staff reporting and course codes data, among others, NDE staff participate in ongoing conversations with school system leaders to determine and affirm direction of state-level activities. Given trend data from these various data points, state-level activities are focused on providing educator professional learning opportunities, as well as activities related to shortage areas as determined by the annual teacher shortage survey.

Some activities include but are not limited to:

- Selection, adoption, and implementation of high-quality instructional materials and high quality instructional practices.
- Ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers and leaders that are collaborative, data-driven, classroom-focused, and as appropriate, job-embedded.

- Grant opportunities for higher education, local school systems, and education partners to implement evidence-based strategies/practices to address recruitment and retention needs for teacher shortage areas.

A focus on these activities, among others, are expected to improve student achievement by strengthening teacher and leader capacity to meet the needs of all learners, especially those who have been historically marginalized, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students living in poverty. Additionally, all activities are expected to be grounded in local data and needs, along with existing assets to ensure funded activities are successful.

All activities must have an explicit connection to public and non-public educators and leaders, evaluation components, as well as scalability and sustainability for effective activities.

Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools
(ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(E)): *If an SEA plans to use Title II, Part A funds to improve equitable access to effective teachers, consistent with ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), describe how such funds will be used for this purpose.*

Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development (SEED) is a comprehensive approach to ensuring access to quality educators and leaders across the state. SEED focuses on effective continuous improvement processes which consider various data sources for both students and teachers to identify areas of strength and improvement. SEED is grounded in the importance of having a coherent language for teacher and leader effectiveness - the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS).

The NDE hosts Educator Effectiveness Summits every year along with partner entities like ESUs and EPPs to provide experiential learning for teachers and leaders, focused on NTPPS. These sessions are paired with regular touchpoints with participating districts to support change management and implementation, where necessary. Title II, Part A funds allow to strategically partner with LEAs, ESUs, and EPPs to create data-driven, context-specific learning experiences focused on strengthening teacher and leader capacity.

System of Certification and Licensing (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(B)): *Describe the State's system of certification and licensing of teachers, principals, or other school leaders.*

Nebraska Revised Statutes, §§79-801 through 79-802, require teachers and administrators to hold a valid certificate or permit to teach or administer in Nebraska school systems. The State Board of Education has established rules regarding the issuance, renewal, conversion, suspension, and revocation of certificates and permits to teach, provide special services, and administer. The rules established in Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 21 (Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and permits to teach, provide special services, and administer in Nebraska Schools) and Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24 (Regulations for Certificate Endorsements). These regulations are periodically reviewed and/or revised by the State Board of Education.

Improving Skills of Educators (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(J)): *Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs, particularly children with disabilities, English learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and provide instruction based on the needs of such students.*

All professional learning is grounded in our Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) Continuous Improvement Process (CIP). The NDE leverages the NeMTSS CIP Framework to ensure a strong system involving all educators and leaders in place in every school. As such, there are ample, year-long opportunities for schools and districts focused on major components of the framework:

- The “why,” “how,” and “what” of the NeMTSS Framework
- Core beliefs and norms guiding the district
- Layered continuum of support and centrality of effective Tier 1 Core supports
- Elements of the balanced assessment system
- Effective scheduling practices
- Data-based decision-making process
- Continuous improvement cycle

Teachers and leaders have access to professional learning tied to their district needs and plans, and there is ongoing support related to:

- Engage teams in data-based decision-making
- Understand evidence-based practices for their content areas and discipline of focus
- Implement the districts’ Tier 1 Core supports consisting of whole child supports
- Administer and interpret results of universal screening
- Implement effective, evidence-based Tier 2 Targeted support programs
- Design effective, evidence-based Tier 3 Intensified supports for academic and whole child support needs

The AQuESTT tenet, “Educator Effectiveness,” along with self-assessment indicators further strengthens continuous improvement and works to ensure that evidence-based practices are met. The tenet states, “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.” It is the responsibility of every district to ensure educators and school leaders are supported in the implementation of NeMTSS and are provided development opportunities that build their experiences to lead to that culture of success.

The NDE partners with ESUs and other entities to provide coherent, relevant, and just-in-time support to schools and districts.

Data and Consultation (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(K)): Describe how the State will use data and ongoing consultation as described in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) to continually update and improve the activities supported under Title II, Part A.

Every year, the NDE thoroughly reviews state and district accountability data to determine which public schools are in need of additional support to improve student achievement, as well as those that are excelling and showing improvement. In addition, NDE staff receives approval and accreditation data for public and non-public schools to understand possible pain points with particular regulations. Other data is reviewed, such as but not limited to, teacher shortage survey data, staff reporting, etc. After reviewing this internal data, NDE staff participate in ongoing conversations with school system leaders to determine and affirm direction of state-level activities. Given trend data from these various data points, it is important for our state-level activities to be focused on providing educator professional learning opportunities, as well as activities related to shortage areas as determined by the annual teacher shortage survey.

All activities must have an explicit connection to public and non-public educators, evaluation components, as well as scalability and sustainability for effective activities. All activities are reviewed by an internal team, with established criteria, to determine continuity of activity and/or if changes need to be made.

Teacher Preparation (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(M)): Describe the actions the State may take to improve preparation programs and strengthen support for teachers, principals, or other school leaders based on the needs of the State, as identified by the SEA.

[Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 20 \(92 NAC 20; Rule 20\)](#), contains regulations for teacher education program approval. In addition to annual reporting requirements, the State Program Approval requires a full review of the educator preparation program (EPP), including the specific areas of endorsement or advanced preparation. The full review is conducted on a cyclical basis (every seven years) and is designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the program.

The full review includes an off-site Folio Review process that engages professional educators in the review of folio materials prepared by the institution. The folios include data and other information regarding the institution's compliance with [Rule 24](#) (endorsements) and [Rule 20](#) (overall preparation program) requirements; assessment results regarding candidate quality and performance in areas such as candidate's knowledge, skills, dispositions, and effect on PK-12 learning, and program improvement initiatives informed by candidate performance data. Once the off-site Folio Review is completed, an on-site visit is conducted, generally in conjunction with a national accreditation visit.

The State Board of Education approves educator preparation programs annually. If a program does not meet requirements of the regulations, they may be placed on probation or lose approval status.

Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)): Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the SEA with respect to such description.

The NDE offers to all public schools and districts an Education Workforce and Student Data Report. The report includes tables with statewide Title I-A school data, school-specific, and district Title I-A data. The school-specific tables include the following data points:

- Rates of low-income and minority students served by “out of field”, “inexperienced”, 1st year, and ineffective teachers, with a focus on disproportionate rates;
- Rates of school-specific teacher turnover, average total years of experience, and district tenure, compared to the same data points districtwide;
- Rates of school-specific principal turnover, average total years of experience, and district tenure, compared to the same data points districtwide.

Definitions

- **Out of Field Teacher:** The percent of the teacher’s FTE that is not fully endorsed and on-level for assigned courses. The FTE is pro-rated according to the proportion of the teacher’s total course IUs that are not fully endorsed. Teachers not listed as teaching a course are listed as In Field by default.
- **First Year Teacher:** Teachers in the first year of employment with a teaching position code from NDE’s Staff Reporting system with a teaching position code (Teacher, Head Teacher, Special Education Teacher-Core Academic Subjects/Grading, Special Education Teacher-Core Academic Subjects/Alternate Standards and Special Education Teacher-Collaborating / Co-Teaching) who are either assigned as of October 1st or are listed as a primary teacher in a course in the year end course reporting, as well as any staff listed as the primary teacher in a completed course that are not in Staff Reporting.
- **Inexperienced Teacher:** Inexperienced teachers are those with four or fewer years of experience. Teachers from NDE’s Staff Reporting system with a teaching position code (Teacher, Head Teacher, Special Education Teacher-Core Academic Subjects/Grading, Special Education Teacher-Core Academic Subjects/Alternate Standards and Special Education Teacher-Collaborating/Co-Teaching) who are either assigned as of October 1st or are listed as a primary teacher in a course in the year end course reporting, as well as any staff listed as the primary teacher in a completed course that are not in Staff Reporting . Staff not listed in Staff Reporting will be assigned an FTE that sums up to 1.0 across all of their assigned locations and will be assigned a Total Experience amount based on the number of school years they have been shown to be teaching any courses.
- **Ineffective Teacher:** Any teacher identified at the lowest level of a district’s locally adopted evaluation system.

These reports are shared annually with districts and available on our Nebraska Education Profile. The NDE, alongside district leaders, reviews data in tandem with state and federal accountability results and designations. Using the results from the resource allocation review and these reports, Title I schools and their corresponding district are expected to design a strategy that addresses the identified gaps.

Table 5.1 - Baseline Data

The data below was derived by analyzing the unique interactions between students and teachers. If a student enrolled in multiple courses with the same teacher, they were counted only once in the analysis.

Measure	Percent Out Of Field	Percent Inexperienced	Percent Ineffective
Statewide	6.59%	20.72%	0.21%
Title I Schools	5.10%	23.34%	0.26%
Non-Title I Schools	7.41%	19.29%	0.18%
Title I – FRL	5.70%	24.23%	0.25%
Non-Title I – FRL	8.30%	21.11%	0.23%
Title I – Minority	6.00%	24.82%	0.24%
Non-Title I – Minority	7.65%	21.14%	0.20%

Section 6 - Supporting All Students

Introduction:

Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) is a continuous improvement framework that focuses efforts and support for the Whole Child approach to address the needs of students, including academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and environmental. NeMTSS is purposely coherent with AQuESTT, Nebraska's Accountability for Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow. This coherence aims to improve educational efforts that support improved outcomes for both students and adults. Implementation of NeMTSS connects to AQuESTT Domains and Tenets in which accountability to students and staff relies on the organizational and professional commitment that is centered around Educator Effectiveness, Student Achievement and Growth, and Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success. NeMTSS provides a framework for the ongoing process of learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and growth through action planning.

