

NEBRASKA CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EXTERNAL REPORT



ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATION
& APPROVAL

Prepared For:	Lewiston Consolidated School
Administrators	Juli Smith: K-12 Principal Rick Kentfield: Superintendent
Dates of Visit:	January 20th and 21st, 2025



LEWISTON
Consolidated School

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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.

The last Continuous Improvement visit for Lewiston Consolidated School was hosted in 2021. Priority next steps for the 2021 visit were stated as follows:

- Build capacity of staff surrounding school improvement goals, action steps, processes, and implementation expectations.
- Narrowing school improvement goals and action steps based on available data.
- Create a professional learning plan that will support the Continuous Improvement Process, goals, and action steps.
- Create cohesiveness to the curriculum process to develop a scope and sequence to understand gaps and overlaps.

PREPARATIONS MADE FOR THE VISIT:

The evidence for the on-site review was prepared and organized by the MTSS/School Improvement Team and school leadership. Lewiston Consolidated Schools website, data files, a data slide deck, and access to internal files also provided valuable information for the visit. Prior to the visit members of the External Team reviewed the Action Plan, School Profile Data, 2023 Assessment Data, and met twice for an orientation of expectations and finalizing visit specifics and logistics.

On-Site Visitation Data:

Artifacts & Evidence	Focus Group Interviews	Classroom Observations
Continuous Improvement Action Plan District Demographics Assessment Data Opening Presentation	Community Stakeholders - 8 Students - 18 Teachers - 6 Leadership and CI: 6	Elementary - 11 Secondary - 13

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
Lead	Kala Peyton	NeMTSS Regional Support Lead
Member	Molly Hornbeck	Director of Curriculum and Instruction: Gretna Public Schools
Member	Kate Sherwin	Coordinator of Engagement, Curriculum & Instruction: Nebraska City Public Schools
Member	Dr. Andrew Havelka	Superintendent: Freeman Public Schools

Agenda

The On-Site Visit was scheduled for Tuesday, January 21st and Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025. Prior to the visit Mr. Rick Kentfield and Ms. Juli Smith participated in two preparation sessions and engaged in communication via various emails. Through this communication, Mr. Kentfield and Ms. Smith were able to create the visit schedule, plan visit logistics, and submit appropriate documentation. The External Team participated in an Orientation Meeting and follow up check-in prior to the visit to discuss responsibilities and to plan for the review of the Action Plan and School Profile.

It is important to note that on the first day of the visit, schools in the area, including Lewiston, operated under a Late Start schedule due to adverse weather conditions. Prior to the visit, Rick Kentfield kept in regular contact with the external lead and plans were made in the case of a late start. The leadership and staff at Lewiston were very flexible and accommodating to ensure that the visit continued with very little disruption to the schedule and plans. Their hard work with this situation was extremely appreciated.

The Lewiston Consolidated site visit opened with a comprehensive overview of the school system, the continuous improvement process, MTSS systems and supports, programming highlights, and self identified successes and challenges within the school system. The opening presentation included opportunities for the external team to ask clarifying questions of the MTSS/Continuous Improvement Team and school leadership.

The remainder of the first day included Focus Group Interviews with high school students, support staff, and certified teachers. Prior to classroom visits, the team was led on a facility tour. Rick Kentfield treated the external team to lunch at a local community cafe.

The second day opened with a question and answer session with the principal, Juli Smith. Ms. Smith clarified several building processes and systems, as the external team needed further clarity on teaming, curriculum, and staff support structures. The external team held additional Focus Group Interviews consisting of elementary students and parents and community members. At the end of

the visit, the external team gave an Exit Presentation summarizing their visit findings, commendations, and recommendations.

