



# **Accreditation Report**

## **South Central NE Unified #5**

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# Executive Summary

## **Introduction**

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## Description of the School System

**Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?**

The South Central Nebraska Unified School District #5 proudly serves the communities of Clay Center, Deweese, Edgar, Fairfield, Glenvil, Lawrence, and Nelson and encompasses 720 square miles in South Central Nebraska. South Central Unified operates two preschools, three elementary schools, and two junior-senior high schools. Starting in the 2013-14 academic year the district will reconfigure the junior-senior high schools and operate with two senior high schools and two middle schools.

South Central Nebraska Unified School District #5 (SCNUSD #5) was formed in 2001 by unifying the districts of Guide Rock, Lawrence, Nelson, Sandy Creek, and Superior. The unification was executed because of the lower tax rates, a decline in student enrollment across the five merging school districts, and unification incentive money from the State of Nebraska. During this process, the districts of Lawrence and Nelson consolidated to form one school system. In 2007 the unification was renewed for 3 years for the school districts of Lawrence/Nelson and Sandy Creek. At this time, Superior (after acquiring the Guide Rock district) chose to leave the SCNUSD #5 reunification.

In 2010-2011 school year Clay Center unified with Sandy Creek and the following year Clay Center merged with Sandy Creek. During the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years a K-6 elementary was maintained at Clay Center.

Sandy Creek Elementary at Clay Center grades 2, 3, and 5 were moved to Sandy Creek in 2012-2013; K, 1, 4, and 6 remain at the site. Clay County Early Learning Center (CCELC, the preschool located in Fairfield) and Lawrence Early Learning Center (the preschool located within the Lawrence/Nelson Elementary building) were acquired by the district in 2012-2013.

The SCNUSD #5 School Board voted at the October 2012 board meeting to move the remaining Sandy Creek Elementary at Clay Center students to Sandy Creek, move CCELC preschool to Sandy Creek, and move Sandy Creek students grades 6-8 to the Clay Center site to form Sandy Creek Middle School in 2013-2014.

The District currently enrolls 750 students and employs 74 certified staff members.

The Lawrence/Nelson school system is located within the two communities of Lawrence and Nelson. The Lawrence/Nelson secondary school building is located in Nelson and it houses grades 7-12. The elementary building is located in the community of Lawrence housing grades K-6, as well as the Lawrence Early Learning Center (LELC). LELC has been housed in this building for many years, but the district took ownership of it in 2012-2013 from ESU 9. Lawrence/Nelson is a consolidated school comprised of students from the communities of Lawrence, Nelson, Nora, and Oak.

The Sandy Creek site is located at the juncture of Highway 14 and Highway 74. The Sandy Creek School building houses grades K-12. In addition, Clay County Early Learning Center is located in the town of Fairfield. The Sandy Creek school system is comprised of students from the communities of Clay Center, Deweese, Edgar, Fairfield, and Glenvil. The communities that make up SCNUSD #5 rely on agriculture and small business to support the local economy.

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skills and challenging them to be lifelong leaders. With a 100 percent college acceptance rate, over 87 percent of South Central Unified students go on to college. Additionally, 98 percent of 7-12 students participate in at least one co-curricular activity.

South Central Unified believes that every individual can learn and will grow as a learner when high, clear expectations are set for all students allowing them to reach their greatest potential. Students benefit from increased individualized attention through a 10 to 1 student to teacher ratio. In addition, South Central Unified's quality staff averages 18 years of experience and is committed to collaborating to meet educational goals through the use of technology, interdisciplinary learning, and innovative teaching techniques.

Students at South Central Unified are dedicated to developing skills to become high performing leaders. Parents and guardians of South Central Unified students play an active role in monitoring their child's academic performance and work collaboratively and positively with staff to maximize their children's educational experience. Consequently, South Central Unified students are prepared to take increasing responsibility for their learning, decisions and actions, and continue to be recognized for their superior achievement.

## System's Purpose

**Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

In 2011-2012, South Central Unified began the development of a district-wide strategic plan. The process was used to identify who the district was and what it wanted to become. The primary goal of the strategic plan was to meet the ongoing needs of students.

