

# A FAMILY'S GUIDE TO NEBRASKA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT



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The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and your school district are committed to achieving educational equity for all students. That means that every student can get the educational resources he or she needs at the right time, at the right level, and with the right intensity.

Making this happen requires that everybody, including parents and teachers, knows what their schools need to do to improve. To help, NDE created the AQuESTT system. It stands for Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow. AQuESTT classifies all schools using four categories: Excellent, Great, Good, and Needs Support to Improve.

Your child's school has been classified as Needs Improvement. Your school will be working on an improvement plan. This fact sheet explains how the classification system works. It also discusses how your school, with the support of parents, teachers, and community members, will work to improve.

## THE SIX TENETS OF AQuESTT

AQuESTT is based on six major points, or tenets. They are Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success; Transitions; Educational Opportunities and Access; College, Career, and Civic Ready; Assessment; and Educator Effectiveness. To learn more about the six tenets, go to [www.aquestt.com](http://www.aquestt.com).



As Nebraska schools, including your child's school, work to improve, they will be guided by these six tenets.

## THE AQUESTT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The four categories of schools—Excellent, Great, Good, and Needs Support to Improve—are based on a number of indicators. Test scores are part of the classification process. But so are other measures, including graduation rates, progress for students learning English, and reduction in absenteeism. Plus, the progress a school is making toward achieving these indicators is factored in. This classification system will take place every year.

The Needs Improvement category includes different types of support for schools. Some schools will be eligible for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Additional Support and Improvement (ATSI). Additionally, schools may also be eligible for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). Please see the back of this fact sheet for a description of each group.

## NEXT STEPS IN THE AQUESTT SYSTEM

You can expect a number of things to happen as a result of the AQuESTT classification. The NDE uses these classification indicators to better target funds and resources to schools that need to improve. In addition, your district or school will develop an improvement plan. Your school may get additional support that includes professional development for teachers and principals, instructional coaches in schools, and new instructional materials.

Schools designated as CSI will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that focuses on the six tenets of AQuESTT. They then will create a complete improvement plan based on what is going well and what needs to improve. CSI schools may be eligible for additional federal funds to support their improvement plans.

Contact your school's principal if you would like to take part in improving your school.

# LEVELS OF SUPPORT

All Schools		Support	Timeline	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tools and a continuous improvement framework (AQuESTT)</li> <li>Access to data to support continuous improvement planning process</li> </ul>	Continuous	
Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)	Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)	Support	Timeline	
A public school with one or more consistently underperforming student groups (2019, annually thereafter)	Any public school with one or more student group(s) performing at or below the performance level of students in state's lowest-performing public schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive needs assessment</li> <li>Plan for improvement tailored to meet needs of student groups connected to continuous improvement plan</li> </ul>	2019; Annually subsequently	
Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)		Support	Timeline	
Lowest 5 percent of Title 1 Schools <b>OR</b>	Any public high schools with graduation rate below 67%, <b>OR</b>	Public schools with consistently underperforming student groups for 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive needs assessment</li> <li>Plan for improvement connected to continuous improvement plan</li> <li>Eligible for funding to support implementation of plan for improvement</li> </ul>	Winter 2018; Every three years subsequently
Priority Schools		Support	Timeline	
Public schools coming from Needs Improvement category <b>AND</b>	Multiple data sources indicating prioritization of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervention team appointed to aid in improvement efforts</li> <li>Intensive approach for improvement</li> <li>NDE-facilitated support with ESU partners</li> </ul>	Continuous; At discretion of State Board of Education	



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