Tuesday, January 21st

TIME	EVENT
8:30 a.m.	External team arrives at school; External team orientation
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Introductions Presentation of School Improvement Plan
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Facilities Tour
10:40 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.	High School Student Interviews
11:10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	BREAK
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Support Staff Interviews
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Classroom Visits
2:05 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.	Certified Teacher Interviews
2:35 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Classroom Visits (If Needed) External Team Work Time

Wednesday, January 22nd

TIME	EVENT
8:30 a.m.	External team arrives at school; External team orientation
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Elementary Student Interviews
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Classroom Visits
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	External Team Work Time
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Parent/Community Member Interviews
2:00 p.m. - 3:40 p.m.	External Team Work Time
3:45 p.m.	Exit Report to Staff
4:00 p.m.	MTSS Team Exit Report

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 **Lewiston Consolidated** Continuous Improvement Team consists of a wide variety of representation from Pre-K to secondary teachers and one administrator. The CIP team uses multiple sources of data to identify areas of strength and areas of improvement in order to design professional learning, adjust instruction, and target students for additional support. "Sustainability, with multiple staff involved" has been a major focus for the CIP process over the last few years. Several teaming structures exist to ensure sustainability, use of data

based decision making, application of decision rules, and the continuity and consistency of school improvement/MTSS processes.

Evidence from the onsite visit suggests that some of the CIP goals and action steps have been isolated to and primarily focused on elementary students and educators. Evidence also suggests clarity is needed for staff in terms of their role within continuous improvement and specific action steps that they can implement within their own instructional practices to further the cause of school improvement.

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

The mission of Lewiston Consolidated School is stated as:

“Empowering students to become confident and creative builders of their future.”

The vision of Lewiston Consolidated School is stated as:

“Every Lewiston student, educated for success.”

The district goals of Lewiston Consolidated School are stated as:

1. Provide programs and courses that inspire and prepare Lewiston students for success in learning, work, and life.
2. Establish high expectations for all students and provide support and resources to create positive, safe, and successful learning environments.
3. Develop systems of support that build collaborative learning among parents, students, and staff.

The Mission, Vision, and District Goals are valued by staff and students as observed through the following:

“Empowering students to become confident and creative builders of their future.”

*Students are involved in and are successful in multiple extracurricular activities. The extracurricular activities provide students with valuable opportunities to explore their interests and future pursuits for post secondary success.

“Every Lewiston student, educated for success.”

*Formal and informal assessments analyzed and utilized to adjust instruction and intensify supports.

“Provide programs and courses that inspire and prepare Lewiston students for success in learning, work, and life.”

*Several classes, such as Agriculture Electives, Social Studies, Applied Math, Family and Consumer Sciences emphasized real-world application and connections.

“Establish high expectations for all students and provide support and resources to create positive, safe, and successful learning environments.”

*Strong teacher-student rapport, students actively engaged and unafraid to ask questions. Flexible seating in elementary fostered collaboration.

“Develop systems of support that build collaborative learning among parents, students, and staff.”

*A strong, involved, supportive and committed family-like atmosphere within the school day and beyond

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

Prior to the visit, school leadership shared a data profile, assessment data, including NSCAS and MAP, and a School Improvement Goal and Action Plan document. External team members were able to analyze the data and school information from other sources to familiarize themselves with the school community.

The Continuous Improvement Team provided an opening presentation that thoroughly explained the process and rationale for creating the Continuous Improvement goals and action steps. The Continuous Improvement team has been focused on creating a sustainable system that involves multiple staff members who are experts in separate areas. Heavy focus for the 24-25 school year was centered on the Continuous Improvement Reading goal, stated as “Improve reading comprehension that includes targeted research based interventions for students in all grades.” Through focus group

interviews and the opening presentation, the external team noted that several levels of teaming exist that engage with data and problem solving to carry out the Reading goal action plan. Meeting norms, structures, and teaming practices allow Literacy improvement work to be a focal point for Kindergarten through 6th grade students, however few supports and structures exist for striving readers at the secondary level.