There are fifteen school board members who represent the patrons of the South Central Nebraska Unified School District. They, along with a school improvement team, worked together to develop the strategic plan for the South Central Unified School District.

The strategic plan was designed in two phases. Phase I was used to spend time learning about the South Central Nebraska Unified School District's students, schools, programs, and staff. Quantitative data was studied from NeSA, MAPS, DIBELS, GRADE, and ACT test results. In addition, trends in graduation, college acceptance, and college continuation rates were evaluated.

Qualitative data was collected through interviews with all classified and certified staff, students, parents, and patrons. Additionally, all students, teachers, and parents were provided the opportunity in December 2011 to complete a climate survey of the district. Those results were compared against a climate survey conducted the prior year.

On December 14, 2012 the information collected in the first phase was presented to the school board about district strengths and areas of concern. This information became valuable in moving the district forward to the second phase of the strategic plan.

The second phase began with the development of a board of education vision statement. In January 2012, the Board of Education adopted a District Vision Statement. It is "to continuously and passionately provide for and expect educational excellence through high levels of commitment, collaboration, and communication among students, parents, staff, and community". The board also approved the district's mission statement which is to "educate, support, and prepare citizens of the world".

South Central Unified School District has further defined the School Board's Vision through District Belief Statements. Recently, teachers from across the district were asked to identify and describe what they believe are essential and most effective in educating students.

The administrative team aligned teacher-created belief statements toward what research indicates are the core functions of highly performing schools.

The following statements emerged as South Central Unified District Belief Statements:

We believe collaboration between home, school, and community has a correlation to the quality of education and experiences of each student.

We believe with high standards and expectations all students can be successful.

We believe in fostering a safe, healthy, and equitable learning environment where trust, mutual respect, and personal connections help to encourage life-long learning.

We believe a systematic approach to the use of data and research-based strategies are essential to teaching, learning, and accountability.

We believe frequent assessment of student learning informs differentiation of instruction.

We believe in high levels of staff collaboration and communication to educate and guide tomorrow's thinkers, achievers, and leaders.

We believe that continuous professional development is most effective when aligned to district goals.

The new District Belief Statements were adopted by the Board of Education at the February 2012 School Board meeting. These ideals are the districts core foundation as it prepares to meet its strategic planning goals.

As part of the strategic planning process South Central Unified students from across the district worked together to develop a new slogan for South Central Unified. It is "Preparing Together to Lead Forever".

## Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

**Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

During interviews conducted with students, teachers, parents, and patrons, "having high expectations" of students was a common theme. South Central Unified students have excelled both in the classroom and in co-curricular activities.

High college going rates at South Central Unified are evidence that the district is producing students who are prepared and interested in attending college. At Lawrence-Nelson the college going rate for the class of 2009-2010 was 91.7 percent. That ranked 10th overall out of all high schools in Nebraska. At Sandy Creek, the college going rate for the same year was 79.3 percent, which was 84th. Both marks surpassed the state average of 71.9 percent.

Even more evidence suggests that South Central students are successful while at college. The college continuation rate of 2008-2009 graduates at Lawrence-Nelson and Sandy Creek is 81 percent and 78.1 percent respectively. Those percentages exceed the state average of 69 percent.

Another indicator of college readiness is the ACT. Now nearly every high school junior and senior in the South Central district takes the ACT, which predicts college readiness in the areas of reading, science, math, and English. In 2010-2011 nearly all of the students at Lawrence-Nelson took the ACT and 92 percent of the students at Sandy Creek took the test. Both exceeded the state average of 69.70 percent. Although more students are taking the ACT test, South Central's average score still remains at 20.83, which is slightly below the state average of 22.10.

Reading comprehension is an area the school improvement team identified as being beneficial in supporting student success PreK-12 and beyond. According to 2011-2012 NeSA (state) test results 30.29% of 3rd through 11th grade students at South Central Unified did not meet state requirements in reading. In 2010-2011, 31.19 percent of students did not meet state requirements.

