

# NEBRASKA CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EXTERNAL REPORT

*(Revised, July, 2022)*



Prepared For:	<b>Grand Island Public Schools</b>
Head Administrator:	<b>Mr. Matthew Fisher</b>
Dates of Visit:	<b>January 28-31, 2024</b>



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### Introduction and Purpose of the Visit

#### **92 NAC 10 “Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Nebraska Schools”**

**Section 009 of Rule 10** describes Continuous Improvement as, “A systematic on-going process guides planning, implementation, and evaluation and renewal of continuous school improvement activities to meet local and statewide goals and priorities. The school improvement process focuses on improving student learning. The process includes a periodic review by visiting educators who provide consultation to the local school/community in continued accomplishment of plans and goals.”

The purpose of the External Visit is to review the documentation and efforts for continuous improvement by the school system and to affirm compliance with Section 009 of Rule 10. External Visits serve to also provide meaningful feedback that can be used to continue improvement goals. In Nebraska, a network of professional peers volunteer to serve on External Teams. Prior to the visit team members verse themselves on best practices and data literacy for Continuous Improvement.

#### **Grand Island Public Schools hosted their last external visit January 16-18, 2019.**

This last visit included four district commendations, three recommendations and provided next steps for improvement.

District level commendations included:

1. Grand Island Public Schools has fostered a strong focus on instructional leadership.
2. The district is committed to student-centered learning environments and student-centered decision making.
3. A positive culture and "GIPS pride" permeate the district and the community.
4. Grand Island benefits from visionary leadership from the board, district leadership, school administrators and school staff.

District level recommendations included:

1. Continue to refine and clarify the district PLC process and expectations.
2. Formalize and communicate the process for program evaluation at the school and district levels.
3. Bolster current efforts to solicit authentic input and engagement from all stakeholders, representative of the student population, in order to facilitate the most equitable educational opportunities for all children.

The following actions were listed as possible next steps the District should take to move improvement efforts forward.

1. Celebrate the commendations and the great work that is happening in the Grand Island Public Schools!
2. Review the report from a district perspective and begin to address the recommendations through your continuous improvement process and strategic planning.
3. Develop a plan to address each of the recommendations as part of your strategic/action planning at each school.

### **Beginning Preparations for the 2024 External Visit:**

Initial communications between the external team chair and Grand Island District representation began in the spring of 2023. These communications centered around general visit plans, team and school logistics/expectations, and selecting members for the external team.

The external team chair then hosted various zoom meetings, beginning in November of 2023, to provide the team with an orientation which included initial dates, logistics, school profile information, and team expectations.

Initial evidence was provided by Grand Island Public Schools on January 12, 2024 through a shared Google Drive. The evidence was organized by district level, building level and miscellaneous folders. Each folder contained schedules, informational flyers, individual building agendas for the on-site visit, building action plans and data

representations. Access to these folders as well as to internal files and systems provided valuable information for the visit.

The external team held a final pre-visit zoom meeting on January 22, 2024. Due to the large size of the district, team members were assigned to visit two elementary buildings and either one secondary building or the Board of Education.

The team began reviewing the district strategic plan, building action plans, school profiles, and other pertinent evidence. Each member of the team was asked to focus their attention to the evidence provided for the specific locations in which they would physically visit. By dividing the external team into smaller teams, the individual members could focus their attention on a smaller set of data. This was done to provide a deeper, shared understanding during team deliberations and work time.

### **Opening Day of the Visit:**

The visit opened with a district presentation and dinner hosted by the District Leadership Team (DLT). This team included the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Chief of Elementary Education, Chief of Secondary Education, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Human Capital Management, Chief Information Officer, and the Chief of Assessment, Research and Accountability.

The presentation included district information including their vision, mission, values and pillars. The Vision of Grand Island Public Schools is: 'Students prepared to make positive contributions to society and thrive in an ever-changing world. Their Mission is: 'Every Student, Every Day, A Success! In educating students we teach hearts as well as minds.'

