



To: Office of the Governor
Clerk of the Legislature
Education Committee of the Legislature

From: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Matthew L. Blomstedt

RE: Priority School Progress Report

Date: December 21, 2022

As required by Nebraska Revised Statute 79-760.07, this report provides an annual update on all schools designated as priority schools for the 2021-2022 school year. The overall report includes the name of the school, the grades included in the priority school designation, the name of the school district, the years for which the school was designated a priority school, a summary of the progress plan, and the level of progress as indicated by the measurable indicators.

The table below provides a quick snapshot of current priority schools, their grades, their corresponding district, year of initial identification, and year of exit, if applicable.

School	Grades	District	Initial identification	Current status
Schuyler Central High School	9-12	Schuyler Community Schools	June 2018	Exited June 2022
Isanti Middle School	6-8	Isanti Community Schools	December 2015	In Year 6*
Isanti Elementary School	Pre-K-5	Isanti Community Schools	June 2019	In Year 3*
Isanti High School	9-12	Isanti Community Schools	June 2019	In Year 3*

**In May 2021, the State Board of Education voted to exempt the 2019-20 school year in the Priority School timeline due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of statewide assessment and accountability classifications.*

For more information, please contact Dr. Shirley Vargas, School Transformation Officer, via phone (402-326-5371) or email (shirley.vargas@nebraska.gov).

Priority School Progress Plan

Each Priority School under AQuESTT (A Quality Education for Today and Tomorrow), Nebraska’s accountability system for public schools and districts, is required to submit a Progress Plan for approval by the State Board of Education (79-760.07 R.R.S.) The purpose of the Progress Plan is to identify goals and areas for growth and improvement; measurable indicators of progress; strategies and actions to achieve improvement; associated timelines and resources; and evidence to monitor progress. The Progress Plan will serve as the primary improvement plan for the Priority School and will also be part of the continuous improvement plan for the district in which the Priority School is located (92 NAC 10, Section 009.01B2).

The Progress Plan is organized by school improvement goals and improvement actions. Each school improvement goal is supported by a set of strategies specifically designed to achieve the goal. Additional information (e.g., school data, reports, current improvement plans, etc.) may also accompany the Progress Plan to provide rationale for improvement goals and to document progress efforts in presentations to the Nebraska State Board of Education.

Qualitative Review of Progress Plan

Every year, each Priority School engages in a qualitative evaluation of its Progress Plan. The review is led by the NDE Intervention Team and in consultation with the Priority School leadership team. The rubric below, which is part of the Nebraska Framework for Continuous Improvement, is used to assess the level of implementation and progress made to achieve school improvement goals. Quantitative data for each priority school can be found on the [Nebraska Education Profile](#).

Not Evident Yet (1) (Demonstrates no or limited implementation within the school)	Emerging (2) (Demonstrates supportive practices and partial implementation within the school)	Operational (3) (Demonstrates systematic implementation at an operational level throughout the school)	Highly Functional (4) (Demonstrates consistent and purposeful implementation at a sustainable level throughout the school)
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Schuyler Central High School

Priority School: Schuyler Central High School
District: Schuyler Community Schools
Years in status: 3 (2018-2019; 2019-2020*; 2020-2021; 2021-2022)
Grades served: 9 – 12

The following data chart depicts the school’s progress toward goals and strategies outlined in its Priority School Progress Plan.

Goals				
	Not Evident Yet	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
2018-2019	20%	60%	20%	-
2019-2020	-	100%	-	-
2020-2021	-	10%	90%	-
2021-2022			43%	57%
Strategies				
	Not Evident Yet	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
2018-2019	22%	61%	17%	-
2019-2020	6%	49%	45%	-
2020-2021	-	27%	46%	27%
2021-2022			49%	51%

The following report includes the overall goal rating for each improvement goal, for the school, as well as a rating for each strategy, for the years in priority school status, where applicable.

