

ACCOUNTABILITY IN NEBRASKA: CLASSIFICATION & DESIGNATION



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The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) seeks to improve all schools. To strategically target resources and champion equity in education, the NDE blends both federal and state supports in its classification and designation system.

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Nebraska statute requires the State Board of Education to create a system of accountability combining multiple indicators of school performance. As such, in 2014, the Nebraska Department of Education, after significant input from stakeholders, developed the **Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow, or AQuESTT**. AQuESTT represents both an accountability system and a system of support built around six tenets. Law also requires Nebraska to designate at least three priority schools. These priority schools must come from the lowest classification level and receive the greatest support from the NDE.

FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** represents the law guiding the use of federal funding. At its core ESSA focuses on educational equity for all students. The law mandates states to create an accountability system that identifies schools most in need of support and intervention. Federal law requires five major components, or indicators, for state accountability systems. Indicators include academic achievement, academic progress, graduation rate, progress for English Learners, and state-determined “fifth indicators” of school quality or student success.

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION

The NDE is maintaining the structure and functionality of AQuESTT for classifying schools and districts. All schools and districts will be classified as Excellent, Great, Good, or Needs Support to Improve. While additional indicators may be added at a later time, the metrics to be used are seen in the table below. Nebraska will include chronic absenteeism and science as the indicators for School Quality or Student Success. Another new indicator is Progress towards English Learner Proficiency.

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|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ESSA Indicator: | Academic Achievement | Academic Progress | English Language Proficiency and Progress | Graduation Rate | School Quality or Student Success |
| AQuESTT Metric: | Status | Growth, Non-Proficiency | Progress Towards English Language Proficiency | 4- and 7-Year Cohort Graduation Rate | Chronic Absenteeism |



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SCHOOL DESIGNATION

Those schools needing support for improvement at the state or federal level can be designated in four ways.

State Support



Priority Schools – Per state statute, at least three schools most in need of support for improvement from the AQuESTT Needs Support to Improve classification level are named Priority Schools. Intervention will be provided in these schools, along with intensive technical support, coaching, and collaboration among schools, the NDE, consultants, and Educational Service Units.

Federal Support*



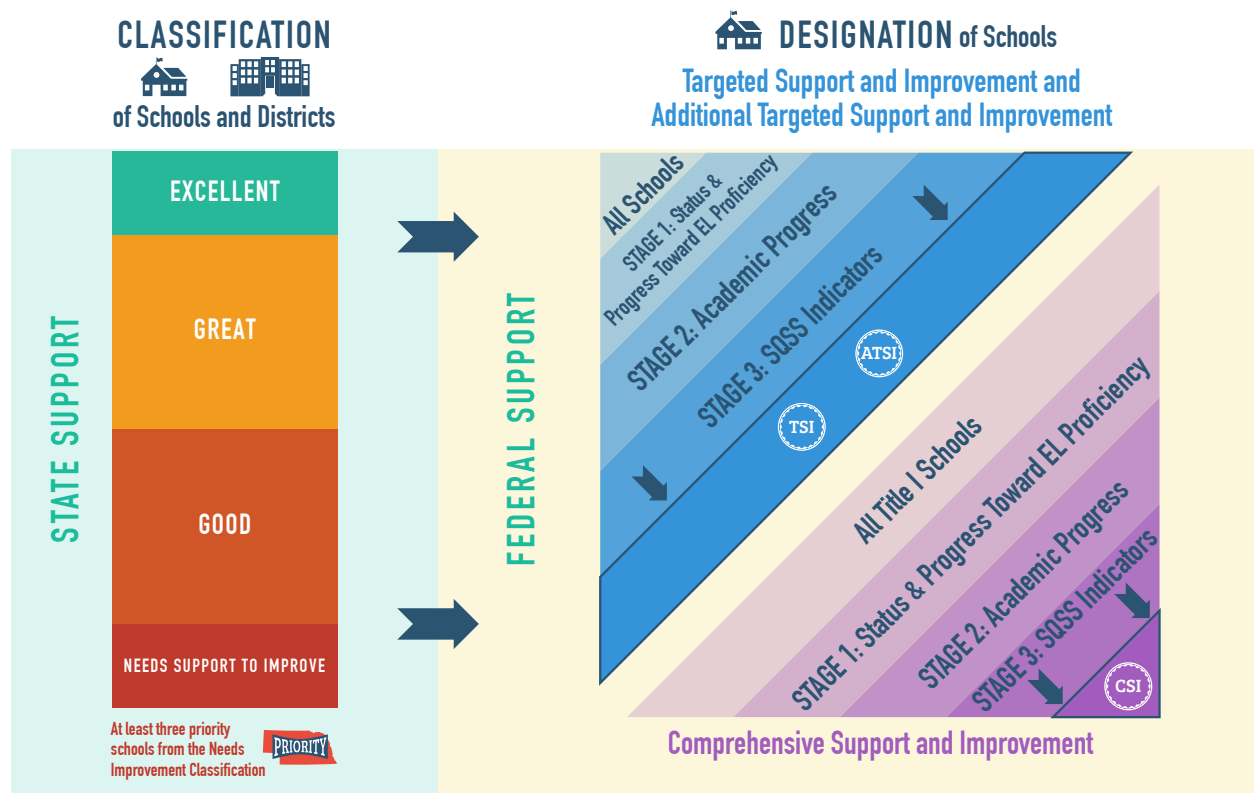
Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) – The lowest performing five percent of Title I schools (those schools receiving federal funds due to concentrations of poverty), public high schools with a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of 67 percent or below, and/or schools participating in Targeted Support and Improvement that did not improve after three years will be designated as CSI schools.



Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) – Any school with consistently underperforming subgroup(s) or low-performing subgroup(s) over a state-designated period of time will be designated as TSI schools. Subgroups are defined as the 7 major racial/ethnic groups, English learners, students with disabilities, and/or economically disadvantaged students.



Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) – Any school in which one or more subgroups of students is performing at or below the performance of all students in the lowest performing schools will be designated as ATSI schools.



*Since AQuESTT, by design, does not allow for the ranking of schools, models similar to the one above will be used to designate schools for CSI, TSI, and ATSI. Slight variances exist between TSI and CSI designation.