The presentation also discussed their district's strategic planning process. Recent changes have included narrowing their focus to three areas: Instruction, Professional Learning Communities, and Positive Supports. A large portion of their planning process includes their district adapted version of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Much of their process is identified and reviewed through an Academic Summit Process. The focus of professional learning tied to improvement included five themes: Developing an understanding of how beliefs impact student learning; Teacher expectations and collective efficacy; Shared Leadership and Equity Commitment Impact; Schoolwide Positive Support practices; Early Literacy.

The District team was also proud to share the progress made in recent State Classifications. They have increased 'Great' schools from two to four, 'Good' schools from seven to eleven and the number of 'Needs Support to Improve' schools has dropped from nine to three.

After the district presentation, the external team met for initial networking and discussions and to make logistical plans for the next day's work.

## **Day Two of the Visit:**

During the first full day of the visit, team members in groups of two or three visited the fourteen elementary school buildings within Grand Island Public Schools. Although individual buildings had specific agendas for these visits, each included similar components.

Elementary schools visited in the morning included:

1. Building Tours
2. Building Overview Presentation/Administrative Interviews
3. Classroom Visits
4. Student Focus Groups

Elementary schools visited in the afternoon included:

1. Building Tours
2. Building Overview Presentation/Administrative Interviews
3. Classroom Visits
4. Staff Focus Groups

The tours, presentations, classroom visits and interview opportunities provided correlations between the artifacts submitted and the information shared during the opening presentation.

At the conclusion of the school day the external team reconvened to begin team work and deliberations. Discussions revolved around strengths, challenges and general themes seen within the elementary school buildings and their evidence. The day ended with preparatory plans for the next day's work.

## **Day Three of the Visit:**

The day started with a brief team meeting to begin data analysis. The team was divided into two smaller teams: One to review evidence related to AQuESTT Tenets and another to review student performance and perceptual data. Work began to synthesize Grand Island Public School's data utilization efforts.

At 9:30am the team dispersed to visit Grand Island Public School's three middle schools and one high school. Once again, individual buildings had specific agendas for the team visits, but followed a similar schedule:

1. Building Tours
2. Building Overview Presentation/Administrative Interviews
3. Classroom Visits
4. Student Focus Groups
5. Teacher Focus Groups

Two team members remained at the district office to lead focus groups with the Board of Education, Parent Advisory Groups and Community stakeholders.

Again, the tours, presentations, classroom visits and interview opportunities provided correlations between the artifacts submitted and the information shared during the opening presentation.

At the conclusion of the school day, the team met again for deliberations, summation of work, and to begin creating commendations, recommendations and next steps for Grand Island Public Schools.

### **Day Four of the Visit:**

The final day of the visit began with team deliberations. The team finalized commendations, recommendations and next steps for the district. The team collaborated to wordsmith the external presentation to ensure a common voice.

The external chair presented the team findings to the District Leadership Team and Board Members. The team thanked the District staff for their efforts and welcoming hospitality. The external visit concluded at 11:00am.

## **External Visitation Team**

The responsibilities of the External Team include:

- 1) Review school system evidence of Continuous Improvement.
- 2) Observe educational services provided by the school system.
- 3) Assess the progress and effectiveness of the Action Plan.
- 4) Provide feedback for continued improvement.

Peer review is a common strategy for supporting school and teacher improvement. Research suggests the potential value in peer review as a part of larger school improvement initiatives. Of particular note, some suggest that peer reviews may reduce “top-down” accountability mindsets and generate greater practitioner-driven innovations. Several states utilize peer review as part of their larger school quality, accountability, or accreditation processes, though peer review is rarely linked to a broader CI process. *(Data Literacy Workbook, Hanover Research, February 2022)*

Serving as an External Visit volunteer is an important responsibility. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) appreciates the leadership skills and peer collegiality of educators throughout the state that

volunteer for this role.