NeMTSS grew out of a combination of federal policy and state-driven efforts to improve the achievement of students with attention to students with disabilities. To summarize the key takeaways from this history:

- Though NeMTSS has roots in special education processes, concerted efforts in the NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version aim to involve all educators in supporting all students. NeMTSS is about far more than just special education. NeMTSS will not lead to improved outcomes for any group of students, including students with disabilities and high abilities, unless every educator sees themselves as integral to the system and accountable for its success.
- Beyond IDEA requirements, ESSA speaks to the need for a multi-tiered system of support for literacy services. Implementing NeMTSS is critical to serving each student.
- NeMTSS is a critically important and required part of the work we need to do to advance outcomes for students with disabilities in Nebraska. The overwhelming majority of students with disabilities who are served under IDEA do not have cognitive impairments that inhibit their ability to learn grade-level content. When students with disabilities are held to high expectations, have access to the Tier 1 Core supports and high-quality materials alongside their same-age peers, and receive high-quality instruction and support they can achieve academic standards.
- NeMTSS in whole is a part of how we can serve the mission (or need) outlined in AQuESTT of supporting students with disabilities to improve results for all students.
- As a framework designed through the lens of continuous improvement, shared leadership will continue to drive improvement of the NeMTSS framework itself supported by data and feedback.
- Special education funding is directed to public schools (therefore we use the term “school district” not “school system” throughout this document). Non-public schools are welcome to attend professional learning, but NDE does not provide direct implementation support to non-public schools.

6.1 Well-Rounded and Supportive Education for Students

Instructions: When addressing the State's strategies below, each SEA must describe how it will use Title IV, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with

allowable uses of funds provided under those programs, to support State-level strategies and LEA use of funds. The strategies and uses of funds must be designed to ensure that all children have a significant opportunity to meet challenging State academic standards and career and technical standards, as applicable, and attain, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.

The descriptions that an SEA provides must include how, when developing its State strategies, the SEA considered the academic and non-academic needs of the following specific subgroups of students:

- *Low-income students;*
- *Lowest-achieving students;*
- *English learners;*
- *Children with disabilities;*
- *Children and youth in foster care;*
- *Migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school;*
- *Homeless children and youths;*
- *Neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students identified under Title I, Part D of the ESEA, including students in juvenile justice facilities;*
- *Immigrant children and youth;*
- *Students in LEAs eligible for grants under the Rural and Low-Income School program under section 5221 of the ESEA; and*
- *American Indian and Alaska Native students.*

The SEA will ensure each LEA has accurately collected student group data and considered the identified needs of each student group listed above through a Comprehensive Needs Assessment at the LEA level. They will obtain and monitor the reporting of this information in several ways:

- Consolidated ESEA Application review and approval process
- Five-year On-site Monitoring process by Federal Programs personnel at the SEA level
- Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) used for school accreditation
- Special Education formal monitoring process
- Nebraska Data Reporting System (DRS) Nebraska Education Profile (NEP)
- State funding formula (TEEOSA)

NeMTSS recognizes there is no predetermined start or end point in continuous improvement. The framework allows a school district to select a challenge or area of focus, possibly from AQuESTT classifications and designations, to then develop goals and corresponding actions to achieve those goals. It is the expectation that engaging in the process of implementing a NeMTSS Framework for continuous improvement will help school districts support the needs of the whole child. Committing to the whole child is to intentionally address the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and environmental needs of students throughout the curriculum, materials, instruction, assessment, staff development, school culture, school climate, and family and community partnerships. Engaging in this work varies due to the unique histories, interests, and needs of the community, district, staff, and students.

NeMTSS assists teams in a way that supports student success. The NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version is intended specifically to help strengthen the clarity and connection to academics, whole child supports, and accreditation and continuous improvement. In doing so, there is a strategic focus on the well-being of each student to promote a safe, engaged, supported, and challenged learning environment. The NeMTSS Framework is designed with reducing the amount of required documentation for various federal and state funding sources in mind. Specifically, NeMTSS strives to strengthen the clarity and connection to inputs and outputs relative to data points, such as school processes, demographics, perceptions, and student learning. This is accomplished through shared leadership, with a specific focus on teaming and integrating initiatives and plans to promote coherence and consistency. AQuESTT outlines a vision for a quality education system and identifies several tenets that support districts and schools to achieve that vision. NeMTSS provides a process for how teams drive improvement to the AQuESTT tenets. Similarly, while the Nebraska Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) gives teams a baseline of where their district shows strengths or where they need to grow, NeMTSS action planning in how teams address those areas.

A. The State's strategies and how it will support LEAs to support the continuum of a student's education from preschool through grade 12, including transitions from early childhood education to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to postsecondary education and careers, in order to support appropriate promotion practices and decrease the risk of students dropping out;

Nebraska's strategies for supporting LEAs to support the continuum of a student's PreK-12 education, include the following transitions:

- Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-760.01 requires that the Nebraska State Board of Education adopt measurable academic content standards in the subject areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. In addition, the Nebraska Department of Education has developed content standards for the fine arts, physical education, world languages, and Career and Technical Education. These standards are an articulation of learning expectations kindergarten through high school aligned across grade levels to ensure a continuum of educational expectations, opportunities, and smooth transitions across all grade levels.
- Nebraska adopted the Accountability for a Quality Education System, for Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) to ensure every Nebraska student, upon completion of secondary education, is prepared for postsecondary education and/or to pursue their career goals. Examples of how the Nebraska AQuESTT system ensures student success include:
 - The results of multiple assessment sources are used to measure student achievement of college and career ready standards as an integral part of the instructional process;
 - Students are surrounded by effective educators throughout their learning experiences;
 - Schools provide support for students' transition between grade levels, programs, schools, districts, and ultimately college and careers.
- The Nebraska Board of Education adopted a policy for Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) which ensures quality programs during afterschool, summer, and on days when

school is not in session to provide academic support for students. These programs support success by providing academic support and enriching learning opportunities for students through engagement in in-depth integrated learning experiences. These programs also support the transition of students between levels through continuity of staff, by providing experiences that develop skills needed for successful transitions, and supporting families as their children and youth transition.

- Each LEA that receives Title I funds has an individual assigned specifically to them within the Nebraska Department of Education, Federal Programs Team, to serve in a consulting capacity to provide technical support and assistance to the LEA regarding any, and all components of the federal programs they operate and the federal funds they use to support those programs. These Federal Programs consultants offer advice and suggestions throughout the school year to LEA representatives in their assigned schools on a variety of the requirements in ESSA, including the effective transition of students from preschool to elementary, elementary to middle, and middle to high school grades. Resources are provided to LEA representatives through NDE staff and Educational Service Unit staff to support dropout prevention programs and intervention steps the LEA may take to address dropout issues that are tied to the LEA's annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment. These intervention steps are then included in their ESSA Consolidated Application and/or their Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), which is required for accreditation of their school district.
- In addition to the general consultation and support provided to each LEA by their assigned consultant, any LEA operating a Title I Schoolwide Program is required to provide an outline of their Schoolwide Plan ensuring the effective transition of their students from one grade-span to the next. Section 5: Transition Plan, of the Schoolwide Plan Self-Review Rating Rubric requires districts to evaluate how well their Schoolwide Plan is meeting this requirement in their district. This plan must be reviewed yearly by the school district. These plans must be posted on the school website and submitted yearly in the District's ESSA Consolidated Application that is reviewed.
- Any Title I schools identified for Comprehensive or Targeted Support will receive additional contacts and support via telephone, electronic media, or on-site discussion upon request or if flagged as needing more support at the SEA level, from their assigned Federal Programs consultant. If the areas of transitioning students and/or dropout rates are related to the identified lag in students' ability to meet the established State Academic Standards, NDE consultants will assist schools in creating appropriate interventions and methods of monitoring progress through their 5-year Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) process and/or annual School Improvement Accountability Grant applications.

B. The State's strategies and how it will support LEAs to provide equitable access to a well rounded education and rigorous coursework in subjects in which female students, minority students, English learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are underrepresented. Such subjects could include English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, or physical education.

The Shared Systems and Supports is a Nebraska Department of Education initiative that guides the development of Nebraska’s Instructional Improvement System. According to the Reform Support Network 174 (2014), “An [Instructional Improvement System] is a system, based in technology, which provides data to enable teachers, principals and other administrators to manage continuous instructional improvement. An Instructional Improvement System offers a common technology platform with one user interface across multiple systems and navigational paths to deliver the right information at the right time to the right people for the improvement of instruction.”

The Nebraska Shared Systems and Supports project creates a fundamental shift toward efficiency in access to digital learning resources and tools. The approach reduces local and state burdens, increases equitable access to digital education, and improves the privacy and security of student information across Nebraska. A core component of the Nebraska Instructional Improvement System is a professional development system that provides educators with a system to find, access and manage professional learning and development opportunities - online and in-person. Other core components include a standards database, learning object repository, course-building tool, learning management system, and assessment object repository. These components are limited neither to specific subject content nor to specific districts/schools. This System of Supports Project opens the door to greater equity of access to resources and supports for all educators in the state of Nebraska. This initiative is in its infancy, but the need for such a system has been long-expressed. It plays a critical role in Nebraska’s efforts to develop effective teachers and educational leaders and ensure equitable access for learners who are most in need of support.

C. If an SEA intends to use Title IV, Part A funds or funds from other included programs for the activities that follow, the description must address how the State strategies below support the State-level strategies in 6.1.A and B. Does the SEA intend to use funds from Title IV, Part A or other included programs to support strategies to support LEAs to improve school conditions for student learning, including activities that create safe, healthy, and affirming school environments inclusive of all students to reduce:

- i. Incidents of bullying and harassment;*
- ii. The overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and*
- iii. The use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety?*

Yes. If yes, provide a description below.

School Conditions

The SEA will require each LEA receiving Title I funds to include in its ESSA Consolidated Application an explanation of how the LEA is addressing each of the three areas of School Conditions listed above. Although the SEA does not intend to use either Title I-A or Title IV-A funds directly to support LEAs in the improvement of school conditions specific to these three categories, technical support will be readily available from Nebraska Department of Education Consultants to assist LEA representatives in developing and evaluating programs at the district and building level to ensure these issues are being addressed.