Improvement Goal: During the 2018-2022 school years, Schuyler Central High School and all stakeholders (i.e. district administrators school administrators, students, teaching and classified staff, local school board members, parents/guardians, community members) will engage in a systematic, clearly documented, inclusive and comprehensive process to communicate the school purpose and direction through a shared commitment to its vision, mission, beliefs, and core values in order to ensure student success, which includes meeting the cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs of each student as measured by perceptual survey data and artifacts (meeting agendas, data analysis, newsletters, revised vision/mission/values, interviews, etc.).

	Sp 19	Sp20	Sp21	Sp22
1. Create and communicate a school vision, mission, core beliefs, core values and meeting norms so that a shared purpose and coherent effort permeates throughout the school and community.	2	3	3	3
2. Increase the frequency, clarity, and variety of two-way communication in a timely and efficient manner so that all stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, parents/guardians, community) will increase their knowledge of and commitment to the school vision, mission, core values, and goals.	3	3	4	4
3. Create /Complete a comprehensive review of programs implemented at Schuyler Central High School so that the school can measure the return on investment and the effectiveness of each program as it relates to the school's goals.	1	1	2	3
4. Ensure families are included in the decision-making process to inform students' academic and behavioral plans and goals by encouraging participation in conferences at least once each semester so that families are empowered to be partners in their student's education.	2	3	3	4
5. Provide monthly Clear, Compelling Direction implementation reports to the School Board so that the School Board is supportive and kept abreast of the implementation of strategies from the Priority School Progress Plan.	2	2	4	3

**CLEAR AND
COMPELLING
DIRECTION-
MISSION DRIVEN**



Average Goal Score

Spring 19	-2.00
Spring 20	-2.40
Spring 21	-3.20
Spring 22	-3.40

Improvement Goal: During the 2019-2022 school years, Schuyler Central High School will reduce its chronic absenteeism rate by five percent annually (this percent decrease matches the State chronic absenteeism reduction percentage).

	Sp 19	Sp20	Sp21	Sp22
1. Continue meeting with the attendance team to implement the SCHS Attendance Protocol; and to examine and report real-time attendance data to staff monthly so that student and school-wide attendance improves and data findings are reported to all stakeholders.	NA	3	3	3
2. Provide professional development for attendance intervention specialists so that evidence-based support is offered in a timely manner to chronically absent students to ensure they are on-track for graduation.	NA	3	2	3
3. Consistently communicate and implement the school-wide campaign to heighten the importance of on-time and daily attendance (to include the tardy policy and time-for-time instructional time make up opportunities) so that students and families understand the importance of being on time and in school.	NA	2	2	4
4. Ensure use of the notification system and follow up to provide reminders to students and families related to attendance rates, absences, important dates to remember, etc. so that students and families receive constant communication using various modalities and school personnel ensure the accuracy of student attendance data.	NA	3	3	4

**CLEAR AND
COMPELLING
DIRECTION-
CHRONIC
ABSENTEEISM**

Average Goal Score
 Spring 19 -NA
 Spring 20 -2.75
 Spring 21 -2.50
 Spring 22 -3.50

Improvement Goal: Schuyler Central High School will identify and construct strategies to remove barriers to student learning, track graduation progress annually for 100% of students, and increase graduation rates to at or above the State average by 2021-2022.

Sp19 Sp20 Sp21 Sp22

1. Implement the SCHS Intervention Protocol to ensure the “failure is not final” mindset and utilize supports for student learning (such as intervention, counseling, Alternative Ed program, a focus on learning versus grading, improved Newcomers program, credit recovery, Warrior Achievement Center, etc.) so that barriers are removed from learning and students master intended content standards.	NA	3	2	3
2. Coach all teachers in “Capturing Kids Hearts” so that staff implement strategies to develop a relational mindset and connection with students.	NA	3	4	4
3. Interview students from each class (9th-12th graders) to continue to investigate real barriers to a 4-year graduation expectation so that their voices inform decisions meant to support student success and on-time graduation (Face-to-face focus groups, School Refusal Survey, Thought Exchange for parents and students).	NA	3	3	4
4. Implement APEX and a systematic plan to intentionally intervene with students falling behind credit expectations for each cohort so that students graduate on time.	NA	2	3	3
5. Implement the SCHS Assessment/Data Protocol to ensure bimonthly process monitoring enabling PLC’s to focus on data from formative assessments (Star 360, MAP data, teacher developed) so that teachers use the data to inform instruction to enable students to master deficient skills.	NA	1	2	3
6. Create and implement a systematic plan to promote accessibility for students to courses that are suited for a blended learning model before, during and after school so that students are able to graduate on time.	NA	2	3	3

