

# **AQuESTT Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) Evidence Submission and Expert Review Guide**

**2017-2018 EBA Administration**

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## **Purpose**

The overall purpose of the EBA is to obtain measures of the six tenets of AQuESTT to support statutory requirements of school and district classification. Neb. Rev. Stat. Sections 79-760.06 and 79-760.07. Additionally, the EBA is designed to obtain information to inform the strategic development and prioritization of statewide systems of support for Nebraska schools and districts.

To support continuous improvement in the Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) instrument and the AQuESTT system more generally, and in response to concerns expressed about the perceived reliability of EBA information, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has inserted an expert review component into the AQuESTT EBA adjustment process.

In order for a school to receive an EBA adjustment to their AQuESTT Classification (i.e. a bump in the school classification), documented evidence of EBA responses must now be reviewed independently by a panel of Nebraska K-12 education experts with at least one reviewer coming from each of the following entities: NDE, ESUs, and local School District staff. This process entails reviewers completing the EBA instrument for eligible schools, independently, and providing their analysis based solely on the evidence provided by the school. A sufficiently strong reliability score, as measured via strength of agreement between school-provided EBA responses and those of the expert review panel, will be required in order for a school to actually receive an AQuESTT EBA adjustment to their classification.

## **Origins of the Evidence-Based Analysis**

Statutory requirements (79-760.06 R.S.S.) prescribe indicators of performance that must be included in the AQuESTT classification model, including:

- Status on the Nebraska state assessments (NeSA / NSCAS);
- Measures of NeSA/NSCAS improvement, growth, and participation;
- Graduation rate;
- and “other indicators of the performance of public schools and school districts as established by the state board.”

To further align the performance classification model to the AQuESTT tenets, the State Board chose to include additional indicators of school quality and student success that are aligned to the six tenets of AQuESTT into the model for classifying school and district performance. The method approved by the State Board for collecting data related to additional indicators is the AQuESTT Evidence-based Analysis (EBA). More information as to the origins, development, and evolution of the EBA can be found on the AQuESTT website ([AQuESTT.com](http://AQuESTT.com)).

**Target Dates**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
October 18, 2018	Kick-Off meeting for EBA Expert Review Panel	Teleconference via Zoom conference call
November 19, 2018	EBA Raw Classifications released to schools via NEP Secure website	
November 19, 2018	Schools eligible for an EBA adjustment are identified and informed via email	Emails sent to district superintendent and school principal(s)
November 19, 2018	EBA Expert Review Panel meeting	Teleconference via Zoom conference call
November 29, 2018	Deadline for schools to submit EBA evidence	Electronic evidence repositories for EBA documentation will automatically close at 12:00 AM CST (midnight)
November 30, 2018	Reviewers granted access to EBA evidence for review and scoring	Emails sent to expert review panel members with access to EBA evidence repositories
December 6, 2018	Deadline for reviewers to submit	Electronic evidence repositories for EBA reviewer will close at 12:00 AM CST (midnight)
December 7, 2018	Psychometricians review scores for systematic bias and calculate strength of agreement	Use of independent, third-party psychometrician services in addition to in-house NDE review.
December 14, 2018	EBA adjustments awarded	Emails sent to district superintendent and school principal(s) with review results

## **EBA Evidence Submission Guidelines**

What follows is a list of general guidelines and informational details to support eligible schools in the submission of evidence of their EBA responses:

1. Schools are eligible for an EBA adjustment based on two factors:
  - a. EBA total score
  - b. EBA percentile rank relative to other schools at the same raw classification level
2. Schools eligible for an EBA adjustment will be notified via email consistent with the target dates contained in this document. This email communication will include directions concerning the submission of evidence for the EBA adjustment.
3. Schools eligible for an EBA adjustment are not required to participate in the EBA review process. Instead, if a school chooses not to submit evidence for review, they simply forgo the opportunity for a potential adjustment to their AQuESTT classification.
4. All documentation should be electronically uploaded to NDE via the directions provided in the notification email.
  - a. If for some reason documentation cannot be provided electronically, the school may contact NDE to make arrangements for submitting evidence in analog format.
5. Schools should provide copies of original documentation as evidence of their EBA responses.
  - a. When this is not possible, or where this alone is not sufficient to provide evidence of school policies, practices and procedures, schools may provide additional descriptive text as context to supplement their responses. This can be done by simply uploading a file with additional descriptive text, such as a MS Word document.
6. Schools will be notified of reviewer responses, reliability calculations, and eligibility for the EBA bump in accordance with the target dates presented in this document.

## EBA Expert Review Guidelines

The following contains guidelines and informational details to support the EBA reviewer in examining documentation submitted by schools.