## External Team Roster

	Name	Position	Phone	Email
<b>Team Lead</b>	Amy Trauernicht	Professional Learning Coordinator	308-635-3696	atrauernicht@esu13.org
<b>Associate Lead</b>	Todd Wolverton	Accreditation Specialist	402-219-2542	todd.wolverton@nebraska.gov
<b>Member</b>	Libby Banderas	Teaching and Learning Facilitator	308-631-1530	libby.banderas@lexschools.org
<b>Member</b>	Danielle Beerbohm	Director of Learning	402-720-8711	danielle.beerbohm@agps.org
<b>Member</b>	Deanne Bishop	Science Instructor, Curriculum Coordinator, HAL Coordinator	308-352-8231	deanne.bishop@perkinscountyschools.org
<b>Member</b>	Trudy K Clark	Director of Statewide Assessment	531-739-8403	trudy.clark@nebraska.gov
<b>Member</b>	Melissa Frans	Coordinator of High Ability Learning & Instructional Technology	402-826-9876	melissa.frans@creteschools.org
<b>Member</b>	Scott Harrington	Jr/Sr High School Principal	402-705-3785	scott.harrington@adams-central.org
<b>Member</b>	Sydney Kobza	Asst Administrator, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education	402-937-3389	sydney.kobza@nebraska.gov
<b>Member</b>	Chelsea Krebs	ELA Teacher	402-658-9525	ckrebs@gpsne.org
<b>Member</b>	Nicole LeClaire	High School Principal	402-752-3215	nleclair@kenesawschools.org
<b>Member</b>	Marissa Payzant	Asst Administrator, Office Teaching Learning & Assessment	402-637-7273	marissa.payzant@nebraska.gov
<b>Member</b>	Jessica Stec	Jr/Sr High School Principal	308-379-5320	jessica.stec@mpslions.org
<b>Member</b>	Shirley Vargas	School Transformation Officer	402-326-5371	shirley.vargas@nebraska.gov
<b>Member</b>	Lacie Wright	Curriculum Coordinator	308-991-7176	lacie.wright@dusters.org

## Agenda

The On-Site Visit was scheduled for portions of four days, January 28-31, 2024. Prior to the visit the team lead collaborated with the District Associate Superintendent to create the master schedule. The External Team participated in an Orientation Meeting prior to the visit to discuss responsibilities and to plan for the review of evidence.

January 28, 2024				
Time	Place	Event	Who	Notes
4:00 PM	<b>Fairfield Inn &amp; Suites</b> 805 Allen Drive Grand Island	Team Check In	External Team	
5:00-6:00pm	<b>Challenge Center</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Introductions District Presentation Dinner	External Team, members of DLT	Please arrive around 4:45
6:00-8:00pm	<b>West Conf Room</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Team Work Time	External Team	
January 29, 2024				
Time	Place	Event	Who	Notes
7:45 AM	Various	Teams Arrive at Scheduled Schools	External Team	
8:00-11:00	<a href="#">Dodge</a> 641 South Oak <a href="#">Seedling Mile</a> 3208 East Seedling Mile Rd <a href="#">Wasmer</a> 318 South Clark St <a href="#">Knickrehm</a> 2013 North Oak St <a href="#">Lincoln</a> 805 North Beal St <a href="#">Engleman</a> 1812 Mansfield Road	School Visits (tour, classroom visits etc)  Schedules are provided per each building	Trudy Chelsea Amy Jessica Shirley Danielle Sydney Libby Marissa Nicole Deanne Scott	Elementary Schools



	<a href="#">Newell</a> 2700 West 13th St		Todd Melissa Lacie	
11:00-11:30	At Each Morning School Location	Lunch in Schools with Students as an interview group in a private room	External Team Members and Select Students	
11:30-12:15	Various	Travel / Break	External Team	
12:15 PM	Various	Teams Arrive at Scheduled Schools	External Team	
12:30-3:05	<a href="#">Shoemaker</a> 4160 Old Potash Highway	School Visits (tour, classroom visits etc)  Schedules are provided per each building	Trudy Chelsea	
	<a href="#">Stolley Park</a> 1700 W Stolley Park Rd		Amy Jessica	
	<a href="#">West Lawn</a> 3022 Sest College St		Shirley Danielle	
	<a href="#">Gates</a> 2700 West Louise		Sydney Libby	
	<a href="#">Howard</a> 502 West 9th St		Marissa Nicole	
	<a href="#">Jefferson</a> 1314 W 7th St		Deanne Scott	
	<a href="#">Starr</a> 1800 S Adams St		Todd Melissa Lacie	
3:15-4:00	At Each Afternoon School Location	Teacher Interviews	External Team and Select Teaching Staff	
5:00-8:00	<b>West Conf Room</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Supper / Work time Supper by 5:15	External Team	
<b>January 30, 2024</b>				
<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Notes</b>