The district witnessed a tremendous improvement in the area of math this past year; however, math remains an area targeted for school improvement. In 2010-2011, 47.38 percent of students in grades 3-8 and 11 failed to meet state requirements. In 2011-2012, sixteen percent more students met or exceeded on the NeSA. In addition, data from MAPS, Plan, and ACT results indicated a specific deficiency in number sense.

Students, teachers, and parents identified a desire to improve student behavior as a school improvement goal. In addition, all stakeholders emphasized the need to develop consistent methods that support students in developing appropriate skills to replace negative behaviors.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

South Central Unified has implemented district-wide professional learning community (PLC) meetings. In preschool through 6th grade, shared planning is provided everyday from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. In grades 7 through 12, PLC meetings take place before school every other week.

The governing board adopted a plan to change grade configurations and implement a middle school philosophy for grades 6-8 beginning in 2013-2014. Additionally, preschool will be moved into a preschool through fifth grade configuration. That will provide shared planning every day to the schedules of all preschool through 12th grade staff.

As part of the new middle school philosophy, additional instructional time will be increased in the areas of math, reading, and language arts. Teachers will be planning collaboratively in daily team meetings. The district looks forward to hearing suggestions from the External Team on how to positively incorporate preschool and middle school into the SCNUD #5 district to maximize quality student learning opportunities for all students within the district.

# Self Assessment

## **Introduction**

AdvancED's Self Assessment (SA) diagnostic is based on the AdvancED Standards of Quality, which serves as the foundation of the accreditation and continuous improvement process. The SA is a valuable tool for collaboratively engaging staff members and stakeholders in purposeful, honest dialogue and reflection to assess the institution's adherence to the Standards, and guide its continuous improvement efforts. The SA includes the institution's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the indicators, comments that explain the indicator's ratings and an overall narrative for each Standard. The results of the SA are reviewed by the External Review Team as one essential component of the preparation process for the institution's External Review.

## Purpose and Direction

The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District purpose statements - past and present</li> <li>•Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</li> <li>•Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction</li> <li>•Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders</li> <li>•Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement</li> <li>•Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction</li> <li>•Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>•The district strategic plan</li> <li>•Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning</li> <li>•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li> <li>•Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The district strategic plan</li> <li>•The district data profile</li> <li>•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li> <li>•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings</li> <li>•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans</li> </ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

The South Central Nebraska Unified School District #5 (SCNUSD #5) involves representatives from the entire school community (students, staff, stakeholders, administration) in the review and revision process of the purpose statement of SCNUSD #5. The purpose statement, "Our mission is to Educate, Support, Prepare citizens of the world", clearly focuses on student success.

The SCNUSD #5 is increasingly using data to drive decisions. Elementary uses data (DIBELS Next scores for Reading) to differentiate

individual instruction. Junior and senior high curriculum decisions use data for curriculum implementation.

Staff is held accountable to high expectations by their peers; staff members hold each other accountable in Professional Learning Communities. Administrators are accessible to staff for them to share concerns. Administrators make every effort to offer support that leads to improved teaching and learning.

One way communication from the school is continuously sent to stakeholders via website, school newsletter, and mailings. Two-way communication is used in the form of phone calls and emails more on an "as needed" basis.

During the 2011-2012 school year the school board established the following vision statement:

"Continuously and passionately provide for and expect educational excellence through high levels of commitment, collaboration, and communication among students, parents, staff, and community."

In addition, students, parents, teachers, and administrators collaborated to develop the following belief statements:

"We believe in collaboration between home, school, and community has a correlation to the quality of education and experiences of each student.

We believe with high standards and expectations all students can be successful.

We believe in fostering a safe, healthy, and equitable learning environment where trust, mutual respect, and personal connections help to encourage life-long learning.

We believe a systematic approach to the use of data and research-based strategies are essential to teaching, learning and accountability.

We believe frequent assessment of student learning informs differentiation of instruction.

We believe in high levels of staff collaboration and communication to educate and guide tomorrow's thinkers, achievers, and leaders.

We believe that continuous professional development is most effective when aligned to district goals."

Students were given the responsibility of developing the district motto (included below) and the school logo:

"Preparing Together to Lead Forever."

