

2017-2018 Evidence-Based Analysis (EBA): Differences in EBA Versions by School Grades

Prepared by

Data, Research and Evaluation
Nebraska Department of Education
December 8, 2017

In consideration of the differences across Nebraska schools, there is a unique EBA for each of the different AQuESTT grade bands (elementary, middle, and high school) as well as one for the district at large.

The differences across EBA versions serve several important purposes:

1. There are different questions included in the different versions of the EBA (elementary, middle, and high school). This is because some of the questions are applicable to only certain grade bands. For example, asking a school about opportunities to focus on “career preparation” is only appropriate for high school grades. In the elementary grades, the focus should be on “career awareness” and, in the middle grades, “career exploration.” Table 1 notes other differences in a number of questions in the EBA.
2. In cases where the EBA questions are the same across grade bands (elementary grades, middle grades, and high school grades), responses to these items may not logically be the same. For example, question 1 of the Educational Opportunities and Access tenet asks about before and after school opportunities for expanded learning. It is reasonable to think that a school (regardless of size) may rate themselves lower on this item for their elementary and middle school grades, but higher for their high school grades (or vice versa). Likewise, for almost all of the other items that are the same across EBA versions, it is logical that schools (including small schools) may have different practices and respond differently across grade bands.
3. In addition to the EBA tenet items (five per tenet) asking about policies, practices, and procedures, the EBA instrument also provides an opportunity for schools and districts to identify models of best practice and to request for different types of support. Here again, these could logically be different across grade bands and for the district.

Given the aforementioned reasons, the validity of the instrument is strengthened by having a different EBA for each AQuESTT grade band. Nonetheless, the Nebraska Department of Education recognizes that the submission of multiple versions of the EBA may be burdensome to some schools and districts. As such, we are working to ensure that AQuESTT becomes fully

integrated into processes for continuous improvement and school accreditation. However, in the meantime, we take consolation in the fact that the EBA is limited to only 30 question items. If access to the same resources/teachers/etc. overrides the aforementioned points, copying responses from one EBA version to the next should not take considerable time.

Table 1. Differences in Question Wording across School Grades.

Tenet and Question	Elementary School Grades	Middle School Grades	High School Grades
Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success – Question 5	The school implements strategies to support all students in monitoring and managing their own learning.	Every student creates a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) to plan, monitor, and manage their own learning as well as meet curriculum competencies.	
Transitions – Question 4	The school implements processes to help incoming students be prepared for elementary school.	The school implements processes to help incoming students be prepared for middle school.	The school implements processes to help incoming students be prepared for high school.
Transitions – Question 5	The school implements strategies to support the successful transition of all students from elementary to middle school .	The school implements strategies to support the successful transition of all students from middle school to high school .	The school implements strategies to support the successful transition of all students from high school to post-high school opportunities .
College, Career, and Civic Ready – Question 5	The school provides every student with opportunities to become aware of the career fields identified in the Nebraska Career Education Model.	The school provides every student with opportunities to explore the career clusters identified in the Nebraska Career Education Model.	The school provides every student with opportunities that focus on career preparation aligned with the Nebraska Career Education Programs of Study that consider graduation requirements, postsecondary expectations, and career cluster choices.