

December 11, 2025 Minutes

Opening Remarks – Dr. Jane Stavem

Dr. Stavem was introduced and provided opening remarks to the State Accreditation Committee. Trend lines in Nebraska, what Accreditation means, and what excellence in Nebraska Education looks like were topics of her discussion.

Opening of Meeting

The Nebraska State Accreditation Committee met at the Nebraska Department of Education on December 11, 2025. Chair Dale Hafer called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m., established the legality of the meeting, and declared a quorum present.

Members present were the following: LeeAnn Amm, Joel Bednar, Gina Bittner, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Dale Fornander, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Vickie Kauffold, Mitch Kubicek, Marco Pedroza Teresa Perkins, Nicole Regan, Sarah Salem, Kim Saum-Mills, Dan Schnoes,

Members absent: Wayne Brown, Jeff Ganz, Dan Schnoes, and Heather Phillips.

NDE staff members facilitating the meeting were the following: Decua Jean-Baptiste, Todd Wolverton, and Sandra Suiter

Chair Dale Hafer requested a motion for approval for the December 11, 2025, agenda. Dale Fornander moved to approve the agenda and Gina Bittner seconded the motion.

Voting **yes**: LeeAnn Amm, Joel Bednar, Gina Bittner, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Dale Fornander, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Vickie Kauffold, Mitch Kubicek, Teresa Perkins, Nicole Regan, Sarah Salem, Kim Saum-Mills

Voting **no**: none

Approval carried 16-0 with 4 absent

Members were asked to approve the minutes from the April 17, 2025, meeting. Sarah Salem moved to approve the minutes and Nicole Regan seconded the motion.

Voting **yes**: LeeAnn Amm, Joel Bednar, Gina Bittner, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Dale Fornander, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Vickie Kauffold, Mitch Kubicek, Teresa Perkins, Nicole Regan, Sarah Salem, Kim Saum-Mills

Voting **no**: none

Approval carried 16-0 with 4 absent

Welcome and Introduction of Members' Updates

Failure to Meet/Violations

The Accreditation Team reviewed the difference between Failure to Meet (Mandatory Requirements for Legal Operations) and Violations (Regulatory) withing Rule 10. Data regarding monitored violations were shared and discussed. Data from 2024-2025 compliance visits revealed that several school systems received violations in the areas of Instructional Programs and Standards, Curriculum and Standards, Middle Grade Instruction, Annual Written Reports along with several other areas.

Rule Revision

Follow up from the April 17th meeting reviewed Rule 10 revisions and the timeline for revisions to

take effect. Revisions being considered include removing dates from Rule in submitting “Evidence” and “Plans of Corrections” for violations. The elimination of “waivers and modifications” in sections 13.01 through 13.03 is being considered and changed to “Pilot Programs and Processes.” Retention of section 13.04 will remain as it relates to special purpose school systems with the board reaffirming waivers up to four years.

Continuous Improvement Regionals

Committee members were updated on the Regional Continuous Improvement workshops. This year’s workshops took place in five different locations. Presenters included NDE staff, NeMTSS, School District Personnel, and Professors from universities and colleges in Nebraska.

Third Party Reviewers

Third Party reviewers for five-year external visits was discussed. Data showed that 88% of Rule 10 Public and Nonpublic school systems now use the Nebraska model for external visitations.

Middle School Athletics

Committee members were reminded of the timeline regarding Middle School Athletics. New updates were not available at the time of the meeting. A suggestion was made to have someone from the SAC committee attend NSAA meetings if possible to report on new developments. A discussion followed to change the language in Rule 10 section 004.02C. Discussion was tabled until after lunch.

Transportation

Bryce Wilson, NDE Finance Officer, was asked to speak to the SAC about changes to the use of vans for transporting students.

Continued Conversation

The SAC reconvened after lunch and finished conversations regarding Middle School Athletics.

Joel Bednar motioned to change the language in regulation 004.02C, striking the word “sixth” and changing to “fifth,” and striking the language “except that elementary school systems having seventh and eighth grade athletics may include sixth grade boys and girls when combined enrollment for seventh and eighth grade becomes fewer than 12 boys or 12 girls and if the governing body has a policy regulating participation for sixth graders;” and, remove regulation 004.03C from Rule 10, not taking effect until the 2027-2028 school year.

Voting **yes:** LeeAnn Amm, Joel Bednar, Gina Bittner, Susanne Cramer, Brad Dirksen, Rebecca Dunn, Courtney Feeney, Dale Fornander, Dale Hafer, Stacie Hardy, Vickie Kauffold, Mitch Kubicek, Teresa Perkins, Nicole Regan, Sarah Salem, Kim Saum-Mills

Voting **no:** none

Approval carried 16-0 with 4 absent, 1 abstain

Carnegie Foundation

Guests from the Carnegie Foundation and Whiteboard Advisors provided information on the history of the Carnegie Unit and the change in philosophy towards a more performance-based education. Carnegie is currently working with several states, with success seen in Indiana, Kentucky, and Utah. Group discussion followed the presentation. Several questions were asked regarding Nebraska school systems, their awareness of current flexibility in Rule 10, and what schools are doing to provide students with more learning opportunities.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.