Each LEA is required by State Statute to adopt a Board Policy on bullying prevention and dating violence. Nebraska State Statute also requires all certified school personnel to complete one hour of suicide prevention training each year. The approved training is designated by the Nebraska Department of Education each year and focused on evidence-based training. The Nebraska Department of Education has Safety and Security Standards guidance for schools to increase the level of safety and security in their schools. Nebraska State Statute also mandates that every school building must have a security assessment completed by the State School Security Director by August 2019 and that every school submit their safety plan to the State School Security Director. Nebraska Rule 10 requires every school to have an annual safety audit. In addition, both LEA and SEA representatives continue to collect and analyze data at the LEA and SEA level regarding discipline practices and outcomes, especially focused on students with disabilities, minority populations, and students from low-income families. Model intervention programs, model policies and evidence-based practices surrounding bully prevention and disciplinary practices continue to be researched by SEA staff and guidance is provided to LEAs to adopt such policies and practices through a variety of venues. On-going technical support from SEA specialists is available to each LEA throughout the year to assist and respond to questions regarding any of the requirements listed here.

Nebraska has been awarded and implemented a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) since 1999. With the award of the 2017 grant, Nebraska will continue to implement the grant through 2021. These grants are competitive and the push from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is for states to align their SPDG goals and grants with their State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and State Identified Measurable Result (SIMRs). Through the State Personnel Development Grant, Nebraska supports schools in the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

Nebraska students and educators benefit from the opportunities and resources provided by the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). For over a decade, Nebraska used this funding source (in different iterations) to improve student outcomes by offering professional development and coaching support on tier one school-wide and classroom Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to Nebraska schools. In the last three years, we have received a significant increase in educator curiosity and inquiry on appropriate behavioral interventions, namely PBIS practices at tiers two and three, for their students. We also recognize the disruptions and difficulties that our school systems face, including transient movement among educators and significant social-emotional needs of our youth, as challenging situations that require immediate action. To support our students and educators, we will adapt our current professional learning and educator development strategies to meet their needs. We propose a comprehensive five-year plan that will improve the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of students with disabilities. To accomplish this ambitious goal, we will promote the implementation of developmentally appropriate evidence-based behavioral interventions and support the long-term sustainability of these practices within an integrated Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. This Nebraska State Personnel Development Grant (NSPDG) centers on four objectives aimed at meeting our goal:

Objective 1: *Increase access to professional development opportunities for Nebraska schools to implement, with fidelity, PBIS as an MTSS for behavior.*

Objective 2: *Provide tailored implementation and coaching support to NSPDG districts to build leadership team capacity and increase sustainability of research-based practices.*

Objective 3: *Increase capacity of state and district personnel to train and implement PBIS research-based practices to educators.*

Objective 4: *Increase educator awareness of inclusive practices and reduce the use of exclusionary practices for students with disabilities.*

To achieve these objectives, we will provide high-quality professional development (PD) using multiple modes of learning (e.g., on-site PD, virtual learning modules) for our educators, including access to technical assistance (TA) via consultation or coaching support. The NSPDG will partner with other state initiatives, like the Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) project, and provide a cohesive support system designed to support the needs of districts and schools. At the end of this five-year initiative, we anticipate that dozens of school districts in Nebraska will improve educational outcomes for their *students with disabilities*, with data reflecting a learning culture that facilitates *inclusive* learning opportunities for all learners. For this proposal, we will use language based on the MTSS approach of differentiating our services. *Tier 1* is behavior instruction that occurs universally within a school system. These are preventative and proactive strategies designed for all students, implemented by every educator. *Tier 2* is behavior instruction that targets specific groups of children (10%-15% of school population) and uses increased exposure to, and practice of, universal behavior expectations to reduce problem behavior. *Tier 3* is behavior instruction that is intensified for individual students (5%-10% of school population) and includes special and non-special education students.

How does PBiS fit into other state and federal programs?

Results Driven Accountability (RDA) seeks to improve the results of students within the special education system. PBiS is an evidence-based practice supported by recent research in helping reduce behaviors for students most at-risk. As the outcome data indicate, schools participating for five or more years in PBiS have reduced office discipline referral rates.

One of the tenets of AQuESTT is positive partnerships, relationships and student success. PBiS helps schools meet that component of the process. Action plans developed by school teams often include steps and strategies on engaging with families and the community and developing those positive relationships.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) emphasizes the use of evidence-based strategies or interventions plus high levels of fidelity of the chosen intervention or system. The implementation drivers cited in the Nebraska MTSS system (Fixsen, NIRN) are the same drivers required for the SPDG grants. Implementation remains a focus of the SPDG grants. Additionally, MTSS best practices include having a team-based approach for implementation which is similar to that required in the Nebraska PBiS process.

NeMTSS recognizes there is no predetermined start or end point in continuous improvement. The framework allows a school district to select a challenge or area of focus, possibly from AQuESTT classifications and designations, to then develop goals and corresponding actions to achieve those goals. It is the expectation that engaging in the process of implementing a NeMTSS Framework for continuous improvement will help school districts support the needs of

the whole child. Committing to the whole child is to intentionally address the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and environmental needs of students throughout the curriculum, materials, instruction, assessment, staff development, school culture, school climate, and family and community partnerships. Engaging in this work varies due to the unique histories, interests, and needs of the community, district, staff, and students. The examples included in this framework are intended to illustrate how NeMTSS can support needs across a range of dimensions of student support. This framework can be used to guide support and data-based decision-making for all content areas and all ability levels. The examples in this guidance document will illustrate academic support for mathematics and literacy. The NeMTSS framework can be used to support early learning needs as long as it does not delay special education evaluation.

NeMTSS assists teams in a way that supports student success. The NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version is intended specifically to help strengthen the clarity and connection to academics, whole child supports, and accreditation and continuous improvement. In doing so, there is a strategic focus on the well-being of each student to promote a safe, engaged, supported, and challenged learning environment. The NeMTSS Framework is designed with reducing the amount of required documentation for various federal and state funding sources in mind. Specifically, NeMTSS strives to strengthen the clarity and connection to inputs and outputs relative to data points, such as school processes, demographics, perceptions, and student learning. This is accomplished through shared leadership, with a specific focus on teaming and integrating initiatives and plans to promote coherence and consistency.

AQuESTT outlines a vision for a quality education system and identifies several tenets that support districts and schools to achieve that vision. NeMTSS provides a process for how teams drive improvement to the AQuESTT tenets.

Similarly, while the Nebraska Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) gives teams a baseline of where their district shows strengths or where they need to grow, NeMTSS action planning is how teams address those areas.

In addition to the many efforts to create coherence in the workstreams for districts, Nebraska utilizes a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach to address the following program-specific requirements.

6.2 Program-Specific Requirements

A. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies

Describe the process and criteria that the SEA will use to waive the 40 percent schoolwide poverty threshold under section 1114(a)(1)(B) of the ESEA that an LEA submits on behalf of a school, including how the SEA will ensure that the schoolwide program will best serve the needs of the lowest-achieving students in the school.

If an LEA requests to serve a school with less than 40% poverty through a Schoolwide Program, the LEA will be required to submit a written request to the SEA, along with its Schoolwide

Intent Form by December 1st of the year prior to the school year during which the Schoolwide Program will begin implementation. This form and plan will be reviewed the Federal Programs Team at the SEA level to look for the following criteria to determine allowability:

- Evidence of a poverty level of at least 35% in the Title I building for which the waiver is being requested;
- A description of how the LEA's decision to implement a Title I Schoolwide Program was determined, including data from the school's Comprehensive Needs Assessment;
- A description of how the LEA's choice of a Schoolwide Program will meet the needs of all students, including the lowest-achieving students; and
- A description of how the LEA's service delivery model to meet the needs of the lowest-achieving students in the school will change/improve as a result of implementing a Schoolwide Program;
- Other items as determined appropriate for the individual LEA.

B. Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

i. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEA/LOAs, will establish and implement a system for the proper identification and recruitment of eligible migratory children on a statewide basis, including the identification and recruitment of preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and how the SEA will verify and document the number of eligible migratory children aged 3 through 21 residing in the State on an annual basis.

To ensure the efficacy, efficiency, and quality of the identification and recruitment of all eligible migratory children, including preschool children and those who have dropped out of school, the Nebraska Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children Program (NE MEP) developed a State Identification & Recruitment (ID&R) Plan. Under the leadership of the State ID&R Coordinator, the plan includes ID&R procedures, professional development for recruiters, a process to approve and issue Certificates of Eligibility (COE), and both intrastate and interstate coordination. The State Quality Control Coordinator works closely with the State ID&R Coordinator to ensure ID&R staff are effective and following state procedures, national guidance and regulations, and that all migratory children are properly identified through the re-interviewing of randomly selected COEs and retraining on errors detected during the approval process. Through the implementation of the plan, the State MEP is able to support, strengthen, and enhance the ID&R process across the state to fully comply with all federal laws and regulations pertaining to the ID&R of migratory children in Nebraska.

To document child eligibility, the NE MEP uses an electronic version of the national COE to collect eligibility criteria required by the U S Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education (OME). Once the COE has met quality control measures through the COE Approval Process and is determined to be eligible, the information is stored in the MIS2000 database system to collect, store, process, and electronically transfer student educational information to meet the reporting requirements of the program via the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX). NE MEP actively participates in the Identification and Recruitment Consortium (IDRC) to augment training, access resources, and share best practices with other states. Additionally, the

State ID&R Coordinator meets regularly with their counterparts in the states of Colorado, Iowa, and Kansas to coordinate activities along the shared borders.

ii. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEA/LOAs, will identify the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school. The NE MEP planning and implementation is guided by a continuous improvement cycle to ensure we are identifying and meeting the unique educational needs of migratory children. The continuous improvement cycle includes:

- A state comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) conducted every three years. This process explores what is, gathers and analyzes data, and makes decisions; identifies any major concerns, gathers data to define needs, and selects priority solutions. Additionally, each LEA/LOA is responsible for an annual local CNA that they submit with their Title IC-Migrant application for funding.
- A state service delivery plan (SDP) conducted every three years. This multi-step process convenes stakeholders to select research-based strategies based on the CNA findings, to meet the needs of migratory children and youth, to develop a plan to implement the strategies, and establish measurable program goals and targets for accountability. LEA/LOAs utilize the SDP to implement programs and services annually.
- An annual evaluation that measures the extent to which strategies were implemented with fidelity and the impact of those strategies on migratory student achievement.

