

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

NEBRASKA

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The Nebraska State Assessment System

Although the state decided to create its first assessment and incentives system last year, the details and implementation of such a system have not yet been developed. The local system of assessment and accountability is still in place.

- ***Grade Levels and Subjects Tested***

The state has voluntarily administered the NAEP test, but no other general state testing was in place for 1999-2000. The state did, however, pass a measure in April of 2000 requiring Nebraska school districts to give the same state writing test to all students in three grades, 4th, 8th and 11th, starting in the spring of 2001. The assessment plan also phases in tests in reading, mathematics, science and history/social studies each year until 2003, but those tests will not be the same across the state; they will be developed locally with state guidance. After the first year of testing, the state will select the four “best” local tests and require districts to select one of them or bring their own tests up to the standards of the models.

- ***Norm or Criteria Referenced***

The state requires the use of a norm-referenced test by districts, but does not specify which test to use. Most districts use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

- ***Matrix or Census Testing*** – n/a

- ***Item Types*** – n/a

- ***Student Performance Levels***

Nebraska developed four performance levels on norm-referenced tests (NRT) for Title I:

State and District Accountability Systems and the Federal Role – 6/2000

- Pre-emerging (1-20%ile) = 1 point in math and reading
- Emerging (21-40%ile) = 2 points in math and reading
- Proficient (50-74%ile) = 3 points in math and reading
- Advanced (75-99%ile) = 4 points in math and reading

For critierion-referenced tests (CRT) and classroom performance assessments required for Title I schools, with a maximum of 100:

- 70 or less = 2 CRT points
- 71-80 = 4 CRT points
- 81-90 = 6 CRT points
- 91-100 = 8 CRT points

Districts can also add attendance to the CRT and would determine performance as:

- Pre-emerging – attendance at 75% or less
- Emerging – attendance at 76% to 85%
- Proficient – attendance at 86% to 95%
- Advanced – attendance at 96% or more.

In **total**, when combining the NRT and CRT points, a student’s performance level is determined with the following criteria:

- Pre-emerging: 1-4 points
- Emerging: 5-8 points
- Proficient: 9-12 points
- Advanced: 13-16 points

- ***Inclusion Policies***

Federal guidelines are followed by districts in the use of accommodations.

- ***Other Assessments*** – n/a

- ***State requirements for local assessment***

Districts are required under Rule 10 to use a norm-referenced test in at least one grade in each of the following spans:

- grades 4-6,
- grades 7-9, and
- grades 10-12

in reading and mathematics.

Title I districts must also develop criterion-referenced indicators as part of the criteria to determine adequate yearly progress.

Performance Data

- ***What data are reported?***

The State Board of Education’s Accountability Reporting Policy, as approved October 1, 1998, states that beginning in the fall of 2000, the Department will issue a biennial *State of the Schools Report*. This will include information that is aggregated by category to provide a performance rating for school districts. The Report will not rank individual school districts.

Information that will be included in both the local and statewide reports include the following:

1. Schools are expected to report student achievement data from norm-referenced local assessments given in grades 4, 8, and 11 in the four state content standards areas:
 - Reading /Writing,
 - Mathematics,
 - Social Studies, and
 - Science.
2. ACT average composite score and percent of seniors taking the test
3. School system performance including:
 - Total enrollment
 - Student to Teacher ratio
 - Average Class size & attendance
 - Dropout & Graduation rates
 - Poverty rate
 - Student Mobility rate
 - Special Education population
 - Title I population
 - LEP population
 - Gifted population
 - Advanced Placement population.

Title I Reporting: Data is also used under requirements for Title I. *Annual Performance Reports* under Title I have been in place for a considerably longer period of time than the new reporting system for 1999-2000. Three types of data are collected and reported:

1. Demographic Data (grade, gender, race, IEP, ESL and LEP populations, migrant students, free and reduced lunch students)
2. Performance Data (NRT results and criterion classroom practice test results)
3. Subject Area (Title I funded reading, math, science, social studies, guidance/social work, health/dental and other)

• ***How are the data distributed?***

It is the intent of the State Board of Education that, beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, local school districts should collect and report data annually to the local community and to the Nebraska Department of Education.

District/Building Reports

- Performance information should be reported to the NDE by district only
- Districts with multiple buildings will provide local performance reports for each building.
- Districts having fewer than ten students should submit student performance data to the affiliated K-12 district for an affiliated system report of student achievement to be issued along with the K-12 district report. The primary reporting district shall report individually and collectively.

