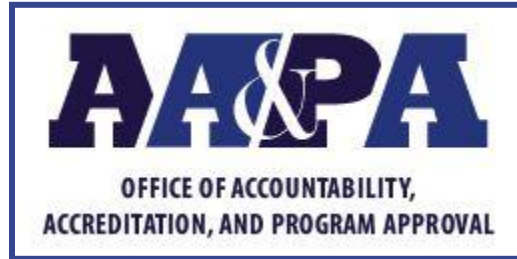


**NEBRASKA CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT  
EXTERNAL REPORT**



<b>Prepared For:</b>	<b>Summerland Public Schools</b>
<b>Head Administrator:</b>	<b>Kyle Finke, Superintendent</b>
<b>Dates of Visit:</b>	<b>March 18-20</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.

This was Summerland Public School's first visit due to the fact that they opened up in 2021.

The evidence for the on-site review was organized in a Google Folder and consisted of a presentation, the CIP action plan, and numerous data documents. Prior to the visit, members of the External Team reviewed the Action Plan and School Profile and met to discuss expectations.

The visit commenced with a detailed orientation session conducted by the School Improvement Team, which included members of the administration. This introductory session was designed to provide the visiting team with a thorough understanding of the school's objectives and ongoing initiatives. Following this orientation, the remainder of the first day was dedicated to conducting Focus Group Interviews. These interviews involved a diverse range of participants, including elementary and secondary students, parents and community members, teaching staff, and the school's leadership team. The purpose of these interviews was to draw connections between the tangible artifacts previously submitted by the school and the insights presented during the initial overview. Additionally, the first day included systematic classroom observations to gather firsthand data on teaching practices and student engagement.

On the second day, the schedule was primarily allocated for drafting and finalizing the exit report. This report aimed to encapsulate the findings of the visit and provide constructive feedback to the school based on the observations and interviews conducted.

### **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 Leader</b>	Matt Farup	Superintendent Wakefield Schools	402-613-2234	mfarup@wakefieldschools.org
<b>Member</b>	Shawn Biltott	Elementary Principal East Butler Schools	402-5452-2081	sbiltott@ebutler.esu7.org
<b>Member</b>	Jim York	Elementary Principal O'Neill Public Schools	402-366-1937	jimyork@oneillschools.org

### Agenda

The On-Site Visit was scheduled for **March 18-20, 2024**. Prior to the visit Summerland Public Schools shared the schedule and documentation with the team. The External Team participated in an Orientation Meeting prior to the visit to discuss responsibilities and to plan for the review of the Action Plan and School Profile.

## **Monday, March 18, 2024**

**Throughout the day:** External team members travel to O'Neill

**3:00 pm** External team members check-in to Holiday Inn (1020 East Douglas St., O'Neill, 68763)

**4:30 pm** Team meets at hotel prior to leaving for NCC

**5:00 pm** Meet & Greet, followed by meal at Northeast Community College (505 East Highway 20, O'Neill, 68763)

Northern Tier Presentation to Visitation team (NTS Superintendents, Principals, School Improvement Teams)

School personnel will return to campuses; external visitation team will discuss next steps

## **Tuesday, March 19, 2024**

**8:00-8:15 am** Team arrives at Summerland for site visit

**8:15-9:00 am** Opening presentation by Summerland leadership team

**9:00-9:30 am** Tour

**9:30-10:45 am** Classroom Visits

**10:45-11:15 am** Interview Stakeholder Group #1 Elementary Students

**11:20-11:50 am** Interview Stakeholder Group #2 Secondary Students

**11:55-12:25 pm** Interview Stakeholder Group #3 Community/Board Members

**12:30-1:20 pm** Lunch on campus and team discussion

**1:30-2:00 pm** Interview Stakeholder Group #4 Staff

**2:00-3:00 pm**      Debrief on interviews

**3:00-4:30 pm**      Return to O'Neill for development of NTS Exit Report

**Wednesday, March 20, 2024**

**9:00 am**              Team arrives at Summerland for meeting and closing/exit report

**11:00 am**            Exit Report

**\*External team members will travel home following the conclusion of the meeting**

**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.

The Summerland Public School Continuous Improvement Process is a structured framework designed to enhance educational outcomes through several key components:

1. District Information: This foundational element encompasses comprehensive details about the district's demographics, historical performance metrics, and administrative structures. It provides a contextual background that informs all other aspects of the improvement process.