To integrate services and ensure that migratory children receive the full range of services available to address their unique needs, the NE MEP consults with other programs that serve migratory children and youth. These programs include Head Start, Migrant Head Start, state funded preschool programs, Title I, Title III, 21st Century CLC, McKinney-Vento, and many others. Committees formed to update the CNA and SDP include representation from NE MEP LEA/LOAs as well as other local, state, and federal programs that work with migratory children and families in the areas of education, health, and other support services. These committees also consult with migratory parents. Committee members and their contributions are documented in the CNA, SDP, and evaluation reports found on our website.

In order to better understand and articulate the specific services that the NE MEP should target to migratory children and youth and their families, a CNA is completed to review and improve the overall design of the NE MEP. Specifically, the CNA aims to:

- Identify and assess the unique educational needs of migratory children that result from the children's migratory lifestyle and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school.
- Guide the overall design of the NE MEP.
- Help local operating agencies and the SEA prioritize the needs of migratory children.
- Provide the basis for the SEA to sub-grant funds.

The Nebraska CNA guides future programming and policy decisions to ensure the program's resources are directed at the most needed and most effective services for migratory children and

youth. The CNA is updated every three years or as needed to respond to changes within characteristics of the program and the migratory population in Nebraska.

The CNA process involves the collection and review of data on migratory student achievement and outcomes, the perceptions of NE MEP LEA/LOA staff and parents related to migratory student needs, and relevant demographic and evaluation data. A committee of stakeholders and experts will use the data to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the migratory student population in Nebraska, and describe and quantify their needs, as well as solution strategies to guide the NE MEP.

During the regular school year, migratory students enroll in the local school district and are screened and assessed with the instruments used for all students. When children arrive in the summer, local and comprehensive summer school projects assess newly identified migratory children and youth to determine their individual strengths and areas for growth and support in mathematics and reading. Preschool age children who receive home-based or summer preschool services are assessed by using the Nebraska Preschool Assessment Tool (NEPAT) developed by the NE MEP. Out-of-School Youth (OSY) who are not proficient in English take an English language proficiency screener. These assessment results are used to guide instructional services. The NE MEP is a member of the iSOSY consortium and utilizes materials developed by iSOSY to deliver services to migratory OSY.

The Nebraska Department of Education has developed partnerships with personnel from other federal programs and community agencies such as Head Start, Migrant Head Start, school districts, adult basic education, Nebraska Department of Labor, community colleges, etc. to ensure that all migratory students, including preschool and those that have dropped out, receive services from all community, state, and federal programs for which they may be eligible. The results of the CNA are included in the NE MEP SDP which targets student needs and provides recommendations and strategies to meet those needs. Each year, LEA/LOA/LOA/LOAs receiving Title IC-Migrant funds, as part of the local plan submit details as to how to address the needs identified in the SDP.

The NE MEP implements a variety of instructional and support programs designed to meet the needs of migratory students including supplemental instructional services during the regular school year, summer school programs, secondary credit accrual opportunities, High School Equivalency Program (HEP), College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), parent involvement activities, PAC meetings, and professional development designed to increase staff ability to provide high quality instruction. In addition, NE MEP conducts extensive ID&R across the state that is verified by processes and procedures for data quality control.

External evaluators are contracted to assist NE MEP to 1) ensure objectivity in evaluating the NE MEP, 2) examine the implementation and effectiveness of services, and 3) make recommendations to help the State improve the quality of the services provided to its migratory students. The external evaluators work collaboratively with MEP staff to:

- Develop and update data collection tools (e.g., surveys, observation protocols).
- Conduct evaluation interviews, structured observations, and focus groups.
- Review student achievement data and other outcomes such as graduation rates and courses completed toward graduation.

- Observe the operation of the NE MEP LEA/LOAs through a structured observation and summarize field notes about project implementation, including the coordination of other state and federal programs (Title I, Part A, Title III and McKinney-Vento, 21st Century, etc.) with Title I, Part C to meet the needs of migratory children.
- Analyze data and prepare an evaluation report containing information about the extent to which program processes such as professional development, parent involvement, and other activities described in the NE MEP SDP are implemented as planned to achieve the State's measurable program objectives (MPOs).

The implementation of services is examined for effectiveness through onsite visits to LEA/LOAs from NE MEP staff to observe instructional strategies, conduct interviews and surveys, and examine data available on students served and the types of activities provided. In addition, a Fidelity of Strategy Implementation (FSI) tool is utilized by the local projects to measure the project's level of implementation of the Strategies outlined in the SDP. The purpose of the tool is to measure the level of implementation of each strategy listed in the NE MEP grant application that aligns with the Nebraska's SDP; address the implementation evaluation of the NE MEP as required by the USED, OME; to determine the extent to which MEP services are delivered with fidelity; to serve as a self-assessment guide to NE MEP LEA/LOAs in implementing Title IC-Migrant funded services in the four goal areas: School Readiness, English Language Arts & Mathematics, High School Graduation, and Services to OSY; to inform NE MEP staff and the program evaluator about the level of strategy implementation at each LEA/LOA.

The Nebraska Department of Education organizational structure places most of the federal program personnel on the ESEA Programs team. This structure facilitates coordination and communication between federal program personnel to ensure the needs of all students are being met through all applicable programs.

iii. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEA/LOAs, will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, are addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs.

To meet the unique educational needs of migratory children and their families and to ensure that migratory students reach challenging academic standards and graduate from high school the NE MEP develops programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, health-related problems, and other factors inhibiting migratory children from doing well in school and making the transition to postsecondary education or employment.

In order to identify and address the unique educational needs, the NE MEP developed a state SDP based on the most recent CNA. Specifically, the SDP addresses the following:

- Provides for the coordination and integration of services with other ESEA programs.
- Ensures that the state and its local operating agencies identify and address the special educational needs of migratory children.

- Reflects collaboration and consultation with migratory parents.
- Provides migratory children with opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content standards and challenging state student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet.
- Specifies measurable program goals and outcomes.
- Encompasses the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, state, and federal educational programs.
- Reflects joint planning among local, state, and federal programs.

The service delivery strategies identified by the SDP Committee took into consideration the needs identified during the CNA process as well as the solution strategies determined. There are four strategies each for School Readiness, English Language Arts & Mathematics, High school graduation, and Services to OSY. The strategies will be used as the target for the implementation of the MEP.

The NE MEP convened a SDP committee composed of key stakeholders from NE MEP LEA/LOAs as well as content area experts who also served on the CNA committee for the CNA process, ensuring continuity from one phase of the Continuous Improvement Cycle to the next. In order to identify and address the unique educational needs, the NE MEP developed a statewide SDP based on a recent CNA. Specifically, the SDP addresses the following:

- Provides for the integration of services with other ESEA programs.
- Ensures that the state and its local operating agencies identify and address the educational needs of migratory children.
- Reflects collaboration with migratory parents.
- Provides migratory children with opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content standards and challenging state student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet.
- Include specific measurable program goals and outcomes.
- Encompasses the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, state, and federal education programs.
- Reflects joint planning among local, state, and federal programs.

The SDP provides distinct strategies and MPOs targeted toward School Readiness, English Language Arts and Mathematics, High School Graduation, and Services to OSY. Each year, LEA/LOAs implement the program as specified in the plan in communities where migrant families reside. LEA/LOA staff link children and families to existing programs and services. The NE MEP offers supplemental education and support services to respond to the unique needs of migrant children and youth that are not addressed through other state, local, and federal education programs.

The NEMEP offers services during the regular year and in the summer for migrant children and youth. These services include:

- Preschool developmentally appropriate programs designed to prepare migrant children for a successful school experience, services are center-based and home-based.

- Family literacy programs: Outreach and assistance to enroll in regular school year programs.
- Supplemental instructional and support services to assist high school students in achieving graduation as well as postsecondary and career preparation.
- Youth leadership programs.
- Provide awareness of HEP and CAMP program opportunities for secondary and OSY students.
- Service providers assist OSY in developing individual goal plans.
- Outreach and instruction in high school equivalency diploma (HSED) preparation, life skills, and English as a second language for OSY and those who have dropped out of school.
- Parent engagement activities.
- Summer school programs include participation in the Binational Migrant Education Initiative.
- LEA/LOA service providers work with schools and migratory students and families to make sure their needs are addressed, including health, nutrition, and transportation.

iv. Describe how the State and its local operating agencies, which may include LEA/LOAs, will use funds received under Title I, Part C to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the State will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year (i.e., through use of the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX), among other vehicles).

The NE MEP utilizes the MIS2000 database system to collect, store, process, and electronically transfer student educational information to meet the reporting requirement of the program. Section 1306(b)(2) requires SEAs to promote interstate and intrastate coordination by providing for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records when children move from one school to another, whether or not the move occurs during the regular school year. The time transfer of student records can be an effective means of reducing the effects of educational disruption on migratory students. The NE MEP also utilizes MSIX to provide authorized users the support in decision making on student enrollment, grade placement, and credit accrual.

v. Describe the unique educational needs of the State's migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, based on the State's most recent comprehensive needs assessment.

The primary purpose of the CNA is to guide the overall design of the NE MEP, and ensure that the findings of the CNA are incorporated into the State SDP. The SDP clearly articulates: 1) the needs of Nebraska migratory children; 2) the Nebraska MEP's measurable program outcomes and how they help achieve the State's performance targets; 3) the services the NE MEP will provide; and 4) how to evaluate whether and to what degree the program is effective.

During the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) meetings, the committee addressed the following:

- The CNA planning cycle and the roles/responsibilities of the NAC.
- Existing data and information to make determinations about the needs of migratory students.
- Goal areas for the NE MEP and preliminary concern statements; and decisions on next steps in the planning cycle.

The implementation of services is examined for effectiveness through onsite visits from NE MEP staff to observe instructional strategies, conduct interviews and surveys, and examine data available on students served, and the types of activities provided. NE MEP LEA//LOAs complete an annual FSI self-evaluation.

