

FAQ: Comprehensive Support and Improvement

1. What's the difference between "designation" and "level of support"?

The use of the word designation comes from No Child Left Behind era and basically served as a label for schools that were underperforming. We've shifted the narrative to be more about focusing resources and supports on schools that have varied needs. To help us identify the resources needed, we've created different levels of support including comprehensive support and improvement.

2. What will this mean for my school?

As a school identified for CSI support, you are part of a cohort of 25-30 schools with similar opportunities for growth and improvement. As a school you will:

- receive additional resources including technical and guided assistance for improvement from the NDE
- complete a comprehensive needs assessment to help you identify the greatest needs for growth and assets to leverage
- submit a plan for improvement to the NDE that outlines steps in implementation and resources needed to implement the plan
- Be eligible for funding to support improvement efforts

3. How did my school get identified for this level of support?

Schools providing Title services that are determined to be in the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools are eligible for this level of support. The AQuESTT accountability system is used to identify schools on the following criteria:

- Performance on NSCAS ELA & Math, or the ACT
- Growth and progress towards proficiency
- Progress toward English language proficiency (for schools that serve at least 10 English learners per school)
- Chronic absenteeism (students who miss one-tenth of their time at that school)
- The Evidence Based Analysis (EBA)

The AQuESTT accountability system helps the NDE identify the lowest 5% of Title I schools as comprehensive support and improvement schools. In addition, any high school with a graduation rate below 67% will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement.

4. What kinds of support can my school receive if we are identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement?

Previous school improvement efforts from the federal government were very prescriptive and overly punitive. CSI is different. Schools and districts have significant autonomy to direct and lead for improvement. Schools must choose "evidence-based" interventions, those that have been proven to improve outcomes for students. The Nebraska Department of Education will be

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providing a workshop for all CSI schools to work together to build their plans and interventions and choose these interventions. Schools can work closely with their ESUs to receive professional development, coaching, and other school improvement services.

5. Will this require my school submitting a new plan? What kinds of supports will my school receive in developing my new plan if so?

Federal law requires all CSI schools to complete a needs assessment and develop a plan for improvement based off that needs assessment. However, it is critical for the work of this improvement plan to be connected to other improvement efforts within the district including the school's continuous improvement plan, MTSS plan, and others. The NDE will be providing a CSI workshop for all schools identified, and work to connect these plans to create cohesion and coherence.

6. How will the plans be monitored and assessed?

The NDE will conduct regular check-ins with CSI schools, and monitor progress towards meeting goals outlined in the school's improvement plan. Additionally, the NDE will facilitate regular CSI cohort check-ins wherein schools can share common celebrations, concerns, and next steps in learning and improving together.

7. What can my school expect my supports to look like?

Schools are at the helm with their supports, with partners at NDE and ESUs by their sides. Schools, in partnership with the NDE, get to identify together the supports necessary. This could include additional staff, intensive professional development, development of social-emotional learning or student health supports, and instructional coaching. The CSI process is over three years, and includes continued development during that time.

8. Will there be any additional cost to the district for those supports? If so, where will those funds come from?

As part of Nebraska's Every Student Succeeds Act Plan, the NDE reserved 7% of the state's Title I funding for improvement efforts. This totals approximately \$5 million to serve schools in need of improvement. The Support for Improvement (SFI) plan/application for CSI schools is a required plan that is also a competitive application. After CSI schools submit a plan for improvement, they *may* receive funds to implement their plan.

9. What is the anticipated timeline for when my school should expect to receive support within each classification?

Our kids can't wait, so we're moving fast. After designation, a school will receive feedback and instructions on the completion of a comprehensive needs assessment. Once this needs assessment is completed, the NDE will gather schools together in late January or early February

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to bridge from the needs assessment to a plan of action. Our hope is to have this plan developed by February, funds awarded in March or April, and planning for the upcoming school year beginning over the summer. Funds will be awarded for the current school year, with the option for additional funds for the following two school years.

10. How much time will my school get to exit this level of support?

By federal guidelines, a school must exit CSI status after three years of intervention.

11. What should we expect if my school is unable to exit this level of support?

A school that does not exit CSI after three years can expect the following three options after three years:

- Significant revision to the improvement plan
- A completely new improvement plan
- An alternative administrative structure

12. Our school is not a Title I school. What does this mean for us?

Schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement by definition are Title I schools. The one exception is any high school that has a graduation rate below 67%. Only schools providing Title I services can be identified for CSI.

13. How do we explain this to our teachers, families, and school community?

Our school accountability system is about identifying the specific supports for each school. Some schools need more support to improve than others. A school identified for comprehensive support and improvement is a Title I school that typically serves a significant proportion of economically disadvantaged students. The goal of this process is to focus resources for improvement and get schools the tools needed to improve.