CLEAR AND COMPELLING DIRECTION-GRADUATION RATE

Average Goal Score
 Spring 19 -NA
 Spring 20 -2.50
 Spring 21- 3.00
 Spring 22 -3.33

Improvement Goal: During the 2018-2022 school years, Schuyler Central High School will establish, implement and communicate a climate of high expectations for teaching and learning while ensuring the academic, emotional and physical safety for students as measured by stakeholder perceptual survey data.

	Sp 19	Sp20	Sp21	Sp22
1. Provide coaching (each teacher 2x per quarter or more) and professional development for teachers on evidence-based instructional practices that support student mastery so that students feel academically safe to take risks with learning.	2	3	3	4
2. Develop common expectations regarding teacher use of evidence-based strategies and proficiency scales so that classroom instruction is engaging and high expectations for student learning are upheld consistently throughout the building.	2	2	3	4
3. Develop a culture of constant feedback for teachers through coaching (2x per quarter per teacher), observation, PLC discussions, and peer interactions so that teachers develop a collective sense of efficacy focused on creating and implementing a common instructional language within the school.	3	3	3	4
4. Implement school-wide norms for PLC collaboration so that all meetings have purpose and direction.	2	3	3	4
5. Provide monthly Student and Staff Culture Progress Plan implementation reports to the School Board so that the School Board is supportive and kept abreast of the implementation of strategies from the Priority School Progress Plan.	2	2	4	4



STUDENT AND STAFF CULTURE

Average Goal Score
 Spring 19 -2.20
 Spring 20 -2.60
 Spring 21 -3.20
 Spring 22 -4.00

Improvement Goal: All students will be challenged and supported to achieve a high standard of academic performance and growth and will demonstrate proficiency in globally competitive skills such as critical thinking, innovation, problem solving, communication and collaboration to ensure they are prepared for postsecondary education, careers, etc. as measured by assessment data, certifications, dual credit coursework, graduation rate, etc.

	Sp 19	Sp20	Sp21	Sp22
1. Define and communicate a set of attributes, referred to as a graduate profile, that are critical for success and inspire, motivate, and guide the work of students, teachers, administrators and the School Board so that Schuyler Central High School students are future ready.	2	2	3	4
2. Evaluate the current Career Education System and create a system for pathway attainment so that the high priority changes for improvement and alignment to community needs are identified and a plan of action is created to ensure students are future ready.	2	2	4	3
3. Utilize Capturing Kids' Hearts during FOCUS time so that relationships are strengthened and students realize their potential.	2	2	3	3
4. Provide monthly Instructional Leadership: Career and College Readiness Plan implementation reports to the School Board so that the School Board is supportive and kept abreast of the implementation of strategies from the Priority School Progress Plan.	2	2	4	4

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP- COLLEGE, CAREER, AND CIVIC READINESS

Average Goal Score
 Spring 19 -2.00
 Spring 20 -2.00
 Spring 21 -3.50
 Spring 22 -3.50

Improvement Goal: During the 2018-2022 school years, EL students will develop language acquisition and cognitive academic language skills in order to grasp the academic, social and cultural aspects of the English language to be successful students and members of society as evidenced by multiple data sources to include ELPA21 scores, ACT scores, student perceptual data, etc.

	Sp 19	Sp20	Sp21	Sp22
1. Teachers will use the stages of language acquisition so that classroom strategies support English language development across the curriculum and support student cultural identity.	1	3	3	3
2. All teachers will learn and implement effective EL strategies (with a focus on vocabulary acquisition and Cornell Notes, newly acquired Kagan Cooperative Learning and other engagement strategies and mental models - multiple representations, differentiation, graphic organizers, advance organizers, etc.) in their classrooms so that EL students are receiving consistent strategies that are purposeful, intentional, explicit and provide meaningful access to English Language proficiency and content standards with appropriate scaffolds and supports.	2	2	2	3
3. Coach and ensure implementation of EL strategies in all content areas throughout the year so that all EL models of instruction are implemented with fidelity and ensure that resources are allocated effectively to implement strategies and program models.	1	2	2	3
4. Implement SCHS Onboarding procedures, pedagogical scaffolds and academic plans for Newcomers so that students can reach their full potential.	2	2	4	4
5. Provide monthly Instructional Leadership: English Learners implementation reports to the School Board so that the School Board is supportive and kept abreast of the implementation of strategies from the Priority School Progress Plan.				

**INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP-
ENGLISH
LEARNERS**



Average Goal Score
 Spring 19 -1.40
 Spring 20 -2.20
 Spring 21 -2.60
 Spring 22 -3.22

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, students at Schuyler Central High School will have equitable access to a high-quality education to achieve their full potential as a result of universal instruction aligned to Nebraska standards, strong Tier 2 and Tier 3 academic supports as needed and personalized learning opportunities as evidenced by multiple measures to include growth indicators on the MAP assessment, ACT data, perceptual data, etc.

	Sp 19	Sp20	Sp21	Sp22
1. Align materials, instruction and assessments to the Nebraska Content Area Standards and ACT standards so that daily lessons are enhanced to support the learning needs of each student.	2	2	2	3
2. Provide release time for teachers on scheduled workdays to align curriculum, instruction and assessment to Nebraska Standards so that adequate time is available to intentionally plan engaging lessons for students.	1	3	4	4
3. Provide professional development, implementation accountability and coaching follow up on high probability instructional strategies so that a common instructional language is created within the school in every classroom.	2	3	3	4
4. Provide monthly Instructional Leadership: Alignment of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment implementation reports to the School Board so that the School Board is supportive and kept abreast of the implementation of strategies from the Priority School Progress Plan.	2	2	4	4

"These ratings not only illustrate the immense work that goes into the implementation of the strategies, but the degree to which they are sustained over time and consistently applied across the school."

-Dr. Shirley Vargas-

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP- ALIGNMENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Average Goal Score
 Spring 19 -1.75
 Spring 20 -2.50
 Spring 21 -3.25
 Spring 22 -3.75

Santee Elementary School

Priority School: Santee Elementary School
District: Santee Community Schools
Years in status: 2 (2019-2020*; 2020-2021; 2021-2022)
Grades served: Pre-K – 5

Santee Middle School

Priority School: Santee Middle School
District: Santee Community Schools
Years in status: 5 (2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020*; 2020-2021; 2021-2022)
Grades served: 6 – 8

Santee High School

Priority School: Santee Middle School
District: Santee Community Schools
Years in status: 2 (2019-2020*; 2020-2021; 2021-2022)
Grades served: 9 – 12

The following data chart depicts all three school’s progress toward goals and strategies outlined in their Priority School Progress Plan for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

Goals				
	Not Evident Yet	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
2019-2020	10%	80%	10%	-
2020-2021	17%	66%	17%	-
2021-2022	67%	33%	-	-
Strategies				
	Not Evident Yet	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
2019-2020	12%	68%	18%	2%
2020-2021	18%	32%	46%	4%
2021-2022	29%	38%	24%	9%

The following report includes the overall goal rating for each improvement goal, for the school, as well as a rating for each strategy, for the years in priority school status, where applicable.

Isanti Elementary School

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, Isanti K-5 students will improve reading and math achievement by increasing the percent of students meeting grade level expectations by 5% as measured by MAP. 80% of 3-5 students will meet projected growth expectations as measured by MAP. 60% of K-3 students will be grade level as measured by DIBELS. Grades 3-5 increase (NSCAS) proficiency by 3%.