All schools had input through individual interviews, committee meetings, grade level meetings, building meetings, and at a school board retreat in the development of a shared vision, mission, belief statements, motto, and logo.

All are aligned to student, parent, teacher, administrator, and patron beliefs along with consideration of quantitative data and researched-based practices from effective schools.

Student, staff, and parent survey results were presented in 2011-2012 at a school board retreat, administrative meetings, building level meetings, at school board meetings, and at community meetings. Vision, mission, and belief statements were created after reviewing survey responses and how they correlate with researched-based practices. Five-year strategic planning has been the focus of administrative meeting and school board meetings. Several special school board meetings were scheduled in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 to develop a Five-

Year Strategic Plan.

## Governance and Leadership

The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.

Overall Rating: 3.17

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Governing body policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>•Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions</li> <li>•Staff handbooks</li> <li>•Professional development plans</li> <li>•Student handbooks</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Proof of legal counsel</li> <li>•Governing code of ethics</li> <li>•Assurances, certifications</li> <li>•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest</li> <li>•Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	The governing body consistently protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a clear distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District strategic plan</li> <li>•Social media</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities of district leadership</li> <li>•Examples of school improvement plans</li> <li>•Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation</li> <li>•Agendas and minutes of meetings</li> <li>•Communications regarding governing authority actions</li> </ul>	Level 4

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction</li> <li>•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership</li> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement</li> <li>•Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs</li> <li>•Professional development offerings and plans</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation, engagement in the system and its schools, a sense of community, and ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders</li> <li>•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan</li> <li>•Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action</li> <li>•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>•Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted</li> <li>•Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation</li> <li>•Job specific criteria</li> </ul>	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite

### **sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

#### Strengths

South Central Nebraska Unified School District #5 (SCNUD #5) conducts weekly administrative meetings inviting input from each building administrator. The SCNUD #5 School Board is working towards the adoption of a strategic plan using staff, community, and student input. The School Board regularly updates Board policies.

In developing the district strategic plan, the Superintendent conducted personal interviews with parents, community members, classified staff, students, all teachers, and all classified staff. The purpose of the focus interviews was to gather information from parents, students, teachers, and the local community about their views on the state of South Central Nebraska Unified School System. The interviews were semi-informal and followed a general agenda that included an explanation of the Superintendent's Entry Plan and ended with two main open-ended questions. 1. Describe the best of South Central Unified School System. 2. Describe the challenges facing South Central Unified School System.

The Superintendent also used survey monkey to collect surveys from students, teachers, parents, and community members. The surveys were used to collect data that was analyzed to assist in discovering school district goals, vision, strengths, needs and opinions. The surveys were conducted in October of 2011. Results of the survey and interviews were used to assist in the development of a strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan incorporates priorities identified from the information gathered during the entry process. This agenda will include benchmarks for excellence synthesized from information received during entry and will provide focus and direction for the school year. The Strategic Plan will be a tactical plan to improve the achievement of all students and to set internal operating, reporting, progress monitoring and accountability systems in place. The Strategic Plan also serve to support the Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs developed by the community during the planning process.

Results of the surveys conducted during the development of the Superintendent entry plan were compared against surveys conducted the previous year. Ongoing surveys are planned each year to measure student, parent, teacher, and patron satisfaction of the district's performance in relation to its Strategic Plan.

An annual school board retreat is available to the school board members. The SCNUD #5 School Board had a presenter on ethics for the school board during the 2011-12 academic year. Principal reports are given at each board meeting. Staff members are regularly invited to present at board meetings on their programs.

#### Concerns

The makeup of the district has changed as well as the makeup of the School Board. There is a Lawrence/Nelson School Board, a Sandy Creek School Board, and a Unified School Board. The Sandy Creek School Board will again change from a nine-member to six-member board in January 2013.

Communication continues to be a challenge within the district. A communication plan is being developed with the help of ESU 9 to help the district address the communication barrier which exists because of the expansive geography and multiple building sites of the district.

Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success are being taken to a level beyond the simple teacher evaluation. Administrators are currently working to implement walk-through evaluations to implement for all classrooms and even more specific fidelity walk-through checks for elementary reading blocks.



## Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Overall Rating: 2.5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Course or program descriptions</li> <li>•Graduate follow-up surveys</li> <li>•Learning expectations for different courses and programs</li> <li>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>•Lesson plans</li> <li>•Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs</li> <li>•Posted learning objectives</li> <li>•Course, program, or school schedules</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	System personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with the goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. A process is implemented sometimes to ensure alignment when curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. There is limited evidence that the continuous improvement process ensures vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with the system's purpose in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum</li> <li>•Common assessments</li> <li>•Program descriptions</li> <li>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps</li> </ul>	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	Teachers in most schools sometimes use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of groups of students when necessary. Teachers sometimes use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource</li> <li>•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge</li> <li>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs</li> <li>•Authentic assessments</li> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>•Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations</li> <li>•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	System and school leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervision and evaluation procedures</li> <li>•Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems</li> <li>•Curriculum maps</li> <li>•Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process</li> <li>•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs</li> <li>•Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success</li> </ul>	Level 3

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South Central NE Unified #5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	Some system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration occasionally occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members promote discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching sometimes occur among system personnel. System personnel express belief in the value of collaborative learning communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings</li> <li>•Common language, protocols and reporting tools</li> <li>•Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities</li> <li>•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	Most teachers in the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are sometimes provided to guide and inform students. The process may include multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction. The process provides students with feedback about their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>•Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	Some system personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for system personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•An induction program is held for new staff prior to the start of school. Some new staff members are paired with ESU staff for curriculum support.</li> </ul>	Level 2

# Accreditation Report

South Central NE Unified #5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed, implemented, and evaluated at the system level and in all schools. Families have multiple ways of staying informed of their children's learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days</li> <li>•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress</li> <li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>•Performance-based report cards</li> <li>•Volunteers on an individual basis are used. The Teammates Mentoring program is active in all K-12 buildings in the district.</li> </ul>	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	School personnel implement and participate in a structure designed and evaluated by the system that gives them long-term interaction with individual students, allowing them to build strong relationships over time with the student. All students may participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into and serve as an advocate for the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students</li> <li>•Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students</li> <li>•List of students matched to adults who advocate on their behalf</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	Teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in all schools across grade levels and courses. Stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures are regularly evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs</li> <li>•District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools</li> <li>•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting</li> <li>•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting</li> <li>•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices</li> </ul>	Level 3

## Accreditation Report

South Central NE Unified #5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	Most staff members participate in a program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on needs of the system. The program builds capacity among staff members who participate. The program is regularly evaluated for effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools</li><li>•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs</li></ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of special populations of students based on proficiency and/or other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel are familiar with research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to students within these special populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students</li><li>•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning</li><li>•List of learning support services and student population served by such services</li><li>•Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services</li></ul>	Level 2

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

The South Central Nebraska Unified School District #5 (SCNUD #5) is located in a rural area comprised of several small communities. This is a strength because it allows staff members to know students and their families reasonably well. Student/teacher ratios are also reasonably small, which also encourages strong relationships. Teammates, a youth mentoring program, is an active organization at all sites and available through referral to all students in grades 4 - 12.

The district has a high percentage of graduates pursuing post-secondary degrees as well as a very low drop-out rate.

Another strength is the number of ways that parents can access information about the school and their child's progress. The school newsletters and district website have a plethora of information about activities and policies, including teacher lesson plans. PowerSchool allows parents to access their child's classroom grades, assignments, and schedules.

Teachers are posting daily instructional goals for each lesson to assist and direct students with their daily learning. State and/or national curriculum standards are listed in each teacher's daily lesson plans. The district is beginning to incorporate the regular use of multiple assessment data tools to help teachers with day-by-day and long-term instructional changes. Additionally, the district is implementing Atlas Curriculum Mapping to identify gaps in instruction and identify professional development needs.

A challenge for the district is finding ways to be consistent across the district. The distance between sites and recent restructuring of the district have added to the challenge. Having a common curriculum, student/parent handbook, website, regular administration meetings and PowerSchool help the district with consistency. Another strategy that will help with consistency is restructuring PLC (Professional Learning Communities) so that teachers are collaborating district-wide with their curricular area regularly.