2. MTSS Teams for Continuous Improvement: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Teams are integral to the process. These teams are composed of educators and administrators who collaborate to identify student needs, implement interventions, and monitor progress at multiple levels, from individual students to entire grade levels.
3. Balanced Assessment System: This component involves a strategic mix of formative, summative, diagnostic, and benchmark assessments. The system is designed to measure student learning continuously and provide timely feedback to inform instructional adjustments.
4. Evidence-Based Instructional Methods: The district commits to using instructional strategies that are supported by research and proven to be effective in enhancing student learning. These methods are regularly reviewed and updated based on the latest educational research and data analysis.
5. Evidence-Based and High-Quality Instructional Materials: The materials used in classrooms are chosen based on rigorous criteria to ensure they are both high in quality and aligned with evidence-based educational practices. This includes textbooks, digital resources, and other educational tools that support the curriculum.
6. District Data: The systematic collection, analysis, and utilization of data related to student performance, staff efficacy, and school operations. Data-driven decision-making is a cornerstone of the district's approach to continuous improvement.
7. District Action Planning and Goals: The district develops action plans and sets specific goals based on professional learning standards. These plans are tailored to address identified needs and aim to improve student outcomes.

Each component of the Continuous Improvement Process is interlinked, ensuring that the initiatives are cohesive and strategically aligned to foster an environment of ongoing enhancement and excellence in education.

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

The mission of Summerland Public School is to provide all students with progressive educational opportunities in a safe, positive environment to develop

the necessary mental, physical, and emotional skills to prepare them to become independent learners with the desires, skills, and abilities necessary to become responsible, productive citizens and lifelong learners.

The vision of Summerland Public School is stated as: Engage, Educate, Empower Every Child, Every Day

The belief statement of Summerland Public School is stated as: All students have the right to learn at their own ability, level, and style with high expectations for success.

- All students have the right to a positive, safe, nurturing learning environment where they are treated with respect and dignity.
- All students have the right to a challenging, diverse, and relevant curriculum enhanced through the use of technology to become lifelong learners.
- All students have the right to overall well being through physical, social, emotional, and mental health support.

The mission, vision, and belief statement are valued by staff and students as observed by student, staff, leadership, and community during interviews. The staff created the statements to demonstrate the values of the school

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

On Tuesday, March 19th, the steering committee for the Summerland Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) convened with the external visit team for a pivotal meeting. This session was marked by a detailed presentation, delivered via Google Slides, which served to encapsulate the core aspects of the school district's improvement initiatives.

The presentation was strategically structured into several key segments:

1. Introduction of the Team: The session began with introductions by each member of the Summerland CIP steering committee, establishing a personal connection and setting the stage for collaborative dialogue.
2. Their Story: This segment offered a narrative of the district's journey toward continuous improvement, highlighting significant milestones and the evolution of their educational strategies over time.
3. CIP Goals: The committee detailed specific goals of the Continuous Improvement Process, outlining both the short-term objectives and the vision for long-term educational achievements.
4. Connection to AQuESTT: A significant portion of the presentation was dedicated to illustrating how the CIP aligns with the Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT). This section demonstrated the synergy between local improvement efforts and state-wide educational standards.
5. Data Presentation: Comprehensive data was shared to substantiate the progress and impact of the CIP. This included metrics on student performance, teacher engagement, and resource allocation, providing a quantitative foundation for the narrative of improvement.

Each segment was led by a different member of the team, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and expertise were represented. Throughout the presentation, members of the external visit team were actively engaged, posing questions that probed deeper into the strategy, implementation, and outcomes of the CIP. This interactive element ensured that the session was not only informative but also a beneficial exchange of ideas, aimed at refining and enhancing the continuous improvement process.

The overall tone of the presentation was informative, designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the district's efforts and to foster a collaborative atmosphere. The meeting concluded with positive feedback from the external team, affirming the effectiveness and thoroughness of the presentation.

**009.01A3** Selection of improvement goals. At least one goal is directed toward improving student academic achievement

**Goal #1:** All students will demonstrate academic growth in ELA.

Summerland Public Schools carefully crafted its academic goals following a thorough analysis of data gathered from the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) and the ACT assessments. In response to these insights, specific subgoals were formulated, particularly aimed at enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes for students identified for Special Education. These subgoals were tailored to meet unique learning needs and to integrate supportive measures that foster academic achievement in this student cohort.

In alignment with the overarching schoolwide goal that "All students will demonstrate academic growth in English Language Arts (ELA)," the instructional and leadership staff at Summerland engaged in extensive collaboration. These efforts were focused on selecting and implementing effective strategies and resources. Key to these initiatives was the incorporation of the Nebraska Standards for ELA across all grade levels and courses at the start of the 2023 school year. During committee and collaborative meetings, staff input highlighted the need for a shift towards broader and more integrated ELA instruction. This shift was supported by a rigorous curriculum that aligned closely with state standards, aiming to enhance the coherence and efficacy of ELA instruction throughout the school.