7:45 AM	<b>West Conf Room</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Teams Arrive at Kneale	External Team	
8:00-10:00 9:45 for those heading to schools	<b>West Conf Room</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Team Work Time	External Team	
10:00-4:30 (Specific building times will be on individualized agendas)	<a href="#">Grand Island Senior High</a> 2124 North Lafayette	School Visits (tour, classroom visits etc)  Schedules are provided per each building	Todd Sydney Lacie Scott Deanne	Secondary Schools
	<a href="#">Barr Middle School</a> 602 West Stolley Park Rd		Chelsea Jessica Trudy	
	<a href="#">Walnut Middle School</a> 1600 North Custer St		Melissa Shirley	
	<a href="#">Westridge Middle School</a> 4111 West 13th St		Danielle Marissa Nicole	
Approximately 11:00-11:30	Specific lunch times will be on individual building schedules	Lunch in Schools with Students for interviews. Each building may have different times	External Team Students listed on individual building agendas	
Approximately 12:30-3:45	At Each Individual Secondary School Location	Classroom Visits	External Team	
Approximately 3:45-4:45	At Each Individual Secondary School Location	Teacher Interviews	External Team Staff listed on individual building agendas	
9:30-10:15 & 10:15-11:00 & 1:30-2:15	<a href="#">Challenge Center</a> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	BOE Interviews	Amy Libby	
11:30-12:15/ 12:15-1:00	<a href="#">Challenge Center</a> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Parent Advisory Interviews / Stakeholder Interviews	Amy Libby	

5:00-8:00	<b>West Conf Room</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Supper / Work time Supper by 5:15	External Team	
<b>January 31, 2024</b>				
<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Notes</b>
8:00-10:00	<b>West Conf Room</b> Kneale Building 123 South Webb Road Grand Island, NE 68802	Team Work Time	External Team	
10:00-11:00	<b>Kneale- Challenge Center</b>	Report Presentation with DLT	External Team and DLT	

## Review of Continuous Improvement

**NAC 92 Chapter 10**  
**009.01A** The school system develops and implements a continuous school improvement process to promote quality learning for all students. This process includes procedures and strategies to address quality learning, equity, and accountability.

Grand Island Public School's Continuous Improvement Process consists of district level strategic planning, school level action planning, committee representation, and data collection.

**009.01A1** Review and update of the mission and vision statements.

**Grand Island Public Schools' Vision, Mission, Values and Pillars are as follows:**

**Vision:**

Students prepared to make positive contributions to society and thrive in an ever changing world.

**Mission:**

Every Student, Every Day, A Success! In educating students, we teach hearts as well as minds.

**Values:**

Equity: In GIPS, equity means that each individual receives what they need, when they need it, in an inclusive and anti-discriminatory environment.

Excellence: GIPS strives to provide an exceptional educational experience for students across our district. We hold ourselves to the highest standards and work with families and our community to provide students the supports they need to excel.

**Pillars :**

Empower

Personalize

Design

Partner

The District Mission was evident throughout the visit. It was seen posted in buildings and documents, spoken about in focus groups and clearly known by many stakeholder groups. Grand Island Public Schools stakeholders believe they support every student, every day in order for them to succeed.

**009.01A2** Collection and analysis of data about student performance, demographics, learning climate, and former high school students.