Another challenge for the district is in developing a mentoring program for new employees. In August 2012 a New Teacher In-Service Day was held to help with new teacher transition into the district; however, the district is working towards increased one-on-one mentoring. Until the district can identify and train in-district mentors for new staff, ESU 9 personnel have been working one-on-one with first-year high school staff members.

## Resources and Support Systems

The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Overall Rating: 2.5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assessments of staffing needs</li> <li>•District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools</li> <li>•School budgets or financial plans for last three years</li> <li>•Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools</li> <li>•Documentation of highly qualified staff</li> <li>•District budgets or financial plans for the last three years</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of school schedules</li> <li>•Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction</li> <li>•Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources</li> <li>•District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources</li> <li>•Examples of school calendars</li> <li>•Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction</li> </ul>	Level 3

**Accreditation Report**

South Central NE Unified #5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have adopted or collaboratively created clear definitions and expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with all stakeholders. All system and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Valid measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel to continuously improve these conditions. The results of improvement efforts are systematically evaluated regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes</li> <li>•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li> <li>•Example systems for school maintenance requests</li> <li>•Example maintenance schedules for schools</li> </ul>	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	The system may or may not have policies related to strategic resource management. The system may or may not have a long-range strategic planning process. Strategic plans, if they exist, may or may not be implemented by the governing body and system leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments</li> <li>•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> </ul>	Level 1

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to provide students and school and system personnel access to media and information resources. The system attempts to hire qualified personnel to assist students, school, and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information</li> <li>•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff</li> </ul>	Level 2

# Accreditation Report

South Central NE Unified #5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a fully functional technology infrastructure, working equipment, and a technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of stakeholders. System and school personnel develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>•Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans</li> <li>•Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	The system has a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of as many students as possible. System and school personnel regularly evaluate programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are sometimes designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> <li>•Student assessment system for identifying student needs</li> <li>•Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education</li> <li>•List of support services available to students</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Description of referral process</li> <li>•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning</li> <li>•Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning</li> <li>•Description of IEP process</li> </ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

The district employs quality teachers and support personnel, including media specialists, counselors, and special education staff.

Using a systematic process, the superintendent continually evaluates the number of qualified staff needed. He presents recommendations to the school board with ways to more efficiently utilize staff through attrition while creating ways to improve the quality of education for students

by reconfiguring locations and teaching assignments (i.e. taking over the Clay County Early Learning Center for Children and Lawrence Early Learning Center preschools in 2012-2013; moving Sandy Creek grades 6-8 to the Clay Center location to create a middle school in 2013-2014 and moving the Clay County Early Learning Center for Children to the Sandy Creek location). Student to teacher ratios across the district are approximately 10:1.

The District Superintendent has created a district-wide strategic plan and communicates its contents to the School Board during regular and special meetings. The strategic plan is communicated to staff via email and staff meetings. Patrons learn about it through the district website, school newsletters, and local newspaper articles.

Local property tax evaluations have substantially risen in recent years, giving the district the financial resources to offset reduced state aid while still lowering the local tax levy.

Instructional time for Elementary Reading is now 90 minutes and Elementary Math is at least 80-90 minutes per day across the district. Extended instructional time for grades 7 and 8 in Reading and Math is being considered for 2013-2014 at both locations. Intervention time is scheduled for 30 minutes daily in all elementaries. All elementary teachers across the district meet and collaborate with their Professional Learning Communities weekly. In 2012-2013, 30 minutes of shared plan time was built into the elementary schedules. In the Fall of 2012, Junior High and High School teachers restructured how the Professional Learning Communities are organized to include district-wide collaboration between teachers. Teachers meet with their curriculum teams on a bi-weekly basis.

A textbook adoption calendar is followed so that curriculum is purchased district-wide for subject areas to be consistent: Elementary Reading (2012), Elementary Math (2011), 7-12 Reading (2007), 7-12 Math (2011), 7-12 Science (2009). This allows for teacher collaboration and streamlined professional development and support.