Throughout the external visits, a comprehensive total of 19 classroom observations were conducted. During these visits, team members meticulously recorded anecdotal evidence concerning various aspects of classroom dynamics, including student participation, the use of formative assessments, and cooperative learning practices. Observations noted that students were generally engaged and responsive to teacher prompts, indicating effective classroom management and instructional strategies. Teachers primarily utilized verbal cues and targeted questions to gauge and enhance student understanding, a technique that promotes active learning and immediate feedback.

Moreover, the use of instructional technology was prominently observed across the classrooms. Although technology was widely employed, the predominant mode of instruction involved direct teaching methods. These were primarily used

to introduce new content and assess students' retention of previously learned material. In the elementary classrooms, a particularly effective strategy noted was the use of clear and student-friendly learning goals, which were visibly posted to guide student learning and expectations.

These strategies and observations highlight Summerland Public Schools' commitment to fostering an educational environment where all students can achieve significant academic growth in ELA, supported by data-driven goals, collaborative planning, and effective teaching practices.

**Considerations:**

- Continue routine staff training on the ELA curriculum and implementation of standards across all grades and courses. This includes reflection the fidelity of the use of the materials provided.
- Explore options for NDE support regarding the NSCAS growth model which includes a blueprint for student results that may ultimately be used for the spring summative test score.
- You should continue to move forward with incorporating NeMTSS tiers of intervention at all levels. Tiers of intervention are important at the elementary and secondary levels for any student struggling with learning content or behavior.

**Goal #2:** The district will implement a PK-12 NeMTSS framework.

The Summerland School District has significantly advanced its educational strategy by adopting a comprehensive PK-12 Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NeMTSS) framework. This initiative reflects the district's dedication to improving educational outcomes across all grade levels. A key component of this commitment has been the strategic addition of staff to bolster the framework's implementation. Specifically, the district has hired MTSS coordinators for both the elementary and secondary levels. These coordinators are tasked with leading the development and execution of specific goals related to the MTSS framework.

To facilitate the effective implementation of MTSS and ensure ongoing goal-setting and problem-solving, the district has institutionalized scheduled

grade-level meetings. These meetings are dedicated to discussing the progress of MTSS initiatives, adjusting strategies as needed, and fostering a collaborative environment for addressing student needs.

At the secondary level, the district has innovatively responded to perceptual data gathered from students and staff by establishing the "Bobcat Academy." This initiative groups students from grades 7-12 into small, consistent cohorts. The aim is to cultivate deeper relationships and a sense of community among students across these grade levels, allowing them to share experiences and support each other. The Bobcat Academy has proven effective in enhancing the cultural and climatic conditions within the secondary school, as evidenced by improved student interactions and a stronger communal spirit.

Furthermore, recognizing the critical importance of mental health in achieving educational success, the district has taken another significant step by hiring a full-time mental health practitioner. This role is crucial in providing necessary mental health support to all students, thereby addressing a broad spectrum of emotional and psychological needs within the school community. This strategic addition not only supports the NeMTSS framework by addressing the 'whole child,' but also aligns with contemporary educational best practices that emphasize the importance of mental health in academic and social success.

**Considerations:**

- You should continue to move forward with incorporating NeMTSS tiers of intervention at all levels. Tiers of intervention are important at the elementary and secondary levels for any student struggling with learning content or behavior.
- It would be beneficial to enhance collaboration across all grade levels, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Currently, MTSS initiatives are largely developed and implemented within isolated educational tiers—elementary and secondary. By fostering a more integrated approach, strategies and resources can be shared more effectively across all grades, leading to a more cohesive and unified implementation of the MTSS framework.
- Meet regularly with planned agendas, identify roles (that could change annually), and keep a record of actions for reporting/accountability purposes. The committee structure supports action plan steps outlined in

the NeMTSS Continuous Improvement CIP Document and this work could easily be linked in the CIP Document.

- Create a strategic chart that displays how each school level is supporting and working towards the district goal. This organization model is reflected in the CIP Template and visually represents the trickle-down effect of strategic planning.

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

**Commendations:**

- Goal #1-ELA
  - NSCAS & ACT scores show marked growth from year one to year two.
  - Fidelity checks & pacing guides are used to enhance ELA instruction.
  - Nebraska State Standards are posted in each classroom.
  - Classroom observations clearly indicated that the goal of "All students will demonstrate academic growth in ELA" was a central focus of instruction across all grade levels and secondary content courses.
  - Staff interviews revealed that the district provided suitable professional development and collaboration opportunities, enabling staff members to effectively contribute to achieving the district's educational goals.