	Sp. '22 Rating
1. Implement instructional model with a focus on using questions, cues, and prompts (guided practice) to respond to students needs	
a. Refine the use of learning progressions in ELA in order to get clarity	2
b. Distinguish between when and how to use questions, cues, and prompts throughout the literacy framework	2
c. Implement number talks	3
d. Develop a master schedule that provides times for small group learning based on guided practice	4
e. Revisit the literacy framework so all components are addressed – focus on writing instruction all grades, mini lessons, word work grades 3-5	2
f. Analyze student work to determine next steps	3
g. Connect the work in the classroom with interventions	1
2. Implement formative assessment data to inform instruction	
a. Identify resources to support the use of formative assessment data	2
b. Develop unit assessments based on standards	2
c. Develop look-fors and use to provide feedback	4
3. Implement Student-Centered Coaching Model to Support Teachers	
a. Define Student-Centered Coaching Framework	2
b. Implement Coaching Model	2
c. Define look-fors to support fidelity of implementation	1

Overall Sp. '22 Rating
2.42

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, K-5 students will increase their average daily attendance for the year to 92%

	Sp. '22 Rating
1. Implement strategies and practices around restorative practices	
a. Participate in train the trainer Lives in the Balance	3
b. Implement first responder protocols	3
c. Develop SEL support team to monitor student progress	3
d. Implement Ross Greene's problem-solving process	2

Overall Sp. '22 Rating
2.75

Isanti Middle and High School

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, 80% of grades 6-12 students will improve their overall achievement as measured by projected growth on MAP tests in reading and math.

	Sp. '22 Rating
1. Implement formative assessment through gradual release model to inform instruction for whole group and small group instruction	
a. Implement focus lessons that include concept purpose, language purpose, and success criteria	2
b. Utilize small group instruction to promote collaborative work and consolidate student thinking	1
c. Develop look-fors around the gradual release model	2
d. Utilize PLCs to analyze student work and adjust instruction	2
e. Analyze MAP data on an ongoing basis to modify/adjust instruction	2

Overall Sp. '22 Rating
1.8

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, average daily attendance will increase for grades 6-12 to 88% or better. At the middle school, grades 6-8 will increase from 90% to 93%. At the high school, grades 9-12 will increase from 82% to 85%. Reduce chronic absenteeism by 5%.

	Sp. '22 Rating
1. Continue to implement restorative practices	
a. Participate in train the trainer Lives in the Balance	4
b. Create SEL team that sets goals and monitors progress for students experiencing social and emotional issues	3
c. Develop a system of first responders with a common protocol	3
d. Use excerpts from Ruby Payne to help staff understand restorative practices and why they matter for our students	2
e. Implement tagline/social norming to establish high expectations for how we act in school	2

Overall Sp. '22 Rating
2.8

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, 80% of students grades 6-12 will continue to be on track to graduate. At the middle school, students receiving Ds and Fs is 10% or lower. At the high school, graduation rate will be at 80% or higher.

	Sp. '22 Rating
1. Implement graduation plans for all incoming high school students	
a. Develop a team to student and make recommendations on alternatives to high school programming	1
b. Conduct weekly meetings with the guidance counselor and/or outside community partnerships	2
c. Meet monthly (grades 8-12) with the graduation coach and guidance counselor to create and monitor graduation plans	2

Overall Sp. '22 Rating
1.7

Isanti Board of Education

Improvement Goal: By May 2022, the Isanti Board of Education will create effective communication with stakeholders through actively engaging parents, students, staff, and community members with the intent to promote working together on common goals; mutual respect and shared responsibility focused on student learning and growth.

	Sp. '22 Rating
1. Conduct a communication audit	
a. Communications (internal) review	3
b. Communications (external) review	4
2. Community Engagement Process	
a. Engage with NASB to facilitate community engagement process in late July/early August 2020	1
b. Utilize responses from CE process to establish common goals for community and board to undertake	1
c. Utilize responses to establish an effective communications process and procedures for Board oversight and administration execution	1
d. Conduct community engagement focus groups	1
e. Utilize community engagement feedback to develop strategic plan	1
3. Establishing Trust	
a. Engage Board and Administration in professional development to build trusting relationship	1
b. Incorporate trust building activities in BOE meetings	1
c. Establish communication processes between Board and Administration for effective oversight and learning by the BOE	1
4. Participate in ongoing coaching to support the Board of Education in governing	
a. Board of Education professional development sessions (onsite)	3
b. Coaching with Board of Education in between and during meetings	3

Overall Sp. '22 Rating
2.13