During the opening district presentation, the team was provided an overview of general district data. Data visualizations illustrating their demographic data included both student and staff percentages of race and ethnicity as well as student and building numbers, numbers of languages spoken, English Learner percentages, High Ability Learner percentages, highly mobile student percentages, poverty percentages, graduation rates and college going rates.

General state assessment data was shared showing Grand Island Public Schools is below state average proficiency levels on both NSCAS and ACT testing for English Language Arts, Math and Science. Although data shows below state average performance, it was noted Elementary ELA and Math proficiency levels

have risen by 9.8%, Middle School by 13.9% and High School by 3.3%. This is a 10.8% increase district wide. Although, not by as large a margin, the presentation also showed district Science scores are up 2.8% as well.

No perceptual data, nor post-graduate data was shared at the district level during the opening presentation.

During the visit, each building presentation shared building specific data. Each building shared their action planning document which included similar data representations across buildings. As each building has varying leadership, processes and procedures, presentations and profiles included individualized representations as well. Some of these presentations included perceptual data as well.

Focus group interviews noted decisions about data use and which assessments to utilize were made based on what guided instruction in the best manner. For example, elementaries chose Dibels as their ELA assessment system and MAP Growth for their Math. NSCAS Growth data was not utilized regularly. Various other stakeholder groups and leadership noted the use of data during Professional Learning Community(PLC) time. Data was reviewed at the student level by grade but not necessarily disaggregated by student group. Most data viewed was not disaggregated by student groups at any level.

Although formative assessment data was mentioned as being utilized as well, point-in-time adjustments were not observed in classroom visits. When asked about the use of formative assessment practices, most stakeholders could say they utilized exit tickets, for example, but only noted data review and instructional adjustments as being discussed during less frequent PLC time.

The external team did observe pockets of more involved data use across buildings. For example, possibly due to having a larger administrative group, the high school demonstrated and presented more comprehensive data use processes and procedures. The understanding of data literacy was more clearly visualized in Grand Island Senior High.

**009.01A3** Selection of improvement goals. At least one goal is directed toward

### **Strategic Goals:**

Grand Island Public Schools Strategic Plan includes the following four goal areas:

Students engaged in Learning

- Every student engages in high-quality early learning
- Every student has access to learning models that meet their unique needs
- Every student learns in a safe and resourced environment

Students empowered through literacy

- Every student is empowered through literacy
- Every student has equitable access to rigorous, relevant coursework

Students learning in a culturally responsive environment

- Every student is provided a personalized environment for learning
- Every student and family are welcome in GIPS schools
- Every student feels a sense of belonging

Students thriving in school and life

- Every student engages with educators who reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of GIPS
- Every student is on-track to meet the promise of the GIPS graduate profile

The district, under new leadership, has recently decided to narrow their focus in order to make more impactful improvement efforts. The strategic goals above have been narrowed to three main focus areas. The district is focusing on Instruction, PLCs and Positive Supports.

### **Instruction**

- 80% of students will score at or above proficient level on all major assessments by the end of the 2023-24 school year
- 95% of students scoring at or above proficiency will remain at or above

### **PLC**

- Grade level PLCs are established to support the implementation of Universal Instruction (i.e. PLC progressions and routines)

### **Positive Supports**

- We will create a safe and predictable environment by implementing a

school-wide value system, scoring 80% or higher on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory in all three subscales (Teams, Implementation, and Evaluation)

- Tier 1 features (school-wide expectations, routines, acknowledgements, in-class continuum of consequences) are implemented within classrooms and consistent with school-wide systems.

The school system formulated and narrowed their academic goal(Instruction) based upon data of student performance on reading and math assessments.

The school system also selected implementing PLCs and Positive Supports as interconnected goals to ensure student success. It is the belief of the district that all three goals intersect to create improved student performance.

**009.01A4** Development and implementation of an improvement plan which includes procedures, strategies, actions to achieve goals, and an aligned professional development plan.

### [District Strategic Plan](#)

#### **Commendations:**

##### **1. Supportive Environment**

**Administration, teachers and students feel extremely supported, by each other as well as the building and district leadership teams.**

Established routines and family atmosphere contribute to students feeling emotionally and physically safe. The staff clearly care about kids and the students know it.