**Recommendations:**

Rewriting ELA goal as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) involves clarifying objectives to ensure they are well-defined and trackable over time. Here's a process to transform a general goal into a SMART goal, particularly in the context of student performance:

1. Specific: Clearly define what you want to achieve, including who is

involved, what the goal is, and where it will take place. For example, instead of saying "improve student performance," specify "improve student reading comprehension scores."

2. Measurable: Determine how you will measure the success of the goal. What metrics will indicate that the goal has been met? For example, "Increase the average reading comprehension scores on the end-of-year standardized tests by 5%."
3. Achievable: Ensure that the goal is attainable given the available resources and time. Consider any potential constraints and confirm that the goal challenges the students without being out of reach. For instance, if a 5% increase is reasonable based on past data and current resources, this criterion is met.
4. Relevant: The goal should align with broader educational objectives and be relevant to the needs of the students, teachers, and the school's mission. For example, improving reading comprehension should support overall academic performance and critical thinking skills development, which are central to the school's educational mission.
5. Time-bound: Set a deadline for achieving the goal to create urgency and prompt action. For example, "Achieve a 5% increase in reading comprehension scores by the end of the current academic year."

Applying this to the goal of all students demonstrating academic growth in English Language Arts (ELA), a SMART version could be:

"By the end of the 2025 academic year, increase the average score of all students in grades K-12 on the standardized ELA assessment by 7%, ensuring that at least 70% of students meet or exceed their individual growth targets as determined at the start of the academic year."

This revised goal is specific to what needs improvement (ELA scores), measurable through standardized assessments, achievable with the right strategies and resources, relevant to overall educational outcomes, and time-bound to a specific school year.

Consider incorporating the Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NeMTSS) into interventions to boost student performance in English Language Arts (ELA)

across all student groups involves a structured, tiered approach. Here's how you can integrate this framework effectively:

### Tier 1: Universal Supports

- **High-Quality ELA Curriculum:** Ensure that all students have access to an evidence-based, rigorous ELA curriculum that is aligned with state standards.
- **Professional Development:** Regularly provide training for teachers on effective ELA instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching. This can help ensure that instruction is accessible and engaging for all students.
- **Classroom Environment:** Create a supportive classroom environment that promotes literacy development. This could include a classroom library, word walls, and spaces conducive to both quiet reading and collaborative work.
- **Data-Driven Instruction:** Use ongoing assessment and data analysis to tailor instruction to meet the needs of all students. This includes formative assessments, screening, and benchmark assessments to monitor progress and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.

### Tier 2: Targeted Supports

- **Small Group Interventions:** For students who need additional support in ELA, provide targeted instruction in small groups. These interventions should focus on specific skills, such as phonics, vocabulary development, or reading comprehension strategies.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Implement regular progress monitoring to track the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments as needed. This helps ensure that supports are directly addressing students' areas of need.
- **Integration of Technology:** Use educational technology tools that can provide additional practice and reinforce learning in engaging ways. This might include digital reading programs, apps for vocabulary expansion, or online forums for writing and peer feedback.

### Tier 3: Intensive Supports

- **Individualized Instruction:** For students who continue to struggle despite Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions, provide intensive, individualized support. This

may include one-on-one tutoring, specialized programs for dyslexia or other learning disabilities, or more frequent progress monitoring.

- Collaboration with Specialists: Engage specialists such as reading specialists, speech-language pathologists, or special education teachers to design and implement individualized learning plans that address the unique needs of these students.
- Family Engagement: Increase communication with families about their child's progress and strategies to support literacy development at home. This might involve workshops for parents on how to encourage reading or provide homework help.

### System-Wide Integration

- MTSS Coordination: Ensure there is a dedicated MTSS coordinator or team who oversees the implementation of the NeMTSS process, ensuring alignment across tiers and consistency in the delivery of interventions.
- Continuous Improvement: Regularly review the effectiveness of the ELA interventions at all tiers. Use student performance data, teacher feedback, and student feedback to refine approaches and ensure the NeMTSS framework is meeting its goals.

By systematically applying the NeMTSS process across these tiers, the school can address the diverse needs of all students, ensuring that each student has the support necessary to achieve proficiency and growth in ELA.