The NAC reviewed the goal areas originally established by OME. It then indicated how the needs of Nebraska migratory students fit within these broad categories and combined areas of need that NAC practitioners and content area experts found necessary. Nebraska State Academic Standards provide a guide to delivering challenging and meaningful content to students that prepares them for success in life. In consideration of State standards and OME recommendations for the CNA, the four goal areas established by the NAC follow:

Goal 1: School Readiness

Goal 2: English Language Arts and Mathematics

Goal 3: High School Graduation

Goal 4: Services to OSY

Upon agreeing to these four goals for improving Nebraska migratory student achievement, each goal was explored in relation to the seven areas of concern established by OME and ensured that concerns and solutions aligned both with the Nebraska Standards and the concerns typically associated with frequent migrancy. The seven recommended areas of concern and the Nebraska context for these concerns are: Educational Continuity, Time for instruction, School Engagement, English Language Development, Education Support in the Home, Health, and Access to Services.

During CNA meetings, the NAC reviewed their previously developed concern statements in each of the four goal areas, updated the statements based on additional data and input, and categorized needs according to the seven concern areas. The development of the concern statements followed an eight-step protocol as well as specific criteria on how to write the statements, the final concern statements, in order of importance as ranked by the committee.

vi. Describe the current measurable program objectives and outcomes for Title I, Part C, and the strategies the SEA will pursue on a statewide basis to achieve such objectives and outcomes consistent with section 1304(b)(1)(D) of the ESEA.

The service delivery strategies identified by the SDP Committee took into consideration the needs identified during the CNA process as well as the solution strategies determined. There are four strategies each for school readiness, English language arts and mathematics, and high school graduation, and services to OSY. These strategies are used to guide and measure implementation.

The link to the latest Nebraska Service Delivery Plan completed in 2022 is [here](https://www.education.ne.gov/migrant/continuous-improvement-cycle/) or at <https://www.education.ne.gov/migrant/continuous-improvement-cycle/>

GOAL AREA #1: SCHOOL READINESS

- **MPO 1A-1:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 47% of eligible migratory children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) will attend preschool or receive MEP-funded preschool services.
- **MPO 1A-2:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 80% of eligible migratory children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) who receive MEP-funded preschool services will score proficient or show a gain of at least 10% on the NePAT.
- **MPO 1B:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 75% of eligible migratory children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) will receive MEP support services that contribute to their development of school readiness skills.
- **MPO 1C:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 90% of family members of eligible migratory children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) who participate in MEP Family and Community Engagement (FACE)/PAC opportunities and/or local family engagement projects will report increased knowledge of school readiness skills.

GOAL AREA #2: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) AND MATHEMATICS

- **MPO 2A-1:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 47% of eligible migratory students in grades K-8 will receive MEP supplemental instructional services.
- **MPO 2A-2:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 84% of eligible migratory students in grades K-8 who received supplemental instructional services in ELA will score proficient or show a gain of 5% on district pre/post-assessments.
- **MPO 2A-3:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 84% of eligible migratory students in grades K-8 who received supplemental instructional services in math will score proficient or show a gain of 5% on district pre/post-assessments.
- **MPO 2B:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 80% of eligible migratory students in grades K-8 will receive MEP support services.
- **MPO 2C:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 90% of family members of migratory students who participated in MEP FACE/PAC opportunities will indicate that they gained knowledge on how to support their children in ELA/math.

GOAL AREA #3: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

- **MPO 3A:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 35% of eligible migratory students in grades 9-12 will receive MEP instructional services.
- **MPO 3B:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 80% of eligible migratory students in grades 9-12 will receive MEP support services that contribute to their graduation, college, career, and/or life readiness skills and goals.
- **MPO 3C:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 90% of migratory family members of students in grades 9-12 who participated in family engagement opportunities will indicate that they gained knowledge of strategies to support their child's achievement of graduation and college, career, and life readiness skills and goals.

GOAL AREA #4: SERVICES TO OSY

- **MPO 4A:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 35% of eligible migratory OSY will receive MEP instructional services.

- **MPO 4B:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 65% of eligible migratory OSY will receive MEP support services that contribute to their graduation, high school equivalency (GED), college, career, and/or life readiness skills and goals.
- **MPO 4C:** By the end of the 2023-24 performance period, 90% of migratory family members of OSY who participated in family engagement opportunities will indicate that they gained knowledge of strategies to support their child's achievement of graduation, high school equivalency (GED), college, career, and life readiness skills and goals.

vii. Describe how the SEA will ensure there is consultation with parents of migratory children, including parent advisory councils, at both the State and local level, in the planning and operation of Title I, Part C programs that span not less than one school year in duration, consistent with section 1304(c)(3) of the ESEA.

The NE MEP consults with parents and guardians of migratory children during the development and revision of the State CNA. The State PAC meets four times during the year and local PACs meet a minimum of twice a year to provide consultation in the planning, operation, and evaluation of the program.

viii. Describe the SEA's priorities for use of Title I, Part C funds, specifically related to the needs of migratory children with "priority for services" under section 1304(d) of the ESEA, including: The measures and sources of data the SEA, and if applicable, its local operating agencies, which may include LEA/LOAs, will use to identify those migratory children who are a priority for services; and

In accordance with ESEA, Section 1304 (d) of the statute, NE MEP gives priority for services to migratory children who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State's challenging State academic standards, and whose education has been interrupted during the regular year. Key factors that are considered by the NE MEP in determining "failing" or "at risk of failing" include the following:

- Disabled/IEP – Student is identified as a student with disabilities (i.e. IEP, 504 Plan).
- Poor Attendance – Student is not attending school regularly (according to district policy).
- Retention – Student has repeated a grade level or a course.
- Modal Grade – Student is placed in a class that is not age appropriate (i.e. 1st - grade placement, 8 years old).
- Credit Deficient – Student is behind in accruing credits toward graduation requirements (based on local requirements).
- LEP – Student is classified as either non-English proficient or limited English proficient according to local language assessment practice.
- Low Performance – Student scores in the "not proficient" level on any of the local assessments - Reading, writing, or mathematics.
- OSY – A migratory youth under the age of 22 who 1) has not graduated; 2) is not attending school; 3) is classified as having dropped out and/or is here to work.
- Pre-Kindergarten. – Children ages 3-5 who are not served by any other program.
- Homeless – A child who is homeless as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act.

The NE MEP uses the student's school records, MIS2000 and MSIX to identify those "failing" or "at-risk of failing" during the student needs assessment process. The Qualifying Arrival Date (QAD) from the child's COE is used to identify the students with a qualifying move within the previous one-year period.

2. When and how the SEA will communicate those determinations to all local operating agencies, which may include LEA/LOAs, in the State.

Every NE MEP LEA/LOA is required to enter at-risk information on every migratory child into MIS2000. This information determines which migratory children should receive services first, provides other districts and states information should the child move, informs audits, and assists the NE MEP in determining sub-allocations. All NE MEP LEA/LOAs maintain a list of their eligible migratory students; PFS students, services available; and students receiving services.

C. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

i. Describe the SEA's plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

Title I Part D grants are offered as formula grants to four school districts and two state agencies, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

1. Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs (ESEA section 1414(a)(1)(B)): Provide a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

Steps-Resource development—Exit begins with entry:

The Nebraska Department of Education has appointed a Coordinator for System Involved Youth. This person is responsible for coordinating with school districts and agencies including the NE Department of Correctional Services, NE Department of Health and Human Services, NE Families Collaborative, and NE Court Probation occurs through scheduled monthly meetings. The monthly meetings allow for joint planning in developing processes and steps used in improving youth transition.

Nebraska has passed legislation Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-425 (2014) and Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-286 (2017) requiring a transition plan 60 days before the student exits a youth correctional facility having a Special Purpose School. This assists the youth and parent for reentry into the community and public school or alternative school. Rule 10 and Rule 18 also require that school districts accept student credits from approved and accredited schools in facilities. Students can graduate from the 3 Special Purpose Schools awarded Title I Part D funds.

Regular meetings are scheduled with the ESIS Advisory group and Committee of Practitioners (representatives from public, private, and alternative educational settings) in regards to the educational concerns of youth returning to their home school or alternative school placement and

education in facilities. The collaborative meetings provide a forum for sharing stakeholder information and initiatives. One initiative established for smoother transition will be implemented. This will allow for acceptance of partial credits by the public schools thereby allowing graduation in a timely manner for youth in transition. This fills the need for transition of youth and their many school moves in order to graduate.

Under 92 NAC 18 - 004.02F2, the school liaison of the Interim-program school initiates contact with the school district responsible for providing special education services to each student with a disability to insure that each student with a disability is provided by the responsible school district with special education and related services pursuant to 92 NAC 51. The school liaison works with the responsible school district to ensure continuation of special education services and information. Interim-Program Schools are also required to contact the school district responsible for providing special education services for each student with a disability to ensure continuation of those services.

Steps-Plan Development:

- With the review of resources and the input from various agencies a combined transition plan will be established.
- Seamless transition from the local school to the correctional facility school is an objective of transition planning for students.
- The local school receives notice through an e-notification of the superintendent's letter that a student from their local school district has been placed in the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center for boys or for girls.
- The local school principal is directed to a secure site to obtain the name of the students and the caseworker for the student. Because of distance from the local school to a correctional facility, a virtual meeting can occur for the 504 plan, the IEP, and also a student assistance plan for transition.
- Records are transmitted to the principal of each of the facility schools from the local school in a timely manner. Through virtual meetings, assignments of incomplete credits can be discussed with the local school counselor or the principal.
- The local school notifies the vocational rehabilitation contact from the Vocational Rehabilitation office serving the local school of the new location of the student. Information can be shared by the local school with the special purpose school by way of the statewide student information system for information such as classroom instructional strategies used, course credits, attendance, and grade records.
- Information from the local school regarding English learner status is also communicated with the facility school.
- Each student has a unique student identification; this enables the correct records to be transferred to the facility school.
- Communication of state assessment timetables can be shared from the local school to the facility school. Any accommodations regarding a student can be communicated from the local school to the facility school.
- Student information is included in the Nebraska student information program and is shared from the local school in the transition process to the principal of the facility school.

