




## Frequently Asked Questions

Nebraska Department of Education  
Office of Coordinated School and District Support  
**Updated January 2021**

FAQ	Response
<p>What is S.E.E.D.?</p> 	<p>In April of 2020, the Nebraska State Board of Education (<b>SBOE</b>) made a commitment to a common language of effectiveness for all Nebraska school teachers and leaders by approving revisions to the <a href="#">Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (NTPPS)</a>. These standards provide a structure designed to address the complexities of teaching and leading. The Nebraska Department of Education (<b>NDE</b>) is committed to organized and intentional collaboration with key partners to develop and implement a system using these standards as the foundation to support the educational community in addressing equity in schools. The system is called <a href="#">Supporting Educator Effectiveness through Development (S.E.E.D.)</a>.</p> <p>The S.E.E.D system serves as the mechanism to make the NTPPS come alive across Nebraska and is very intentional in the communication of two words: <b>support and development</b>. The word <b>evaluation</b> was intentionally left out of the acronym S.E.E.D. <b>Evaluation</b> is one essential component that enables the support and development process to be tailored to individual needs. <b>Evaluation</b> is not an effective tool to support this process if used as a stand alone indicator of one's abilities. An evaluation tool needs to be utilized in tandem with other tools, policies, and protocols to support the growth of teachers and principals. An example of a tool that has traditionally been used with evaluation in Nebraska is rubrics that align to the standards.</p> <p><a href="#">Follow us on Twitter</a> </p>
<p>Have rubrics aligned to the NTPPS been developed?</p> 	<p>A draft of a <b>continuum of support and development</b> has been developed. Rubrics typically provide a roadmap to show people where they need to go to be successful. The DRAFT <b>continuum of support and development</b> takes this process one step further than rubrics, and will serve a specific purpose within the S.E.E.D. system. This continuum of support and development will be integral in making the shift from compliance (evaluation as prescriptive for judgment of performance level) to support and development (collaboration about examining practice to guide learning.) The shift is toward formative assessment, real</p>

	time support and development and reflective partnerships in professional practice.
<p>What are the major shifts in the newly revised NTPPS?</p> <p><u>UPDATED</u> </p>	<p>The major shifts in the new NTPPS are an increased focus on equity and data-driven decision making, allowing districts to more purposefully prioritize the individual needs of each student. The revisions, written by Nebraska educators statewide, provide an enhanced picture of effective teaching and school leadership. The NTPPS demonstrate the commitment to an expectation of <b>equitable and data-driven practices</b> for Nebraska’s teachers and principals, and intentionally communicate this commitment through these powerful words: “<b>confront and eliminate institutional bias and student marginalization</b>”. The S.E.E.D. system begins and ends with individuals and the ability to come together as educators. S.E.E.D. is committed to supporting Nebraska’s educators to truly lean into their curiosity and ask questions they might not have otherwise ever asked. This is a complex process that must be supported and developed over time. Research and experience tell us this process of change will take at least 3-5 years to become a statewide mindset. The NDE will work closely with ESUs, higher education institutions, and districts to ensure that a common language derived through collaboration drives the process. Context matters.</p> <p><b>RESOURCE:</b>  <i>Leading for Equity in our Schools</i> (temporarily under reconstruction) is a resource that addresses mindsets and dispositions that help look at students from an asset perspective. and enhance educators’ expertise in promoting success for all students, especially for those who have been historically marginalized and oppressed.</p>
<p>How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of NTPPS?</p> <p><u>UPDATED</u> </p>	<p>The pandemic has greatly impacted education in Nebraska and has exposed the inequities in Nebraska’s educational system. Educators and the educational system as a whole in Nebraska have been given an opportunity, and the response to this exposure is critical. As education moves into the post-COVID era of schooling, educators and all members of Nebraska’s educational system are <b>morally compelled</b> to have intentional conversations about the fact that schooling has barriers, including benefits for some while creating biases toward others. The NTPPS is intentional about elevating conversations around equity and data-driven practice to a frequent, regular, reflective space.</p>
<p>Is the NDE mandating a statewide instructional model?</p>	<p>No. The investments made in work with instructional models must be valued in statewide decisions being made. Some might argue it would be “easier” to mandate a statewide model. However, the Office of Coordinated School and District Support is committed to the idea that context matters. The</p>

	<p>voices of educators statewide have been a part of the decision-making from the very beginning of the standards revision process and will continue to be included. The instructional system developed must embrace an equity mindset, shifting from compliance to development and support of educators, so each student in Nebraska has access to effective teachers and school leaders.</p>
<p>What will the NDE expect from districts regarding the rigor of instructional models?</p> <p><u>UPDATED</u></p> 	<p>The alignment process developed must showcase the initiatives in which districts are already engaged. An effective instructional model is one that is created out of the context and needs of individual districts and is grounded in the NTPPS. For example, many districts have adopted a student support model, such as MTSS. Through their work of developing these student support models into district-wide instructional systems, within their own contexts, attention needs to be given to how that work aligns with the instructional models of each district, to realize how the effectiveness of their teachers and principals is related to the instructional system.</p> <p>Districts should focus on identifying their own context, needs, and questions, and reflect on their ability to determine next steps, processes, and tools. How do current programs and processes help to answer those questions? What questions are left unanswered and what will schools do to respond? How will they adjust and adapt their current systems? What role does the instructional model in place play in supporting this process?</p> <p>NDE is committed to guiding the shift necessary for districts to focus on their own context, and their areas of needed support and development, rather than on a form of traditional compliance.</p>
<p>What does “equal to or more rigorous” really mean? Where did this phrase come from?</p>	<p>The state of Nebraska will not mandate that districts must use the NTPPS as their district instructional model, but the NTPPS sets the standard for expectations of effective teaching and school leadership in Nebraska. Districts will need to show how their instructional models are “equal to or more rigorous” than the NTPPS. <i>The precedent for the phrase “equal to or more rigorous than” has its roots in state statute 79-760.02, regarding content standards, which states in part: ...The standards may be the same as, or may be equal to or exceed in rigor, the measurable academic content standards adopted by the state board.</i> It goes without saying that districts should not settle for lesser than. The expectation is that every Nebraska student has access to effective educators regardless of where they live and which district they attend. Having the standard of “equal to or more rigorous” ensures consistent expectations while also honoring local context and control.</p>
<p>Have crosswalks between the NTPPS and the Danielson and Marzano</p>	<p>Yes. The crosswalks were created as a surface level alignment in June of 2020. While the crosswalk process is an effective starting point, the stronger leverage is in the conversations</p>