### **Commendations:**

- Goal #2- The district will implement a PK-12 NeMTSS framework.
  - The district has created a 7-12 MTSS Team and has hired staff to provide for an MTSS Coordinator at each building level.
  - The district has shown a commitment to holding consistent collaborative MTSS meetings.
  - The district has incorporated SEBL support in 7-12 Bobcat Academy in response to student and staff perceptual data.
  - The district is continuing efforts through establishing a Mental Health Team and the district is taking steps to have a full time mental health practitioner.
  - The district exhibits a commitment to determine & implement

## Evidence-Based Practices(Tier 1, 2 & 3) in SEBL for PK-12

### **Recommendations:**

The district has made significant strides in developing an effective 7-12 MTSS process, and the elementary school has successfully demonstrated the utility of the MTSS framework through the implementation of a tiered support system for students in academic content areas. However, we recommend the adoption of a consistent, district-wide NeMTSS process to ensure uniformity and effectiveness of supports across all grade levels and buildings.

Creating a PK-12 district-wide NeMTSS (Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Supports) offers several advantages over having separate MTSS teams for each building. Here are some of the key benefits:

### **1. Consistency in Implementation and Practices**

A district-wide NeMTSS ensures that the same framework, strategies, and practices are implemented across all grade levels and buildings. This consistency helps in standardizing the quality of interventions and supports. It ensures that all students, regardless of which level they are at within the district, receive the same level of support and access to resources.

### **2. Streamlined Training and Professional Development**

With a unified MTSS approach, the district can organize more efficient and comprehensive training sessions for staff across all schools. This can lead to more effective use of resources, as training can be delivered on a larger scale rather than duplicating efforts across multiple teams. It also fosters a higher level of expertise among staff, as professional development can be tailored to meet district-wide goals and needs.

### **3. Improved Resource Allocation**

A district-wide approach allows for more strategic and efficient allocation of resources. Resources such as specialized staff, technology, and teaching materials can be distributed based on the overall needs of the district rather than individual schools. This can lead to better-equipped schools, particularly in areas that might otherwise struggle to access such resources.

#### **4. Enhanced Collaboration and Communication**

A unified MTSS framework facilitates better communication and collaboration among schools. Schools can share best practices, challenges, and successes more easily, learning from each other's experiences. This can foster a sense of community and teamwork across the district, leading to improved problem-solving and innovation.

#### **5. Continuity of Support for Students**

Students transitioning between schools within the district under a district-wide NeMTSS experience a seamless continuation of support. Students benefit from a consistent approach to interventions and supports from grade to grade and building to building.

#### **6. Data Management and Analysis**

With a single, district-wide system, data collection and analysis can be centralized, making it easier to track progress and trends across both levels. This centralized approach to data helps in making informed decisions that affect the entire district and in identifying district-wide priorities for improvement.

#### **7. Long-term Tracking and Accountability**

A district-wide MTSS framework makes it easier to track student progress over the long term as students advance from grade to grade. It also enhances accountability, as the district can set comprehensive goals and monitor the effectiveness of interventions across both levels.

Overall, a PK-12 district-wide NeMTSS framework enhances the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of support services provided to students across the entire district, leading to more coherent and impactful educational outcomes.

The district has also made steps to prioritize time for collaborative meetings to help accomplish the goal of creating a PK-12 MTSS framework. Setting aside dedicated time for collaborative meetings to problem-solve and discuss data is

crucial in establishing an effective Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NeMTSS) framework within a school district. These collaborative meetings play several vital roles:

### **1. Data-Driven Decision Making**

Regular discussions about data allow teams to analyze student performance, identify trends, and determine the effectiveness of interventions. This ensures that decisions are based on evidence rather than anecdotal experiences or assumptions, leading to more targeted and effective supports.

### **2. Consistency Across the District**

Collaborative meetings help ensure that all staff members across the district are on the same page regarding the implementation of the NeMTSS framework. This consistency is key to effectively supporting students as they move between grades and schools within the district.

### **3. Problem Solving**

These meetings provide a platform for staff to bring forward issues and challenges they face in the classroom or school-wide implementation of NeMTSS. Collaborative problem-solving allows for the pooling of resources and ideas, fostering innovative solutions that might not emerge from isolated efforts.

### **4. Professional Development**

Such meetings also serve as ongoing professional development sessions where staff can learn from each other's experiences and insights. Sharing strategies that have been successful in one classroom or school can inspire adaptations and applications elsewhere in the district.

### **5. Alignment with District Goals**

By regularly convening to discuss the implementation and outcomes of the NeMTSS process, the district ensures that all actions are aligned with broader educational goals and policies. This alignment is crucial for cohesive action and for meeting district-wide academic and behavioral expectations.

## **6. Accountability**

Regularly scheduled collaborative meetings increase accountability by requiring staff to report on their progress and outcomes. This accountability encourages consistency and fidelity in the application of the NeMTSS process.

## **7. Building a Collaborative Culture**

Frequent and structured meetings cultivate a culture of collaboration and support among staff. This cultural shift can enhance morale and increase the willingness of staff to engage in the NeMTSS process, knowing they have the backing and support of their colleagues.