1. Reviewers must be faculty or staff associated with one of the following educational organization in Nebraska:
  - a. Nebraska Public School District
  - b. Nebraska Educational Service Unit
  - c. Nebraska Department of Education
2. At least one reviewer from each of the above organizational types should be assigned to review an eligible school.
3. Reviewers will be assigned to review eligible schools using a research design-based allocation method, such as a modified Latin Squares design, to support all subsequent psychometric analyses.
4. Reviewers affiliated with a school district may not review evidence provided by their employing school district, ESU affiliated reviews should not review evidence provided by a school located within the geographical boundaries of their employing ESU.
5. Reviewers should complete the EBA questionnaire using **only** the following artifacts (no other outside resources or information should be considered):
  - a. Evidence provided by the eligible school
  - b. EBA Response Rubric
  - c. EBA Review Scorecard
6. The EBA rubric should be used to help the reviewer identify which response option best aligns with the evidence provided by the eligible schools.
  - a. The rubric should be used for each question item across the six AQuESTT tenets.
7. Reviewers should pay close attention to the wording of each statement in the rubric as it captures the progression of the rubric levels. **Every statement in a given rubric level has to be applicable to merit select that response option.**
  - i. If one or more statements in a given rubric level is not descriptive of the evidence provided by the school, that response option is no longer eligible for selection.
    1. For example, if a rubric level 3 contains three constructs (represented by three colors), and only two of the three constructs described are identifiable based on the evidence provided by the school, the reviewer should go to next lowest level (level two) and continue the review process.
  - ii. For each EBA item, the reviewer should select the highest response option for which all of the constructs described in said rubric level accurately reflect the evidence provided by the school.

1. If the reviewer feels that the evidence provided falls between two rubric levels, the reviewer should select the lower of the two levels (e.g., level 1 instead of level 2).
  
8. For any EBA items where evidence is not provided by the school, reviewers should automatically identify the response as “level 0” and make note in the comments section of the reviewer score card that “no evidence was provided.”
  
9. Reviewers should not make any judgements about the veracity of the evidence provided by eligible schools.
  - a. In other words, the evidence provided by eligible schools should be presumed to be authentic.
  - b. Any concerns about the legitimacy of submitted evidence may be noted in the comments section of the score card. However, these concerns should not be used in determination of the response.
  
10. The EBA expert review process is to be completed independently by each reviewer.
  - a. Reviewers should not confer with each other during the act of reviewing EBA evidence.
  - b. During the review process, all questions or points of clarification should be directed to the NDE contact listed below.

**2017-2018 EBA Expert Review Panel**

<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Type</b>
Dorann	Avey	Digital Learning Director	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Jadie	Beam	Director of Professional Learning	ESU 13	ESU
Lori	Broady	Teaching & Learning Specialist	ESU 4	ESU
Jon	Cerny	Superintendent	Bancroft-Rosalie Community Schools	District
Brad	Conner	Accreditation Specialist	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Sara	Cooper	Science Education Specialist	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Matt	Dominy	Director of Curriculum and Staff Development	Seward Public Schools	District
Julie	Downing	Professional Learning Specialist	ESU 13	ESU
Chad	Dumas	Director of Learning	Hastings Public Schools	District
Dean	Folkers	Chief Information Officer	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Rhonda	Jindra	Teaching & Learning Specialist	ESU 1	ESU
McKayla	LaBorde	Director of Student Services	ESU 3	ESU
Dawn	Lindsley	Assistant Director of Nebraska Career Education	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE



Pat	Madsen	Director of Teacher Preparation	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Amy	Mancini-Marshall	Director of Assessment and Accountability	Grand Island Public Schools	District
Dale	Martin	Superintendent	Nebraska Unified #1	District
Terri	Martin	Director of Curriculum and Assessment	Gering Public Schools	District
Russ	Masco	Business Partner Relationships and Systems of Support	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Jeff	McQuistan	Director of Staff Development	ESU 17	ESU
Jadi	Miller	Director of Assessment	Elkhorn Public Schools	District
Jason	Mundorf	Associate Superintendent	Kearney Public Schools	District
Julie	Myers	Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Lexington Public Schools	District
Jackie	Nielsen	Associate Superintendent	Beatrice Public Schools	District
Marci	Ostmeyer	Professional Development Director	ESU 7	ESU
Samantha	Pavelka	Teaching & Learning Coordinator	ESU 16	ESU
Marissa	Payzant	English Language Arts Specialist	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Lacey	Peters	Health and Physical Education Specialist	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE

Christine	Qualman	Educational Consultant	ESU 3	ESU
Jeanette	Ramsey	Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Grand Island Northwest	District
Kirk	Russell	Education Specialist II	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Julee	Sauer	Director of Professional Learning	ESU 3	ESU
Amanda	Skalka	Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	South Central Unified	District
Kim	Snyder	Director of Teacher and Principal Support	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Shirley	Vargas	School Achievement Coordinator	Nebraska Department of Education	NDE
Melissa	Wheelock	Administrator	ESU 10	ESU
Caryn	Zietlow	Professional Developer	ESU 2	ESU