Comments from students included:

- "I feel safe and the teachers take care of us. We keep doors locked."
- "Today's goal is to try! If we don't get it we'll do it again!"
- "Teachers are always willing to help when I am having trouble learning."

Teachers feel supported by administration and gave positive feedback. Staff comments include:

- "Our school feels like home and family."

- “There is a marked difference this year. The District is extremely supportive and the Superintendent is visible. He sees and hears us.”
- “This year we have felt greatly supported and heard through some rocky transitions. Our Superintendent and Chief of Education are always approachable and care about us as staff. It feels like they mean it when they say they want to listen.”

## 2. Instruction

**Instructional staff introduce lessons with learning targets and success criteria. The use of HQIM across levels(especially ELA and Science) ensures Guaranteed and Viable Instruction within the district. PLCs enhance collaboration between teachers in aligning instructional methods.**

Classroom observations noted teachers instructing lessons at the same time, on the same topic, in similar methods. Teachers clearly plan their pacing and instruction to ensure consistent tier one instruction. Comments were heard about ensuring all students have access to high quality materials and instruction across the board.

It was clear across buildings and levels that learning targets and success criteria are visible. During classroom visits, targets and success criteria were posted in classrooms, in student notebooks, included in electronic lesson presentations, and discussed by teachers with students.

Classroom expectations were also visible and students were compliant. Students knew the expectations, transitioned well, and participated in classroom activities.

Student comments included:

- “Teachers make sure that we know the material and we know it well before moving on.”
- “Everybody gets what they need.”

## 3. Data Utilization

**Teachers, Administration, Leadership For Learning and PLC groups collect and organize data to make informed decisions. Strong leaders promote data literacy efforts to ensure data systems and build collective capacity among staff.**

Data collection and use was evident throughout the district. District and building leaders clearly utilize data to make decisions. Whether budget or academic, leaders utilize data to do what is best for students and staff.

The Leadership for Learning team clearly gathers and presents data to elementary building teams and teachers to ensure student success. The high school administrative



team was noted as having developed data literacy and utilized much data throughout their processes and procedures. Building and student level data was evident in presentations, PLC agendas, and classrooms across the district.

Utilize evidence from the Action Plan, Perceptual Survey, Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Interviews, Achievement Data, the NEP and Classroom Visits.

### ***Recommendations:***

#### **1. Consistency of Implementation**

**Although district level strategic plans are in place and processes are created for building level plans, consistency in building level plan implementation varies. Data analysis, root cause analysis, and strategy implementation needs to be monitored to ensure plans are truly making improvement in school processes and student success.**

An analysis of the District Strategic Plan took place to narrow the focus. Plans were created to focus on student success through instruction, PLCs and positive support. Although these plans and goals are in place, more can be done to ensure success across the district. Monitoring the success of plan processes and procedures should be implemented and shared across buildings.

In order to ensure processes, procedures and plans are monitored, staff need to be data literate. Much data is collected across the district, yet there are pockets of data literacy needed. Allowing those with high data literacy knowledge to support those without, will build capacity for data analysis and disaggregation to identify the why behind deficiencies and strengths.

Many buildings demonstrate pockets of successful strategies that should be celebrated and shared. Processes and procedures need to be in place to see if the plan goals and strategies are making an impact on student performance. When noted success is found, sharing the why and how improvements are made across buildings will help unify processes. It is noted, not every building faces the same populations and needs. However, creating more frequent cross-building reviews of procedures will allow for learning from each others' strengths when they are an appropriate fit.

Working across buildings also supports new staff. Many building teachers and leaders are new to their role or even to the district. With high staff turnover rates, supporting buildings with higher percentages of new teachers with connections to those with mostly veteran staff will help build continuity. This will also support buildings with lower numbers of staff or even one administrator, by allowing shared plans and processes to build capacity.