- A seamless transition from the facility school back to a local school is a next step for student transition.
- Per Nebraska legislation, the Office of Probation Administration will establish an evidence based reentry process.
- Within 14 days of placement by the court a treatment plan will be established after admission to the facility.
- A transition plan (Academic Advancement Plan) will be developed by the education department in conjunction with the records and contact from the previous school setting or home school district. The plan will be transmitted on an online system now piloted by a rural county detention center, and also can be included on the Advisor SIMS system being piloted in the Department of Corrections with the Educational Service Unit #3.
- The district probation office and office of Juvenile Services personnel will review the individualized reentry plan and expected outcomes with the juvenile, guardian or parent, and the youth's support system. Parents and family will have opportunities to participate in meeting for a smooth transition. A transition plan will be completed within 30 days prior to discharge back to the community or alternative placement. Education Department, and Vocational Rehab Department will also be involved in the transition planning for the student to return to school, enroll in post-secondary, or enter the job market. Parents will be part of this planning via skype if a face to face meeting cannot be arranged.
- The plan can be communicated with the home school by the facility school transition liaison.
- Some students are assigned furlough in the reentry process to complete community and school visits in their transition plans.
- Prior to the school visit, the liaison will communicate with the home school. A caseworker or guardian ad litem, or facility school liaison can accompany the youth and parent for visit and enrollment day.
- The home school will receive credits from the educational program, continue the IEP of the student as needed, and meet with the principal of the school via skype or phone conference.
- A support system and liaison contact will be established for the student The Probation Office will provide a juvenile worker for the student if the student is remaining on probation. If not, the student is under the supervision of the parent.
- Follow-up on the student maintaining enrollment for school success will be monitored up to 90 days. This is one requirement of Title I Part D. Roles will be established with various agency staff for follow-up.

2. *Program Objectives and Outcomes (ESEA section 1414(a)(2)(A)): Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the State that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Title I, Part D program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program.*

Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-760.3 (2016) established an accountability system called AQuESTT. The State Board of Education's 2017-2026 Nebraska Strategic Vision and Direction includes the mission of "education for every student each day". The Guiding Principles for Providing High Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings¹⁷⁹ blends with the above two

systems with emphasis on the collaborative tenets: Career Ready, Educational Access, Educator Effectiveness, Positive Relationships, Transition, and Student Achievement and Growth. The data collected is reviewed and submitted to NDE to evaluate student achievement and the effectiveness of the programs.

NDE ensure that Title I Part D requirements include: improving educational services and the opportunity for youth in correctional facilities to meet the same challenging State academic achievement standards; provide services for successful youth transition, and provide students with support services for drop-out prevention.

Assessing the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve a high school diploma or equivalent is provided by the NE State Standards. Career and technical skills are included in the Career Standards.

Program Objectives:

- Increase student success in school performance through credit completion yearly in the three-year period of 2022-2025. The action plan includes baseline data and a percentage increase of 1% each year for credit completion.
- Increase student access and opportunities for success in graduation and post-secondary activities in a three-year period including baseline data on timely re-enrollment, and cohort graduation, post-secondary education, and job enrollment by 1% each year of the three year action plan.

Program Outcomes:

- Timely re-enrollment of students in the local school districts (as collected through student data)
- Aggregate student cohort graduation increases, (collected through state data)
- Post-secondary enrollment increases, (collected from student data)
- An increase in number of students involved in job training and employment. (collected from state data)
- Data will be gleaned from the National Clearinghouse for Colleges, and the Nebraska Labor Department, and the NE GED Department, and school district data reported to the NE Dept. of ED through Advisor collection, and USDE ED Facts collection, student information system.

Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

i. Describe the SEA's standardized entrance and exit procedures for English learners consistent with section 3113(b)(2) of the ESEA. These procedures must include valid and reliable, objective criteria that are applied consistently across the State. At a minimum, the standardized exit criteria must:

- 1. Include a score of proficient on the State's annual English language proficiency assessment;*
- 2. Be the same criteria used for exiting students from the English learner subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes; and*
- 3. Not include performance on an academic content assessment.*

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code Chapter 15: Rule 15 Regulations and Procedures for English Learner Programs in Nebraska Public Schools outlines uniform procedures for entrance and exit from the EL status.

Identification procedures outlined in Section 003 of Rule 15 include the administration of a Home Language Survey to all students enrolling in Nebraska districts that includes the state's required questions. If the parent's or guardian's answers to any of the questions indicate a language other than English, the district must administer an English language proficiency assessment, commonly known as a screener, that has been determined to be valid and reliable in measuring English language acquisition. Based on the composite results of the assessment, the student shall be determined to have met the state's definition of an English learner, which is the same as the federal definition, and therefore, will be identified on the state record system as an EL and provided language development services.

Exiting students from the EL status requires a score of Proficient on the state's required ELP assessment, the ELPA21 *Summative or Alt ELPA Assessment*. The ELPA21 *assessments'* proficiency determination are based on the student's performance on the four language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

Nebraska exit criteria includes a score of proficient on a valid and reliable English language proficiency (ELP) assessment. There are two distinct scenarios where Nebraska established a different measure of proficiency on a valid and reliable ELP assessment for a narrow group of students:

- a) ELs with a disability that precludes assessment in one or more domains of the ELP assessment; and
- b) ELs who are students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the ELP assessment even with appropriate accommodations who take the State's alternate ELP assessment.

ii. SEA Support for English Learner Progress: (ESEA section 3113(b)(6)): Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:

- *The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and*
- *The challenging State academic standards.*

The Nebraska Department of Education has provided and will continue to provide support to LEAs in meeting Long-Term Goals, Interim Measures of Progress, and the challenging State academic standards by:

- The adoption and implementation of rigorous English language proficiency standards aligned to the state's English language proficiency assessment, the ELPA21. 181
- Conducting alignment studies of the Nebraska ELP standards and the state's College and Career Ready Standards (CCR); including the development of resources to aid content and EL teachers in the implementation of both sets of standards.

- Providing resources and technical assistance on allowable EL testing accommodations for content tests, including the administration of native language assessments. 182
- The adoption of State Rule 15 and accompanying resources outlining the regulations and provisions for the education of English learners including programming and staffing of programs.
- The SEA provides a variety of support through the NDE website for EL, monthly newsletters, and a multitude of groups; the EL Coalition, NE EL Teachers Collaborative, Title III Consortium Directors, Alt ELP Community of Practice, and the NE Multilingual Higher Education group.

iii. Monitoring and Technical Assistance (ESEA section 3113(b)(8)): Describe: How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A subgrant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and

1. The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies

The Nebraska Department of Education implements a consolidated Federal Programs application system and monitoring process. The Federal Programs staff members approve grants and monitor LEAs and consortia for Titles I, II, and III. Each member is assigned a geographic area of the state and conducts reviews on a five-year cycle. The Title III team provides assistance to federal programs team members monitoring LEAs with Title III programs by either conducting the Title III section of the review or by providing technical assistance, resources, and support. LEAs are required by Rule 15 to conduct an annual review of their Language Instruction Educational Program's effectiveness. The areas of review include but are not limited to:

- Program implementation processes in place including a process for identifying students, implementing the language instruction educational program, adequate staffing, assessment and accommodations, and procedures *for exiting the program*.
- Analysis of student data including performance on the ELP and content assessments.
- Monitoring academic progress of former ELs.
- Identifying and implementing modifications to the program based on the review of district practices and data.
- Summarizing findings of the review in a written report to be made available to the public.

Should an LEA's program be found not to be effective or otherwise in need of improvement through the ESSA consolidated monitoring, through the Continuous Improvement Process tied to accreditation, submission of the annual LEP Plan, by or other means, Nebraska Department of Education provides technical assistance *to the LEA and ESUs* by:

- Providing targeted workshops to address topics of common concern across LEAs;
- Conducting on-site technical assistance visits to individual LEAs or consortia;
- Connecting the LEA to a member of the statewide EL Professional Development team to provide technical assistance to staff or onsite workshops centered on EL friendly strategies and effective program practices;
- Providing dedicated Title III staff members for phone assistance or online support

E. Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

1. Use of Funds (ESEA section 4203(a)(2)): Describe how the SEA will use funds received under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, including funds reserved for State-level activities.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program will use Title IV, Part B funds, as well as other federal funds, to establish and implement strategies that support educationally at-risk students identified in 6.1.A and 6.1.B above. This system of support addresses both students' academic and non-academic needs during times when school is not in session including afterschool, non-school days, and in the summer. All sub-grantees are required to participate in applicable USDA nutrition programs ensuring healthy snacks and/or meals are provided to students who attend programs afterschool and in the summer. The 21st CCLC funds ensure students' academic success through implementation of strategies that support three overarching program goals:

- Improve student learning performance,
- Increase student social benefits and positive behavioral changes,
- Increase family and community engagement in supporting students' education.

These three program goals are accomplished through an intentionally designed program aligned to the Nebraska State Board of Education goals and Strategic Plan, as well as the six tenets of Nebraska's accountability system, AQuESTT. Examples of this alignment and support include:

- Positive Partnerships, Relationships and Student Success: Collaborative partnerships between school day and afterschool educators, families, community partners and local businesses provide a system of support, meaningful engagement, and enhanced learning and leadership opportunities for students. T
- Transitions: Continuity of program staff who remain with students across school years and in the summer support student transitions Pre-K through college and/or career through focused activities and mentoring opportunities.
- Educational Opportunities and Access: Additional learning time is provided afterschool and in the summer that gives students the opportunity for more in-depth, student-centered learning experiences and time and support for homework completion. In addition, summer programs reduce the risk of students experiencing the "summer slide" when at risk students can potentially lose academic gains made the previous school year.
- College and Career Ready: Partnerships allow students to connect in meaningful ways with local business and industry, postsecondary institutions, school day educators, and program staff to develop interests and skills for future success.
- Assessment: Programs employ sound data collection and management practices focused on the continuous improvement process.
- Educator Effectiveness: Programs employ formal and informal educators who partner to provide additional learning time for students who may benefit from added educational support. Ongoing professional development is provided to develop skills, knowledge, and strategies for supporting student learning.

Funds reserved for State-level activities will comply with Sec. 4202 (c). State administration funds will be used for administration, establishing and implementing a rigorous peer review process and awarding of funds to eligible entities. State Activities funds will be used for

monitoring and evaluating programs and activities, providing capacity building, training and technical assistance, conducting a comprehensive evaluation, providing training and technical assistance to eligible entities that are applicants for or recipients of awards, ensuring that recipients align the activities provided by the program with the challenging State academic standards, ensuring that recipients identify and partner with external organizations, working with teachers, principals, parents, the local workforce, the local community, and other stakeholders to review and improve State policies and practices to support the implementation of effective programs, coordinating 21st CCLC funds with other Federal and State funds to implement high quality programs and providing a list of prescreened external organizations.