All facilities are maintained for cleanliness, safety and to provide a healthy environment. Building quarterly meetings are held to monitor high expectations for school facilities and learning environments.

A district-wide Technology Committee was established in 2010-2011 to make recommendations on technology infrastructure, curriculum decisions, and professional development opportunities. Technology infrastructures are continually evaluated and upgraded as needed with a system-wide technology support system comprised of district teachers and contracted support. Internal networking capabilities have been upgraded the past two summers across the district. Staff throughout the district regularly attend technology conferences; ALL K-12 teachers attended the Nebraska Education Technology Conference (NETA) in April 2011. Educational Service Unit #9 professional development personnel meet regularly with teachers during to provide one-on-one support.

In 2012-2013, the district has focused on providing teachers with opportunities to evaluate and use disaggregated norm-referenced and state assessment data in teams or groups. There has been training on how to understand the data and online access for teacher to view DIBELS Next and NWEA-MAPS data. The district is working to increase the use of data to drive research-based instruction and learning by making the data available through Professional Learning Community (PLC) conversations. Disaggregated NeSA scores have been provided to classroom teachers; they will be setting class goals and creating action plans during their PLC conversations this Fall. The district continues to use the newly developed (2011-2012) Check for Learning (C4Learning) system provided through the Nebraska Department of Education. C4Learning allows teachers to create formative assessments by choosing the standard(s) to assess. The district plans to implement district-wide C4Learning quarterly assessments by the end of 2012-2013. Atlas Curriculum Mapping was introduced to staff for implementation in January 2012 to supplement assessment data in order to inform curriculum decisions and evaluate instructional effectiveness.

## Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Overall Rating: 2.8

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>•Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free</li> <li>•Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning</li> <li>•List of data sources related to district effectiveness</li> <li>•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning</li> <li>•Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results</li> <li>•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning</li> <li>•Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis</li> </ul>	Level 3

# Accreditation Report

South Central NE Unified #5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	Most professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data</li> <li>•Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data</li> <li>•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans</li> <li>•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data</li> <li>•Policies and procedures specific to data use and training</li> <li>•Evidence of student readiness for the next level</li> <li>•Evidence of student success at the next level</li> <li>•Evidence of student growth</li> <li>•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals</li> <li>•Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups</li> <li>•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>•Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement</li> </ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

The district does well at communicating district information about student learning to stakeholders. This happens through open school board meetings, school newsletters, the district website, and through community meetings. The district also does well at using consistent data sources.

Please view the SCNUSD #5 Assessment Schedule 2012-13 (uploaded elsewhere in ASSIST) for a listing of nationally normed, state, and other screening, diagnostic, and local assessments used to drive curriculum and instruction decisions. Nationally normed assessments include the ACT, PLAN, NWEA-MAPS, and NAEP. State assessments include NeSA Writing, Reading, Math, and Science. Screening, diagnostic, and local assessments include DIBELS Next, CORE Phonics Survey, Corrective Reading, C4Learning (Reading, Math, Science), GRADE (used for data triangulation for the district Reading goal; now used as a diagnostic tool only), Easy CBM (K-6 Math), ASVAB (Career Aptitude Test), GMADE (used for data triangulation for the district Math goal starting in 2012-2013), Regional Writing (Fall for grades 4, 8, 11; Spring for grades 3, 7, 10), Preschool GOLD (state-required for preschools), and three additional screening tools used at the preschools.