• ***How are the data disaggregated?***

Data will be reported by subgroup (disaggregated) for each of the following whenever the subgroup is 5% of the student body or ten students, whichever is greater:

1. Socio-economic status
2. Students with disabilities (assessment and reporting procedures will follow state and federal guidelines)
3. Newly enrolled students (students not enrolled in the district on the last Friday in September will be reported as a separate group)
4. Gender
5. Race.

Title I Disaggregation: If statistically sound, data is reported by

1. each major racial and ethnic group
2. LEP status
3. Migrant status
4. Students with and without disabilities, and
5. Socio-economic status

The Nebraska State Accountability System

The state does not hold schools or districts accountable except in the case of 1) **public reporting**, 2) the comprehensive **accreditation** review process and 3) the federally required measures for **Title I** schools.

- ***Student Accountability***

Students are not held accountable for performance.

- ***School Accountability***

Title I schools are held accountable for adequate yearly progress as determined by the local norm referenced testing used. In order to reach the IASA goal of achieving 100% student performance at the proficient or advanced levels, the state established a timeline of 10 years to accomplish this goal. Based upon the numbers of students who scored at each level, the **Title I** office calculated three progress benchmarks:

- Percent to move from pre-emerging to emerging,
- Percent to move from emerging to proficient, and
- Percent to move from proficient to advanced.

To determine the annual required amount of movement between these benchmarks to meet the IASA goal in 10 years, the difference between the goal and the baseline data for each school and district was divided by ten. These annual progress goals were determined by the state Title I Office. For example, goals might include:

- Move 2% of students from pre-emerging to emerging
- Move 3% of students from emerging to proficient
- Move 5% of students from proficient to advanced

each year for the next ten years. In districts with only one school, performance goals and outcomes at the school and district levels are the same. Districts with multiple schools can either establish district-wide performance goals and aggregate performance from all buildings or on a school-by-school basis.

Adequate yearly progress has been made if a school or district meets two of the three *goals* annually as a school or cumulatively as a district.

Sanctions and Rewards

Title I schools in program improvement must:

1. Develop or revise its school plan
2. Submit it to the district for approval
3. Implement the changes during the first year immediately following identification.

Rewards are not used in the state for either Title I or non-Title I schools.

- ***District Accountability***

Districts are responsible for Title I schools within the district not making adequate yearly progress. Districts are also responsible for complying with the state accreditation process, which requires a comprehensive review of the district. The Nebraska system of accountability through accreditation requires a comprehensive review on a 7-year cycle, involving an external review by a panel that is chosen by the district, not the state. A report by the external panel is sent to the state as well as the district, but the state has no other formal role in the accreditation process. As part of the accreditation process, districts and schools must develop a **performance report** and disseminate it to the community.

Sanctions and Rewards

Each school district in Title I program improvement must revise the district plan by July 1 of the year following identification. If a district does not make adequate yearly progress for four consecutive years, it may undergo state corrective action, including the development of a plan to address the district's problems and specific state and local responses.

Rewards are not used in the state for either Title I or non-Title I districts.

- ***Subgroup Performance as an Indicator***

Subgroup performance is not included as an indicator.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools

- ***Identification***

Schools are identified by the district using state developed measures of progress. If a school does not make adequate progress for two consecutive years, the school district shall identify such a school as being in program improvement. In most cases, if the school is identified as being in program improvement, then the district is identified as well because they are one in the same. If there are multiple schools in a district, the district is in program improvement if half or more of the schools in the district are in program improvement. Districts (and therefore many schools) are no longer considered to be in program improvement if adequate yearly progress is shown for two consecutive years.

- ***Assistance***

Title I schools and districts receive technical support and other improvement measures.

- ***Who provides the assistance?***

- Title I schools receive support from the state Title I Office.
- General assistance to all schools is provided by the **educational service centers**.

- ***Does support differ for Title I schools?***

Only Title I schools and districts get technical support and other improvement assistance from the state Title I Office, as they are the only ones identified for program improvement.

Alignment of the State Accountability System and Title I

The state accountability and Title I systems are separate. Non-Title I districts are only accountable through the accreditation process, which does not include sanctions. Title I schools and districts are accountable for making adequate yearly progress, can be placed in program improvement and are to build and revise action plans. There are also specific measures of progress and additional testing requirements for Title I.

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