2. Awarding Subgrants (ESEA section 4203(a)(4)): Describe the procedures and criteria the SEA will use for reviewing applications and awarding 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds to eligible entities on a competitive basis, which shall include procedures and criteria that take into consideration the likelihood that a proposed community learning center will help participating students meet the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards.

The processes procedures, and priorities used to award 21st CCLC subgrants are as follows:

Grant competition: A 21st CCLC grant competition is conducted annually and several months prior to the postmark deadline date, the Request for Proposals (RFP) is released. The RFP is developed in consultation and coordination with a 21st CCLC advisory group that includes appropriate state officials and others identified in statute, as well as other stakeholders who bring a variety of perspectives as experts in the field. In the project design section, applicants must describe how they will ensure students' academic and overall success through implementation of research or evidence-based strategies that support the three overarching Nebraska 21st CCLC program goals. Applicants are required to consult with eligible nonpublic schools to assure equitable services. Applicants must describe how the transportation needs of participating students will be addressed. The competition is advertised widely through the website, press release to the public and direct emails to public and nonpublic administrators and other stakeholder groups. A grant writing technical assistance workshop(s) is conducted shortly after the RFP's release and technical assistance documents are posted on the 21st CCLC website.

External review process: In step one of the review process, external teams comprised of educators and other professionals with knowledge of afterschool and summer programming from diverse areas of the state and varying sizes of communities are selected to represent a variety of viewpoints. Team members independently read and score proposals. Step two of the process includes the on-site review where fellow team members discuss individual scores and rationale. SEA staff do not serve as reviewers but are present to answer questions and ensure that proposals are evaluated according to the objective criteria in the RFP. Teams discuss each proposal and arrive at a team consensus score and feedback, including funding recommendation and any conditions of funding. Recommended proposals are forwarded to the State Board of Education for final approval.

Criteria used to award subgrants: To be eligible to apply for a Nebraska 21st CCLC grant, proposals must target students and family members of those students who attend schools in

which at least 40% of the students qualified to receive free or reduced-cost meals in the most recent school year in which data is available. Competitive priority points are awarded to programs targeting students who attend school buildings receiving a classification of “Needs Improvement” on the most recent AQuESTT Classification Report, applications submitted jointly by at least one school building and at least one public or private community-based organization, programs targeting students who attend schools with a mobility rate or English learner rate above the statewide average, and programs targeting students who attend schools in which 60% or 80% or more of the building students qualified to receive free or reduced-cost meals in the most recent school year in which data is available.

Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program.

i. Provide the SEA’s specific measurable program objectives and outcomes related to activities under the Rural and Low-Income School Program, if applicable.

1. Outcomes and Objectives (ESEA section 5223 (b)(1)): Provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, including how the SEA will use funds to help all students meet the challenging State academic standards.

The activities authorized under the Rural and Low-Income School Program provide a funding source for smaller districts in the State of Nebraska to provide additional opportunities for their schools in areas of allowability that match other ESEA programs. These funds supplement local, state, and federal resources already in place in rural and low-income school districts to support these activities in order to increase student achievement. Depending on the way the allocations are spent determine how to measure the effectiveness of the individual projects. Ways to measure the effectiveness could include; Performance data/growth data measured by the state using the existing NSCAS scores, tracking the LEA’s identified specific federal programs (Title I - IV) authorized activities in Section 5222 (a)(1-5) of ESSA, perceptual data, or individual measures as determined by the district that best meet the criteria.

Each LEA may determine how to make the most effective use of these RLIS funds in combination with other local, state, and federal resources in addressing their greatest area(s) of academic need. NDE will continue to elevate district best practices as well as support and strengthen statewide and regional efforts by engaging partners to continuously enhance the quality of rural and low income schools programs across the state. NDE’s Rural and Low Income Schools Program will coordinate with other federal programs as well as agency-wide efforts to deliver high-quality service and support to LEAs and schools.

Application:

School districts receiving RLIS funds will be required to complete an on-line application that has the same components as other ESEA grants. Specific to this grant will be information about;

1. How will the RLIS funds be targeted to the improvement of student learning?
2. How does the use of these funds match the district’s Continuous Improvement Plan, Safety Plan, Continuous Needs Assessment, and/or Local Plan?
3. How will the district evaluate the improvement of student learning based on the use of the allocations?

4. Which allowable program matches the use of the funds?

Included in the annual RLIS grant application are requirements for each LEA to identify the specific federal program (Titles I-IV) authorized in Section 5222(a)(1-5) of ESSA for which the funds will be used. The LEA will be required to include a line-item budget in their application that designates both the category via object code in the budget and activity description (Titles I-IV) for RLIS fund use. (H.2: Technical Assistance)

2. Technical Assistance (ESEA section 5223 (b)(3)): Describe how the SEA will provide technical assistance to eligible LEAs to help such agencies implement the activities described in ESEA section 5222.

A designated Federal Programs Consultant is assigned specifically to provide technical support for each LEA that is selected and submits a RLIS grant application. The designated staff member serves as the state liaison with the U.S. Department of Education staff regarding all REAP requirements and yearly submission of updated school district information to determine RLIS eligibility. This individual notifies all RLIS districts of their eligibility to apply for RLIS funds; availability of online resources and webinars in preparation for completion of their RLIS grant application; as well as assistance in the actual completion of all grant application forms. All grant applications are reviewed by this same NDE staff member and any required changes are accomplished via telephone and electronic media submission of final grant documents before submission for final approval by the NDE Director of Federal Programs. The designated NDE staff member is also responsible for providing support to the LEA in meeting the objectives included in the grant application through (monitoring). The Federal Program Specialist also assists/supports in helping to submit all required documents to confirm LEA expenses as well as requests for reimbursement of their RLIS funds. There is also one Grant Management Specialist in the Office of Budget and Grants Management that reviews all reimbursement requests to assure allowability. This person works closely with the RLIS Federal Program Consultant to assure the approved application matches the reimbursement request. In addition, application materials, eligibility requirements and training materials are available via the Title V Section of the Federal Programs Team NDE Website.

All RLIS applications are initially reviewed by an RLIS Specialist and final reviewed by the Federal Programs Administrator. The NDE RLIS Consultant will ensure that subrecipients comply with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. The program monitoring process is held on a rotating basis that matches the ESEA monitoring schedule for all programs. During this monitoring it is assured that all requirements are being met and any required actions are addressed. Fiscal monitoring also occurs on a rotating basis through the NDE Office of Budget and Grants Management.

Title VII, Part B – McKinney-Vento Act

i. Consistent with section 722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act, describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youths in the State and assess their needs.

The Nebraska Department of Education ensures that every LEA has an appointed District Homeless Liaison. Each Liaison completes an online training that outlines the responsibilities of the liaison, the requirements of how a student can be identified as experiencing homelessness or an unaccompanied youth, and the support the district is required to provide as outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. The Nebraska Department of Education also offers training to certified and support staff in the identification of homeless and unaccompanied youth. These trainings are posted on the SEA's McKinney Vento website. The Nebraska Department of Education has partnered with outside agencies to provide online training sessions as well as in person sessions.

ii. Describe the SEA's programs for school personnel (including liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including such children and youths who are unaccompanied and homeless youths.

Training opportunities for local McKinney-Vento liaisons are available in a variety of formats and locations. In Nebraska the majority of local liaisons are district superintendents, so instructional sessions are targeted at locations that have the best chance to reach the greatest number of administrators. This includes yearly sessions at Administrators Days, a session at the Title I conference, sessions at the local ESUs during the annual Title I meetings, and the ESUs' superintendents back to school meetings in September. McKinney-Vento instructional PowerPoint presentations are available on the NDE website for self-training at the individual district level as determined by the local liaison.

One-on one training and technical assistance is available by email, by phone, or by school visitation for LEA liaisons. The SEA and LEA liaisons have formed a strong support group that is available at any time to assist with problem solving including sharing of ideas, best practices, and forms that have been developed to identify and enroll students. LEA liaisons are responsible to train district and school staff. Local liaisons and the SEA liaison have collaborated for these presentations. The format for these dual presentations is that the SEA liaison talks about a specific part of the McKinney-Vento Act and the local liaison relates how that is implemented at the district level. The SEA liaison also assists with the development of PowerPoint presentations that can be used by the LEA liaisons. The PowerPoint presentations are available on the NDE website for easy access.

All liaisons are encouraged to sign up with NCHE, NAEHCY, and Schoolhouse Connection to access the many webinars, materials, and services offered. Notices are sent to the LEAs to remind them of upcoming trainings. Liaisons are informed of and encouraged to take advantage of national trainings and conferences.

Discussions and technical support are provided to early childhood program representatives and Head Start coordinating staff within the Nebraska Department of Education. All of these trainings deal with the identification, enrollment, and rights of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth. The definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act is compared to the definition of HUD homeless. Resources are made available for posting throughout the

communities and the school buildings. Information about the acquisitions of free resources is presented.

The SEA liaison provides training and technical assistance to NDE Title I consultants to increase their knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Act and the identification, enrollment, assessment, and rights of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth. This training facilitates their ability to guide districts during the three year monitoring cycle.

The SEA Homeless Liaison serves as a member of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) to coordinate services for homeless and unaccompanied children and youth among public schools and other agencies across the state. Participation of the SEA Homeless Liaison on this Council helps to ensure that the needs and rights of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth are being met, including those homeless and unaccompanied children and youth with disabilities and those in public preschool and Head Start programs. These relationships help to develop a more detailed understanding of the needs of the homeless population and a more effective system for serving homeless and unaccompanied children and youth.

iii. Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths are promptly resolved.