## **2. Differentiated Learning Support for Students**

**There is little evidence of differentiated learning support for students within Tier 1 Instruction. Academic support and professional development for teachers surrounding formative assessment processes is needed to reach the individual needs of all learners.**

Classroom observations and focus group interviews noted little use of formative assessment data. Although much data is collected across the district, it was not clearly evident it guided instruction to meet individual student needs.

It is understood the district noted having too many curricular and instructional implementations. Plans were made to return to a focus on strong Tier 1 instruction across the board. The district is commended for realizing this and ensuring all students receive high quality Tier 1 instruction.

Now that teachers are planning, pacing, and implementing consistent universal instruction, formative assessment practices can be added to ensure student needs are being met. Many teachers mentioned administering formative assessments, however the data was not noted as being utilized frequently to guide instruction. Adjusting instruction at point of time will allow for more timely redirection of learning paths.

Providing teachers with professional learning surrounding formative assessments and how to differentiate based on data will save instructional time in the classroom.

## **3. Culturally Responsive Environment**

**Evaluate systems for EL students and newcomers to ensure staff are trained and equipped with strategies to support curricular goals, linguistic supports, and student services.**

The work Grand Island Public Schools has done over the years to onboard students new to the district and even our country is recognized and greatly appreciated. As with any process or procedure, it is important to continue to look for ways to improve. With the documented increase of newcomers and the challenges faced at all levels, a review is warranted. Resources, in particular, will need to be reviewed as the district is going to have to become more efficient due to pending budget cuts.

Families are directed to the Welcome Center upon arrival. The center provides language acquisition assessments, migrant identification, homeless needs assessment, and health department services. Once newcomers are identified they are placed in the appropriate classrooms within the district.

Evidence indicates there is a rapid influx of newcomers causing an extended wait time prior to receiving instruction. An evaluation of the district's student onboarding process is needed to ensure students receive needed support.

Once students are in the schools, many of them are English Learners. To ensure they are receiving the support they need for success, teachers must be trained in instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. The district noted all newcomer classroom teachers were EL certified, yet it was unclear once students exited the newcomer classroom if they received the same quality of support. With over 800 students passing through the Welcome Center this year alone, much EL education is needed and requested by staff.

Grand Island has certainly been a model for many other schools in terms of how they work with EL students as well, but other strong programs do exist. Looking at ways to integrate dual language classrooms or buildings may be something to explore to relieve some of the current stresses being experienced. With increasing challenges due to an influx of students, new staff demands and fewer resources, an evaluation of current onboarding processes is needed. Looking outside the box, so to speak, to ensure staff are trained, students are onboarded in a timely manner, and resources are extended will ensure success for all.

**009.01A5** Evaluation of progress toward improvement goals.

**Next Steps:**

1. Develop student ownership and internalization of success criteria and self-monitoring of learning.
2. Extend collaboration between buildings to develop strengths and guaranteed and viable systems. Build on each other's strengths.
3. Provide and support continuous education for administrators and more differentiated professional learning opportunities for staff.
4. Develop data literacy within all staff to ensure data is driving decisions, identifying root causes, and directing instructional methodology to enhance differentiation for students' needs.
5. Train teachers to make instructional adjustments through utilizing formative assessment data at point of instruction.

## Summary

### **Summary:**

Grand Island Public Schools should celebrate efforts made to improve learning for students to ensure success. Leadership at the district level have recently revisited their strategic plan and realized a narrowing of focus was needed. Through this transition, administrators and teachers have joined efforts to create reachable goals and incorporate data driven strategies.

As this is a new transition, goals will need to be monitored and adjusted but not necessarily discontinued. Data literacy efforts will ensure data drives future plans and goal adjustments.

Grand Island Public Schools has opportunities to work with their regional Educational Service Unit and the Nebraska Department of Education through many avenues including support for school designations. The district is encouraged to utilize these opportunities to the fullest to benefit school improvement efforts.

1. Finalize the report and download as a PDF.
2. Submit the PDF, including the Improvement/ Action Plan, via email to the school system and the NDE at: [nde.accreditation@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.accreditation@nebraska.gov)

