

Recommendations to the NSEA Board by the Ad Hoc Committee on Nebraska State Student Standards

Angela Mosier, Westside Community Schools, Chair

The charge to the Committee from New Business Item 2013-5 stated:

“The NSEA will develop a committee charged to research and promote alignment of state standards, instructional practices and assessments through a comprehensive system that leads to student success. The committee will determine how best to promote this alignment through the legislature, Department of Education, colleges of Education and other stakeholders and present the plan to the NSEA Board of Directors by April 2014.”

As you can read from the above charge to the ad hoc committee on Nebraska State Student Standards, the directive was extensive and comprehensive. The committee accomplished the following:

- Established a “Groupsite” to provide secure communications, discussion of issues, review of documents, and take part in small group activities.
- Met twice at NSEA for “face-to-face” discussions and activities.
- “Uploaded” and reviewed 25 documents to date on Standards, Common Core, Nebraska Processes, NEA Resources, etc.
- Was oriented to the “Big Picture” of Standards, Instructional Practice, Assessment, Accountability, and the Delivery System in Nebraska.
- Developed recommendations for additions to NSEA Resolutions B-11, B-12, B-13, and B-14 to be discussed at Delegate Assembly in April, 2014.

The committee makes the following recommendations:

- Approve recommended additions to NSEA Resolutions B-11, B-12, B-13, and B-14 (see elsewhere in this booklet).
- Keep the membership informed about National Trends in Standards, Assessment, Instructional Practices and Accountability.
- Educate the membership about the “current” Nebraska State Content Standards and their alignment with Common Core Standards and “College and Career Ready Standards”.
- Inform the membership about the process the State Board is using to update Nebraska Standards.
- Support members/local associations in the development of curriculum to help students become proficient on Nebraska “College and Career Ready Standards.”
- Develop the capacity of local affiliates to advocate for members professional partnerships in determining best instructional practices, curriculum selection/development, and implementation.
- Reconvene the committee to focus on the implementation of the above recommended actions and continue to study the current statewide professional development delivery system and make recommendations for its improvement.

Nebraska Student Standards Process

Many of Nebraska’s Educators are aware that Nebraska is one of four states that has not adopted the “Common Core State Standards” nor is Nebraska part of either Assessment Consortia which includes PARCC or Smarter Balance. Nebraska is guided by state statute 79-760.01: Academic Content Standards State Board Duties, which sets out the parameters of

adopting standards, revising those standards, and developing an assessment system to measure those standards.

The Nebraska State Board of Education is following the timeline for revision of content standards as required by 79-760.01 and has caused a study and comparison of the English Language Arts and Math Standards to be accomplished. The report on the comparison of current Nebraska ELA and Math Standards are on the Nebraska Department of Education website at www.education.ne.gov.

A quick summary of the results of the comparison study of Nebraska standards to the Common Core reveals that Nebraska standards are comparable to, or exceed, Common Core in a few areas. The State Board has called a review committee of Higher Education Institutions to review the Nebraska Standards to see if they are “College and Career Ready.” In this case, “College and Career Ready” is defined as preparing a student to be successful in the first credit-bearing course in English and Math. The recommendations of this group have been forwarded to a group of Nebraska educators to revise the State ELA and Math Standards. The first draft of the “College and Career Ready Standards” for Nebraska should be presented to the State Board in March or April 2014. From that point, the State Board will have the standards reviewed by external experts for validation and then a public review process will begin, as has been the practice of the State Board.

After public review and input session, the standards will return to the writing committee of educators for final corrections and the standards will be presented to the State Board for adoption. By September 2014, Nebraska should have revised English Language Arts and Math standards that are “College and Career Ready.” Though these standards will NOT be Common Core Standards, they should meet the requirements of the Federal Department of Education for obtaining a waiver from No Child Left Behind provisions.

When the new standards are adopted, the statewide assessments must be revised, and this will be accomplished, as is the practice in Nebraska, with educators at the forefront of writing those tests. The issue for our NSEA members will be how to align curriculum and instructional practices to ensure students can learn to these new standards. Most of the materials, curriculum, texts, etc. are already being developed nationally to “align with the Common Core.” NSEA should be positioned to provide support for our local associations and individual members to be collaborative partners in the implementation of curriculum and instructional practices.

It is for this reason that the ad hoc committee recommends the NSEA Board extend the convening of the committee to review the current state of the Professional Development Delivery System in Nebraska or the lack thereof; and develop recommendations that will build the capacity of our locals to be collaborative partners in the implementation of new curriculum and instructional practices. NEA is currently building its capacity to support members in the implementation of the Common Core and NSEA should be well positioned to use those resources and translate them into Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards. Some of the committee work will include surveying local associations to see what is currently being done in districts and then developing strategies to close those gaps that are identified.

The committee members look forward to the discussion that should occur because of our recommendations to revise Resolutions B-11, B-12, B-13 and B-14. We believe that revisiting these four resolutions at Delegate Assembly will cause our members to reflect on our beliefs about standards, assessment, instructional practice, and accountability and become the “spring board” for further discussion and capacity building. We stand ready to continue the dialogue

with you the NSEA Board of Directors, our colleagues at Delegate Assembly, and our local association members.

In addition to Chair Angela Mosier, other members of the committee include Ann Allyn, William West, Jen Yoder and Linda Freye, Lincoln; Alan Bone, Westside Community Schools; Carolyn Campbell, Bayard; Marsha Edquist and Sabine Fleshner, Millard; Pat McLaughlin, Alliance; Tracy Naylor, Lexington; Susan Stake, Waverly; Tiffany Lafrentz and Teresa Weatherly, Omaha; Leann Widhalm, Norfolk.