Nebraska Department of Education Rule 19 describes all necessary steps each LEA must take to develop, implement and monitor their dispute resolution policy and procedures. This rule follows the guidelines set out in the McKinney-Vento Act. The ESEA Monitoring Guide Checklist used by SEA staff also has an extensive section on the dispute resolution process allowing the SEA to determine if each district has approvable policies and procedures in place. On-site monitoring interviews with LEA personnel, guided by specific questions in the Monitoring Guide Checklist Also confirm that the LEA dispute resolution process is being implemented and followed consistently, and that any disputes filed at the LEA level are resolved promptly.

iv. Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that youths described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act and youths separated from the public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youths described in this paragraph from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.

The SEA ensures this through the 5-year monitoring process as outlined above. Equitable access at the LEA level to programs and services, and the removal of all barriers to continued educational success are addressed both through assurance statements contained within the ESEA Consolidated application, as well as required components in the ESEA Monitoring Guide Checklist utilized during on-site monitoring visits by SEA staff members of each LEA. The McKinney-Vento requirements are reviewed and enforced through this process both for school age programs as well as any LEA operating a public preschool program.

- v. Describe the SEA's procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths:*
- 1. Have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the State;*
 - 2. Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities; and*
 - 3. Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, are able to participate in Federal, State, and local nutrition programs.*

Nebraska does not have compulsory public preschool so there are no set procedures for admission of homeless children. However, as a member of the ECICC, the SEA liaison has the opportunity to provide technical assistance to the members in understanding the definition of homelessness and to help members develop registration materials that will facilitate the identification of homeless children.

The LEAs are responsible to find and identify youth that have become homeless and separated from school. The state staff and student reporting system is useful in identifying students who are no longer attending school. LEA liaisons become familiar with places or areas where homeless youth who are separated from school might be located.

In the liaison training process it is clearly emphasized that the definition of enrollment is to attend classes and participate fully in school activities. The SEA and LEAs monitor the full participation of youth experiencing homelessness in all areas including magnet schools, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, gifted and talented, and other programs available at the local level. At this time, Nebraska does not allow charter schools. Technical assistance is provided to liaisons and districts to ensure compliance with this piece of the McKinney-Vento Act. The SEA liaison also helps to review state and local policies that could affect compliance. The SEA liaison is part of the Commissioner's School Practitioners Advisory Group that has advanced partial credits recommendations to the Commissioner. These four recommended practices would be for any student who enters a new approved or accredited school.

NDE Nutrition Services received a grant to upgrade the technology, integrate the state student information system, and incorporate homeless data sets to ensure that free meals will be available immediately upon enrollment and entry into the student reporting system.

The SEA ensures this through the 3-year monitoring process as outlined above. Equitable access at the LEA level to all programs and services, including early childhood and public preschool programs operated by the SEA or LEA is monitored and enforced by the SEA. This includes the removal of all barriers to continued educational success, including transportation and continued placement in schools and preschools of origin, as well as all nutritional services to which the homeless children are automatically eligible to receive. These requirements are addressed both through assurance statements contained within the ESEA Consolidated application, as well as required components in the ESEA Monitoring Guide Checklist utilized during on-site monitoring visits by SEA staff members of each LEA.

vi. Describe the SEA's strategies to address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays and retention, consistent with sections 722(g)(1)(H) and (I) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

The SEA addresses these issues through ongoing technical assistance to each LEA. As outlined above, requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act are enforced through the annual ESEA Consolidated application, the 3-year on-site monitoring process, and any formal disputes filed with the SEA Homeless Liaison. The SEA liaison receives ongoing training from the NCHE and NAEHCY to ensure clear and consistent guidance is offered to LEAs, including the extension of the requirements under McKinney-Vento to early childhood, preschool and Head Start programs operated by the SEA or LEA.

Policies to Remove Barriers (722(g)(1)(I) of the McKinney-Vento Act:

Demonstrate that the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth, and the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees, or fines, or absences.

NDE training stresses the importance of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth being able to access all educational and school programs and activities, including extracurricular activities. The SEA liaison works with other staff in the SEA federal programs office to target policies that many require changes. LEA liaisons are encouraged in their training to bring forward for discussion any local policies that could put the district out of compliance.

The SEA and LEAs have developed and continue to review policies to remove barriers to identification, enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. This includes policies and best practices regarding fees, fines, absences or lack of proper paperwork. Technical assistance is provided through trainings offered at NDE workshops, webinars and one-on-one technical assistance to keep school districts informed of the requirements and best practices regarding fees, fines, absences or lack of proper paperwork in regard to identification, enrollment and retention of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth. During the Federal Programs monitoring process Title I consultants and LEA liaisons discuss district policies and procedures used to identify, enroll and retain homeless children and youth. Enrollment forms that support best practices are developed and shared by the LEA and SEA liaisons. Best practices are provided not only at the training venues previously mentioned but also through the strong state system of support that has been developed through the use of the LEA liaisons' ListServe.

The SEA works with other NDE and state entities to develop, review and revise policies regarding fees, fines, absences or lack of paperwork that could create a barrier for the enrollment and/or retention of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth. The SEA ensures through both the ESEA Consolidated Grant Application process, as well as the 3-year on-site monitoring process that each LEA has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all barriers are removed to enrollment and retention of homeless children, including children in public preschool programs. Ongoing technical assistance and communication from SEA staff with LEA personnel help to provide the support necessary to hold school districts accountable for the consistent

implementation of the policies they have established to ensure the rights of homeless and unaccompanied children and youth are upheld.

Assistance from Counselors (722(g)(1)(K)):

A description of how youths described in section 725(2) will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths, and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.

Rule 10 in Nebraska requires that each LEA has a guidance counselor on staff to address the needs of all students to become college and career ready prior to graduation, and to provide such youth with the readiness skills necessary to transition beyond their K-12 program. Through the ESEA 3- Year On-Site Monitoring process, each LEA is required to identify a Homeless Liaison, whose duties include support to families of homeless children as well as individual guidance to any unaccompanied homeless youth in order to ensure their equitable access to all services for which they are legally entitled. This includes access to, and coordination of guidance and counseling services, on the same basis as is provided to all other students in the school district.

The NeMTSS framework outlines specific skills and actions to organize, support, deliver and drive continuous improvement. The NeMTSS framework meets required continuous improvement regulations set forth in Section 009 of Nebraska's Administrative Code, Rule 10, Accreditation of Schools, and regulation 005.03 requiring accredited schools to have a student assistance process. NeMTSS is oriented to help school districts meet local goals for student learning as outlined by state standards and assessments. NeMTSS provides districts, schools, and educators with a structured approach to reaching goals they are already accountable for achieving. The alignment to accreditation and coherence can be seen in:

- A common plan (the continuous improvement plan (CIP) is used to support both processes)
- Use of the same problem-solving model
- Shared language anchored by the shared glossary
- Orientation of accreditation teams to the particulars of this framework.

NeMTSS provides increased clarity and stronger connections with other school support structures from the Nebraska Department of Education, including the Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative. The Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative is a tool that informs and supports the decisions made locally related to curriculum and instructional materials. The connections can be seen in:

- Cross-references to the value of high-quality instructional materials in the layered continuum of support
- Examples of how teams can consider Tier 2 Targeted supports in alignment with their Tier 1 Core materials
- Coherence with the AQuESTT Tenet, "Educational Opportunities and Access", each student has access to effective, comprehensive, and continuous learning opportunities that prepare them for ongoing school success, postsecondary education, and career goals.

Children of color—particularly African American and American Indian youth—are identified as students with disabilities at substantially higher rates than their peers. It is critical to ensure that overrepresentation is not the result of misidentification, including both over- and under-identification, which can interfere with a school's ability to provide children with the appropriate educational services required by law. It is equally important to ensure that all children who are suspected of having a disability are evaluated and, as appropriate, receive needed special education and related services in the most appropriate setting and with the most appropriate discipline strategies employed.

This rule sets a common standard for identifying significant disproportionality in representation of students within special education, segregated school settings, and in receipt of disciplinary actions and ensures that school districts where disproportionality is found carefully review their policies and practices to determine root causes and whether changes are needed. The final rule ensures that school districts explore and address situations where the cause of significant disproportionality is due to under-identification of a group as well as over-identification. In addition to requiring a standard methodology, the regulations shine a spotlight on disparities in the discipline of students with disabilities on the basis of race or ethnicity by requiring states to examine districts for significant disproportionality in their disciplinary practices. Specifically, the regulations clarify that States must address significant disproportionality in the incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions, using the same statutory remedies required to address significant disproportionality in the identification and placement of children with disabilities.

Through the IDEA mandate, school districts found to be “significantly disproportionate” in any of the above areas, must identify a means to correct the disproportionality.

The Nebraska Department of Education identified family engagement as an essential area of focus in its new Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) within the tenet of Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success. Engaging families and communities as partners with schools is essential, as the evidence is clear: partnerships contribute to children and youth’s academic and social success. Current family and community engagement research, websites, and promising practices are available via the links below.

Schools and childcare providers 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 improve the outcomes for each child, family, school, district, and community. In order to better support learners throughout the state, The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) in collaboration with educators, parents, and community partners created the Nebraska School, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. This Framework is a tool to help Nebraska educators as they reach out to families and community partners.

Content was aligned to the Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success AQuESTT tenet. “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.”

This Framework is built on the understanding that school, family, and community engagement:

- recognizes the role families and the community play in advocating for educational equity, opportunity, and quality;
- is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities where knowledge is exchanged;
- focuses on culturally respectful partnerships that support student learning, at home, at school, and in the community;
- builds, sustains, and grows relationships that empower all students, families, and communities;
- is continuous across a child’s life spanning from birth to young adulthood;
- occurs in multiple settings where children and youth learn before, during, and after the regular school day as well as summer.

The Framework includes information on six interrelated focus areas:

1. [Active Family Engagement](#)
2. [Safe and Welcoming Schools](#)
3. [Student Attendance](#)
4. [Community Partnerships and Support Services](#)
5. [Business and Industry Partnerships](#)
6. [Before-School, Afterschool, and Summer Programs](#)

Information provided includes a definition, best practices, research, and additional resources.

This framework is for schools and teams of educators to use in their continuous improvement efforts. Educators can use the resources and suggestions included in their engagement efforts on school improvement teams, MTSS teams, school safety committees, etc.

The creation of the Nebraska School, Family, and Community Engagement Framework was a collaborative effort that reflects input from individuals from across the state including educators, parents, and community partners.