



Supplemental Document for Priority School Action Item

April 26, 2021

Context

Per N.R.S. 79-760.06, all public schools must be classified annually through the AQuESTT accountability system. Classifications are based on multiple indicators including summative assessments, high school graduation rates, and reduction in chronic absence, among others. Furthermore, NDE designates schools for additional support, governed by two specific regulatory authorities – the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and state statute (N.R.S. 79-760.06) requiring the NDE to designate no fewer than three Priority Schools.

Per N.R.S. 79-760.07, if a school has been designated as a Priority School for three consecutive school years, the State Board shall reevaluate the progress plan 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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began impacting schools in Nebraska as early as February 2020, the NDE was [granted a waiver](#) from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on March 25, 2020. This waived several requirements pertaining to ESSA such as, the assessment, accountability and school identification, and reporting requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. Since this also impacted our state statutes, Governor Ricketts issued [Executive Order No. 20-20](#) waiving “specific statutory provisions pertaining to the education assessments, reporting, and classifications.” Using this state and federal flexibility, the NDE suspended summative statewide assessments and therefore no new classifications were calculated and no new school designations were identified or removed in the fall of 2020.

As noted above, the NDE submitted an ESSA waiver to the USDE in spring 2020. These requests afford federally designated schools (i.e. Comprehensive Support and Improvement, Additional Targeted Support and Improvement, and Targeted Support and Improvement) an additional year of support by exempting the 2019-20 school year from total years in the designated status. *To maintain consistency across all designations – federal and state – the NDE will match processes and communications for Priority Schools.*

Priority School Timeline

Priority School	Year Designated	Original 3-year Timeline	New 3-year Timeline with Exemption of ‘19-’20
Santee Middle School	Fall 2016	Spring 2019 (Entered Year 4 Fall 2019)	
Schuyler Central High School	Fall 2018	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Santee Elementary School	Fall 2019	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
Santee High School	Fall 2019	Spring 2022	Spring 2023

Recommendation

Exempt the 2019-20 school year in the Priority School timeline due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and suspension of statewide assessment and accountability classifications.