In summary, setting aside time for collaborative meetings is not just important but essential for the success of a NeMTSS framework. It ensures that the process is dynamic, data-informed, consistent across the district, and embedded within the professional culture of the schools.

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

### **ADD/EDIT INFORMATION TO INCLUDE FEEDBACK ON EACH GOAL**

#### **Commendations:**

- Goal #2-MTSS across the P-12 scope
  - The MTSS process in place has helped ELA performance.
  - A district-level willingness to staff MTSS Coordinators
  - 7-12 Collaborative MTSS Meetings
  - Incorporating Bobcat Academy
  - Full-time LMHP

#### **Recommendations:**

- Keep up the commitment towards organizing the P-12 MTSS Process.

**Commendations:**

Academic:

The district has established a vision to meet the needs of students. Leadership has recognized the importance of making the Continuous Improvement Process integral to the operation of the district. The CIP Team has already specified the intent to expand the use on the NeMTSS framework to create and monitor progress of district-wide goals.

Additionally, the action plan created towards the goal of all students demonstrating academic growth English Language Arts (ELA) demonstrates a commitment to providing high-quality education to students. These efforts have resulted in a comprehensive approach that will ultimately benefit student learning outcomes. Including the support and expertise of the ESU and NeMTSS support will allow the district to recognize resources and to focus effort.

## Cultural:

The vision of “Engage, Educate, and Empower Every Child Everyday” is noticed by students, staff and stakeholders. Evidence from the Focus Interview Groups are as follows: “When you think about this school, what are some words that come to mind?”



## Themes from Focus Group Interviews:

- Absolutely no regrets that Summerland came together as a district.
- There is cohesiveness throughout the district. Students, Staff, and Stakeholders see themselves as Bobcats, not individuals from the separate communities that make up the Summerland District.
- Positive School Culture: Students and Staff enjoy coming and working at the school.
- Students and community members have high-regard for staff, all staff.
- Safety is a high priority.
- Opportunities are available to students and staff to grow
  - FFA, FBLA, FCCLA, and SkillsUSA

- Fridays at Northeast & Job Shadow
- Career Explorations

Teachers consistently display mutual respect in their interactions with students, staff, and community members. This commitment to prioritizing "kids first" has fostered high levels of participation and engagement, contributing to a secure and welcoming atmosphere. By emphasizing community and dedicating themselves to student well-being and success, the school system has cultivated an environment that supports both learning and personal development.

#### NeMTSS:

Summerland Schools has take steps in implementing a NeMTSS framework throughout PreK-12, resulting in a student-focused approach to education, problem-solving, and SEBL initiatives.

- SEBL Programs: Bobcat Dens & Bobcat Academy
- Utilize school counselors & FT Mental Health Practitioner
- Signage of School Mission and Vision evident in all classrooms, "Engage, Educate, Empower Every Child, Every Day"
- Tiered approach to intervention to meet all student needs.

#### ***Recommendations:***

##### Academic:

Utilize conversations to discuss the expectations of vertical alignment of Nebraska State Standards that have already been established in the district. This will help ensure that all students are receiving a consistent and effective education. Additionally, it is recommended that the district-wide Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) template from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) be utilized, and that all staff be included in the CIP process. This will encourage collaboration, investment and input from all levels, leading to more effective practices. Finally, when updating goals, structure them using the

SMART goal organization principle: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. This will help ensure that goals are directed towards the individual district's needs. This process helps to determine the need and attainable, and that progress can be accurately tracked and evaluated.

### Cultural:

Be intentional about creating new traditions. Traditions in school districts play a vital role in shaping the culture and community within schools. Here are some of the key reasons why traditions are important:

#### **1. Sense of Identity and Belonging**

Traditions help create a unique identity for a school or district, distinguishing it from others. This identity fosters a strong sense of belonging among students, staff, and the community, which is crucial for building a supportive and inclusive environment.

#### **2. Continuity and Stability**

Traditions provide a sense of continuity that links the past with the present. This continuity can be especially reassuring in times of change and can offer stability for students and staff by maintaining familiar routines and rituals.

#### **3. Community Engagement**

School traditions often involve community members, thereby strengthening the bond between the school and its surrounding community. Events like annual carnivals, sports meets, or arts showcases become opportunities for community involvement, which can enhance support for the school and generate a mutual sense of pride and investment.

#### **4. Positive School Climate**

Traditions contribute to a positive school climate by fostering joy and enthusiasm. Regularly celebrated traditions can generate anticipation and

excitement, improving the overall atmosphere within the school. They also serve as regular reminders of the school's values and mission, reinforcing these ideals within the student body.