Also included in the Opening Presentation, Lewiston leadership and the MTSS Team shed light on some of the strengths and areas in need of improvement of the community and school system. The areas of growth highlighted were staff retention, low parental involvement, and attendance at school activities and events, and low student participation in extracurricular activities. Even though areas of growth were identified, the team had already identified and implemented action steps to address these issues. District strengths highlighted were the development of new vocational/agricultural education opportunities, a supportive board of education that advocates for the school community, and a school community that is strong and supportive.

Stakeholder interviews, classroom visits, and artifacts provided by the district indicate that students at Lewiston Consolidated have shown a solid trend of growth on state and local assessments, especially in the area of Literacy. This trend of success is an indicator of a culture of continuous improvement. Instructional staff at Lewiston utilize evidence-based practices, a targeted instructional focus, and thorough data analysis to monitor progress, implement interventions, and design professional learning opportunities.

A continuous improvement process that may improve efficiency, consistency, and sustainability are increasing capacity and the ability for staff to utilize EduClimber for data collection, visualization, and data based problem solving and decision making. In addition, considerations for scaling up the Literacy goal from elementary through high school, will ensure continuity and progression of literacy skills.

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

The school system formulated academic goals based upon longitudinal data of student performance on reading assessments at the elementary level. Growth goals were focused on increasing the amount of students testing at or above the 40th percentile.

Goal #1: All students will show measurable growth in reading comprehension.

Lewiston's action plan aims to improve reading comprehension through targeted, research-based strategies like small group interventions, daily WIN time (K-3), and *Writing Revolution* book studies (4-12). Progress is tracked with assessments and DIBELS monitoring, while initiatives such as Title I, UFLI phonics (4-6), and collaborative data meetings ensure comprehensive support. Walkthroughs and the WORDS grant further enhance instructional practices.

Classroom observations supported the district's reading goal through purposeful small group instruction during WIN time (K-3) using UFLI resources focused on phonics and phonemic awareness. The Title teacher led phonics-based interventions, helping students with oral reading fluency and teaching 4th graders to segment multisyllabic words for better spelling. These efforts align with the district's focus on targeted, research-based strategies.

Considerations:

- Teachers at Lewiston provide personalized, interactive learning opportunities, encouraging student participation and confidence while offering extra support when needed.
- Teachers demonstrated flexibility, adapting instruction based on student needs (e.g., handling ins/outs, modifying lessons for students with special needs).
- Implement extension of the reading goal through existing practices such as immersive peer learning, read-alouds, and student-led Kagan grouping strategies.

GOAL #2: Students will improve in math computation.

The district's math goal focuses on improving student computation skills, measured through district and state assessments. Key strategies include monthly walkthroughs with feedback, MAP and NSCAS data analysis, and HMH curriculum tests for grades 7-12. Lesson plans are aligned to support math standards, and intervention time within classrooms provides targeted Tier 2 support. PST meetings further enhance collaboration to address student needs.

Teachers use varied methods and tools to support all learners and deepen math understanding. Observations showed effective strategies, including a 5th-grade teacher using fraction tiles and individualized support, a science teacher adapting for a nonverbal student, and an Algebra 1 teacher using varied questioning techniques to engage students.

Considerations:

- Strong teacher-student rapport, students actively engaged and unafraid to ask questions. Flexible seating in elementary fostered collaboration.
- Capitalize on existing use of collaborative structures within the fine tuning of the math improvement goal: think-pair-share, quick checks for understanding, use of manipulatives (fraction tiles), kinesthetic learning (integer number lines), graphic organizers , and higher-order questioning.

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

Specific action steps were written to address the needs of students and staff in the area of literacy, specifically building capacity on evidence based practices, providing targeted and intensified supports, and utilizing data to inform instruction and apply a layered continuum of support.

Commendations:

- The Lewiston School Improvement Team (MTSS) represents diverse expertise and uses data-driven, evidence-based practices for continuous improvement, including Pre-K as part of their holistic approach.
- The full-day Pre-K program showcases the district's commitment to early childhood education and supports recruitment and enrollment.
- Lewiston is focused on improving academic offerings and support services, while also seeking more consistent professional development, better data tracking, and increased collaboration to enhance teaching and student support.