instructional models been developed?



about the practices that align and the gaps revealed. Both crosswalks, [Danielson](#) and [Marzano](#), show areas of alignment with the NTPPS and areas of weak alignment. The local school district should strike a balance with the effective practices in the existing models and deeper shifts found in the NTPPS.

Are there preferred, instructional models?

No. Districts may choose any instructional model to serve as the common language for effective teaching and leading in their districts. However, any instructional model will need to be equal to or more rigorous than the NTPPS, with an enhanced focus on equity and data-based decision making.

Does the NDE have deadlines for an updated evaluation instrument to be made available to districts?

No. If districts are at a point where they are ready to start discussing a local evaluation instrument, they should start having those conversations. Conversations about evaluation should be collaborative amongst districts' teachers and leaders and should focus on equity and data-based decision making, and how these two things impact effective teaching and school leadership. Conversations such as these would be extremely valuable for districts, especially now that Covid-19 has brought inequities to the surface that were maybe not apparent before.

**RESOURCE:**

[Reflection Questions for Prioritized Indicators within the NTPPS](#) is a resource designed to engage teachers and principals in reflection framed around the identified prioritized indicators. The charts provided in the link above provide an innovative opportunity for evaluators and staff to engage in conversations to develop greater awareness surrounding the purpose and effectiveness of current practices and policies

Time must be committed to this reflective process and to gain a clear understanding of each district's current state. This means that now is not the best time for districts to focus on the creation of an evaluation instrument. 1.) There has not been specific guidance on instructional models other than the approval of the NTPPS, and 2.) with Covid-19, it is impossible to know what teacher/principal evaluation will really look like in the next school year. Much research is being done in this area and districts are advised to have conversations about effective teaching/leading as opposed to making decisions about an actual evaluation instrument that may be changed by either district instructional model adjustments and/or Covid-19 disruptions.

What are the priorities right now?

Districts should be focusing time and energy on how education will look post-COVID-19. With all that the pandemic has impacted, how are districts taking advantage of the opportunity to innovate? What questions do they have? What support do they need? Education should look different post-COVID-19 and that is where priorities must lie.

UPDATED



What does state statute say about teacher evaluation?

State statute requires districts to conduct classroom observations of probationary teachers once each semester. Districts may need to consider their definition of “classroom observation” depending on the physical setting of the school, as per their district policy. As stated above, the NDE has provided a set of prioritized indicators to support districts in their conversations about teacher/principal evaluation.

Are there waivers about teacher evaluation in light of the pandemic?

No. Districts may or may not be adhering to their district policies this year in regards to the evaluation of non-probationary teachers; however, administrators should develop new pandemic-appropriate ways to support the priorities of growth for all teachers, to ensure teachers (and principals) feel supported, trusted, and motivated to elevate their classroom practice, regardless of the physical setting of the school.

Are there any resources for how to do teacher/principal evaluation during a global pandemic?

The NDE's guidance for districts, entitled *Teacher and Principal Evaluation 2020-2021 Overview*, can be found on the front page of [Launch Nebraska](#).

Also, the Danielson and Marzano organizations have provided the following resources for districts:

[Framework for Remote Teaching Guide \(Danielson\)](#)

[Framework for Remote Teaching Observational Tool \(Danielson\)](#)

[Framework for Remote Teaching Self-Assessment and Reflection \(Danielson\)](#)

[Teacher Virtual Evaluation Model Protocols \(Marzano\)](#)

Are the *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards* an Instructional Model?

UPDATED



Yes. The previous version was called the *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework* (NTPPF), but to avoid confusion with other NDE processes, they are now called standards. The performance standards are considered the instructional model representing the standard for effective teaching and leading in Nebraska. The NTPPS is an education system to ensure that each and every student has access to effective teachers and principals. A quality instructional model is a critical piece of this system and is highlighted in multiple indicators within the NTPPS.

Are there any resources that would provide an introduction to the standards? Where are these housed?

The NDE provides videos of conversations about the standards through the lens of a student, teacher, principal, ESU, EPP, and NDE. Listen to Nebraska educators speak from their perspective about the standards, the support they offer teachers, and the alignment of work across the state educational system.

The links will be found on the following webpage when available.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/educatoreffectiveness/>

**For further questions, please contact:**

**Dr. Kim Snyder**

**Director of Statewide Teacher and Principal Support**

**P: 402.471.4351**

**E: [kim.snyder@nebraska.gov](mailto:kim.snyder@nebraska.gov)**

**Twitter: @NDE\_SEED**