## **5. Building School Spirit**

Traditions such as pep rallies, school songs, and mascot-related activities enhance school spirit. They create a sense of camaraderie among students and can boost morale, which is important for both academic and extracurricular engagement.

## **6. Encouraging Engagement and Participation**

School traditions often require active participation, which can engage students in ways that the regular curriculum may not. Participation in these events can help students develop skills such as leadership, teamwork, and organization.

## **7. Memory and Milestones**

Traditions create lasting memories for students and can mark significant milestones in their educational journey. Events like graduation ceremonies, homecoming ceremonies, or even field days are cherished memories that alumni carry with them, often shaping their perception of their education in positive ways.

## **8. Transmitting Values**

Through traditions, schools can transmit core values and lessons that are important to the community and educational philosophy. Whether it's through community service days, honor codes, or awards for specific virtues, traditions can serve as a medium for instilling values.

## **9. Motivation and Achievement**

Some traditions focus on celebrating academic and extracurricular achievements, which can motivate students to excel. Recognizing

achievements through honor rolls, award ceremonies, or showcasing student work can validate efforts and inspire continued excellence.

Traditions are more than just repetitive events; they are foundational practices that nurture the emotional, social, and academic fabric of school districts, helping to create a cohesive and spirited educational environment.

When new leadership joins a school district, especially those who are familiar with the district but stepping into new roles, it's crucial to ensure they receive comprehensive support to make their transition smooth and effective. Here's how this support can be structured and delivered:

### **1. Thorough Onboarding and Briefing**

The existing members of the Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) team should organize detailed onboarding sessions for the new leaders. These sessions should include thorough briefings on the current status of ongoing projects, past initiatives, and the historical data that has shaped the current strategies. It's important to provide a clear overview of what steps have been taken so far in the district's strategic planning and implementation processes.

### **2. Identifying and Discussing Challenges**

The CIP team should not only highlight successes and positive outcomes but also openly discuss the challenges and areas where growth is necessary. This includes detailed discussions on any obstacles that have hindered progress in certain areas, and sharing insights on potential or ongoing issues that could impact future developments. By having a clear understanding of these challenges, new leaders can better strategize on how to address them effectively.

### **3. Fostering Collaboration**

Encourage a collaborative environment where new leaders can easily seek advice and input from experienced team members. This could be facilitated through regular strategy meetings, joint problem-solving sessions, and informal catch-ups that help new leaders feel part of the team and comfortable in seeking guidance.

### **4. Support from the Board and Senior Administration**

The Board and senior administrators should actively support new leaders by ensuring they have the necessary resources and authority to implement changes. This support can also include mentorship programs where new leaders are paired with experienced members of the district who can guide them through the intricacies of their new roles.

### **5. Continuous Professional Development**

Invest in the professional development of new leaders by providing opportunities for training and learning, both within the district and through external resources. This could include leadership training programs, workshops on educational leadership, and conferences that align with the district's goals and challenges.

### **6. Constructive Feedback and Encouragement**

Implement a structured feedback system that not only assesses the performance of new leaders but also provides constructive feedback and encouragement. This helps them understand their progress in their roles and fosters a positive atmosphere that is conducive to personal and professional growth.

### **7. Clear Communication Channels**

Establish clear, open lines of communication where new leaders can express their concerns, propose new ideas, and provide updates on their initiatives. This

ensures transparency and maintains a steady flow of information across all levels of the district's leadership.

By taking these steps, the existing team members and the Board can significantly bolster the integration and effectiveness of new leaders in the district, ensuring that the leadership transition does not disrupt the ongoing progress and momentum of the district's objectives.

#### NeMTSS:

The NeMTSS framework should be systematically integrated across the entire PreK-12 system, emphasizing a district-wide problem-solving model along with robust data collection and analysis. It is equally important to prioritize mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) supports for both students and staff, thereby fostering a nurturing and supportive learning environment. Consistency in the MTSS framework across the district is crucial. MTSS teams should be inclusive, featuring members from all grade levels, administrative staff, and even Board representatives. Furthermore, establishing a feedback loop through the inclusion of additional staff on continuous improvement goal committees will enable building leadership to stay attuned and responsive to emerging needs.

It was observed that perceptual data was collected just once, in October of 2022. To enhance the implementation of an effective MTSS framework, incorporating regular collection of perceptual data would be a beneficial step. This approach would not only improve the problem-solving process but also ensure that the Continuous Improvement Process integrates perceptual insights, allowing for a more responsive and inclusive strategy.