## Summary of Psychometric Review Procedure

Schools who had received an original AQuESTT classifications of 1 “Needs Improvement”, 2 “Good”, or 3 “Great” and had a total EBA score in top percentiles (Needs Improvement = 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, Good = 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, Great = 95<sup>th</sup> Percentile) were given the opportunity to participate in an external review. A total of 92 schools (70 Elementary, 12 Middle, and 10 High) provided sufficient materials with which to participate in the external review process. Each of these schools received three external reviews, one from each of three organizations: Local School District, Educational Service Unit (ESU), and Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). Each rater reviewed evidence pertaining to each of the AQuESTT EBA items, for which there were five items measuring each of the six tenets: *Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success* (1.PPSS); *Transitions* (2.TRANS); *Educational Opportunities and Access* (3.EDOP); *College and Career Readiness* (4.CCR); *Assessment* (5.ASSESS); and *Educator Effectiveness* (6.EDEFF). Each of the 30 items was originally scored by a school representative on an ordinal scale ranging from 0–4; item-specific criteria for assigning analogous ratings ranging from 0–4 were given to all external reviewers. For the analyses reported next, school-specific subscale means were computed for each of the four raters (three external reviews, plus one original school rating) using all available items for each subscale.

### *Differences Among School and External Reviewer Ratings*

A formal assessment of the differences in subscale mean ratings across schools and reviewers was conducted separately by subscale and for the overall mean across subscales using a series of general linear mixed models. All models were estimated in SAS MIXED 9.4 using residual maximum likelihood and the Kenward-Roger method for denominator degrees of freedom.

A conditional model to examine differences among the three school types (Elementary, Middle, and High) by the four rater types (originally provided by the schools vs. the three types of external reviewers: District, EDU, and NDE) was estimated as shown below:

$$y_{sr} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10} \dots \gamma_{20}(SchoolType_s) + \gamma_{01} \dots \gamma_{03}(RaterType_r) + \gamma_{11} \dots \gamma_{23}(SchoolType_s)(RaterType_r) + U_{s0} + U_{0r} + e_{sr}$$

in which  $\gamma_{10} \dots \gamma_{20}$  are the simple main effects of school type,  $\gamma_{01} \dots \gamma_{03}$  are the simple main effects of rater type, and  $\gamma_{11} \dots \gamma_{23}$  are the interaction contrasts between school type and rater type. In every subscale and type of school, the rating averaged across the three external reviewers was significantly lower than the rating provided by the school. There were no discernible patterns of difference among the types of external reviewers (School District, ESU, or NDE).

### *School-Specific EBA Adjustments*

A formal analysis of the differences between the ratings given by each school and their external reviewers were then conducted separately for each school using all the item ratings in order to determine EBA adjustments. The model for each school was estimated as shown below:

$$y_{ir} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10} \dots \gamma_{50}(\text{Subscale}_i) + \gamma_{01}(\text{External}_r) + \gamma_{11} \dots \gamma_{51}(\text{Subscale}_i)(\text{External}_r) + e_{ir}$$

in which  $y_{ir}$  is the item response for item  $i$  and rater  $r$ . The fixed intercept  $\gamma_{00}$  provides the predicted school-provided item response for the reference subscale,  $\gamma_{10} \dots \gamma_{50}$  are the simple main effects differentiating the five, and  $\gamma_{11} \dots \gamma_{51}$  are the interaction contrasts that provide the difference for each subscale item response given an external reviewer. Given the use of school-specific models, the only error term is given by  $e_{ir}$  (which holds differences among the three external reviewers and unknown item by reviewer interaction variance). For each school, the decision to provide an upward EBA adjustment from the initial or raw AQuESTT classification was granted where for at least three subscales (tenets) or for the overall mean there was a statistically non-significant difference between the external reviewer mean and that of the original school-provide mean response.

### *Summary Results*

The results of these analyses can be summarized as follows:

- Of the 92 schools who provided sufficient information to participate in the external review process, 59 had at least three tenet mean ratings from external reviewers that were in agreement with their original school-provided mean ratings.
- Of the 92 schools who provided sufficient information to participate in the external review process, eight had overall mean ratings from external reviewers that were in agreement with their original school-provided mean ratings.
- Ultimately, 59 schools were granted an EBA adjustment for the 2017-2018 AQuESTT process.



## Questions and Contact Information

All questions and/or correspondence about the EBA evidence submission, expert review process, or psychometric analysis should be addressed to:

Lane Carr, MPP  
Director of Accountability and AQuESTT  
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Lincoln, NE 68509-4987  
Phone: 402.471.3138  
Email: [lane.carr@nebraska.gov](mailto:lane.carr@nebraska.gov)