Recommendations:

- Work towards an enhanced support system for new and inexperienced teachers by developing a comprehensive onboarding program that leverages the expertise of Lewiston's faculty, particularly those who are sole subject matter experts.
- Implement a content and materials management system to capture and preserve critical information such as lesson plans, unit designs, and curriculum maps. This ensures continuity and sustainability in case of staff turnover.
- Establish a regular, dedicated time for ALL staff to collaboratively review data, discuss goals, and plan action steps. Focus on the promotion of data literacy, building capacity, and streamline both instructional practices and school improvement processes.

009.01A5 Evaluation of progress toward improvement goals.

Reading Goal Commendations:

- Lewiston Consolidated School effectively utilizes evidence-based practices, a targeted instructional focus, and thorough data analysis to monitor progress, implement interventions, and design professional learning opportunities. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to advancing literacy outcomes.
- Students at Lewiston Consolidated have shown a solid trend of growth on state and local assessments. As a collective, take time to highlight and celebrate the impactful strategies and successes already in place.

Reading Goal Recommendations:

- Establish a district-wide implementation plan that extends the reading goal from elementary through high school, ensuring continuity and progression of literacy skills.
- Integrate evidence-based reading strategies and instruction into content-area learning across all subjects, fostering a school-wide commitment to literacy improvement.
- Capitalize on the already established systems and structures to provide data-driven, evidence-based tiered supports across all grade levels.

Math Goal Commendations:

- Secondary students demonstrate an unmatched level of enthusiasm and excitement

for their recent learning of mathematical skills and concepts. This positive attitude towards math is a strong foundation for academic success and future action steps to support the district's continuous improvement process.

- Teachers use varied methods and tools to support all learners and deepen math understanding. Individualized support builds confidence and engagement.
- Students articulate their math thinking clearly, showing strong understanding. Discussions enhance reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Math Goal Recommendations:

- Build on the successful systems from the Reading Goal to improve math proficiency by focusing on a specific area (e.g., number sense, geometry) and ensuring consistent teaching methods, including manipulatives, questioning, and problem-solving, across all grades.
- Utilize the upcoming math curriculum adoption process to your advantage. Ensure the chosen curriculum provides robust tools for rigorous Tier 1 instruction and includes supplementary materials for differentiated student support.
- Explore creative instructional systems to optimize math teaching expertise, such as departmentalization, professional learning communities, and professional learning provided by content area teachers or through the ESU.

Summary

The summary section of the External Report provides additional confirmation of steps made during the previous Continuous Improvement cycle, and more importantly, provides a launching point for the next 5-year cycle. This report provides information for Lewiston Consolidated School as a whole and captures the strengths and perceived needs of the school community along with unique characteristics of the school district.

Throughout the preparation and on-site External Visit, Lewiston leadership was communicative, responsive, and thorough with providing data and information about system processes. The continuous improvement process is truly a shared and

collaborative effort by not only the Continuous Improvement team, but the entire staff at Lewiston Consolidated School.

The External Team would like to thank each and every staff member at Lewiston Consolidated School for welcoming us into their home and making us feel welcome. We would also like to thank you for the opportunities to engage with students, staff, leadership, and community members either within the classrooms or in an environment where open and honest dialogue was held.

As gathered from multiple sources of information, the following information provides next steps to consider as you prepare for the 2025-2030 Continuous Improvement cycle:

- The district is encouraged to utilize the Data-Based Decision Making Process (analyze MAP, NSCAS, ACT math data) to narrow and clarify the focus of the Math school improvement goal and action steps.
- It is the suggestion of the external team that the Lewiston leadership and MTSS teams engage in the creation of a 2025-26 professional development calendar aligned to continuous improvement goals and action steps
- The Lewiston leadership and MTSS team are encouraged to engage in the systematization of the onboarding and support process for new and inexperienced teachers

Relevant Resources for Consideration: (live links)

- [Program Comparison Tool](#)
- [CIP Template](#)
- [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