The consistent collection of perceptual data plays a critical role in data-driven decision-making within a school district, particularly when establishing a Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NeMTSS) framework. Perceptual data—gathered from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other feedback mechanisms—provides insights into the attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and satisfaction of students, staff, and parents. This type of data complements the more traditional quantitative metrics like academic performance, attendance, and behavior data, offering a fuller picture of the school environment and its

impact on stakeholders. Here's how perceptual data contributes to the effectiveness of implementing a NeMTSS framework:

### **1. Having a clear vision of School Climate**

Perceptual data can reveal the subjective feelings of safety, belonging, and respect among students and staff, which are crucial elements of a positive school climate. A supportive climate has been linked to better academic performance and reduced behavioral issues, both of which are key targets of the NeMTSS framework.

### **2. Identifying Needs and Barriers**

This data helps identify hidden needs and barriers that might not be evident through quantitative data alone. For instance, students may report feeling unsupported in their learning, or teachers might feel they lack the necessary resources or professional development to effectively implement interventions. Understanding these perceptions allows the district to address specific concerns that may hinder the success of the NeMTSS framework.

### **3. Enhancing Engagement and Buy-In**

When stakeholders see that their perceptions and feedback are valued and acted upon, their engagement with and commitment to school initiatives increase. This is particularly important in the NeMTSS process, where the success of interventions often relies on the active participation and cooperation of teachers, students, and parents.

### **4. Tailoring Interventions**

Perceptual data can inform more tailored and responsive interventions. For example, if students report high levels of stress around exam times, the school might implement specific stress-reduction strategies or academic supports during these periods as part of Tier 2 interventions in the NeMTSS framework.

### **5. Monitoring and Adjusting Implementation**

Regular collection of perceptual data allows schools to monitor the effectiveness of the NeMTSS implementation from the perspective of those

directly affected. It provides ongoing feedback that can be used to make adjustments to interventions, supports, and strategies, ensuring they remain relevant and effective over time.

## **6. Promoting Equity**

Perceptual data helps ensure that the NeMTSS framework addresses the needs of all student groups. It can uncover disparities in experiences and outcomes that might require targeted interventions, thus supporting the equity goals of the framework.

## **7. Building Relationships**

Collecting and discussing perceptual data can foster stronger relationships among staff, students, and parents. These relationships are foundational for a collaborative approach to problem-solving and for the effective implementation of a school-wide support system like NeMTSS.

In summary, the consistent collection of perceptual data enriches data-driven decision-making processes by adding qualitative insights to quantitative data. This combination allows for a more comprehensive approach to developing, implementing, and refining a NeMTSS framework, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive school practices.

## **Summary**

The summary section of the External Report provides additional confirmation of steps made to ensure that Summerland School District is committed to the Continuous Improvement process. This report provided information for the Summerland school system as a whole and captured the strengths and perceived needs of the school community along with unique characteristics of each school building.

Throughout the preparation and on-site stages of this External Visit, Summerland leadership has been communicative, responsive, and open and honest about their journey highs and lows. The External Team would like to thank the school system not only for their hospitality but for also allowing the team opportunities to immerse themselves into the school culture and climate. As gathered from the CIP Documents and Opening Presentation, here are some summary steps for the system to consider as they prepare for the 2024-2029 Continuous Improvement cycle.

- 1) All staff on CIP committees and MTSS Teams: increased staff involvement at each building site will strengthen awareness of the importance of Continuous Improvement as it relates to the AQuESTT accountability system. Continuous Improvement should not be viewed as the work done by “some” and student growth will be more apparent when all staff have a deep understanding on the connection of inputs and outputs.
- 2) Continue to utilize and improve on the practice of using the Nebraska Continuous Improvement NeMTSS CIP Template which is structured to house the district wide goals, data, and how the individual buildings and collaborative teams work to contribute to those goals. Another strength of the newly revised NeMTSS Framework is the inclusion of many updated NDE resources that are all connected to AQuESTT Domains and Tenets.
- 3) To further understand the individual and collective use of formative assessments, Summerland schools is encouraged to add baseline data from the CNA 2.0 (June 2023) into the revised academic goal and action steps. It is possible that the school could delineate the ELA content goals and have supporting benchmark objectives to ensure productive PLC conversations and use of data.

**Relevant Resources for Consideration:** (live links)

### [NeMTSS Website](#)

- [Program Comparison Tool](#)
- [NeMTSS Team Contact Page](#)
- [NeMTSS Framework Document](#)
- [Essential Elements](#)
- [CIP Template](#)
- [The Path Forward](#)
- [Nebraska's Journey to Inclusion](#)

- [The Journey to Inclusion](#)
- [Comprehensive Needs Assessment \(CNA 2.0\)](#)

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)