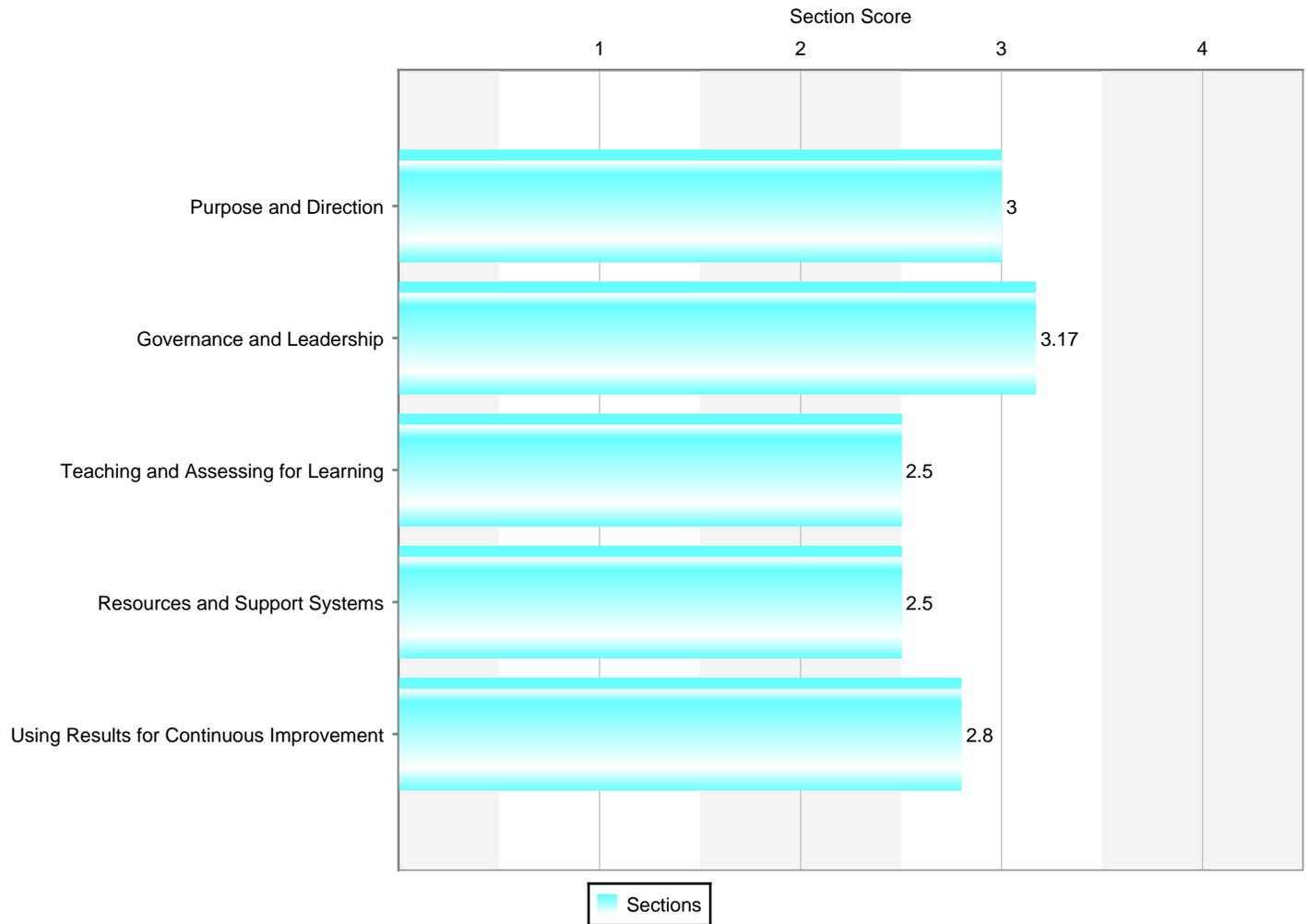
DIBELS Next data is being used to determine reading group instruction as well as identify students who need progress monitoring at the elementary level. While the Sandy Creek site has been working with the Nebraska Reading RTI Consortium using Program Specific Instruction to support the core curriculum, in 2012-2013, the other two elementary sites have joined the Consortium, also. The Consortium provides ongoing support for implementing the new reading curriculum (Treasures 2011) and using the data. Disaggregated NeSA scores are also provided to the upper elementary teachers to inform classroom instruction.

The Continuous School Improvement Steering Committee uses data to determine the progress being made with the district's improvement goal. The data shows that the district needs to sustain reading comprehension as a goal, but the data also shows that a goal for improvement in math is needed. Procedures for administering assessments have been presented to staff members to insure reliability and fidelity. District administrators are working to carefully align the district's strategic plan with the Continuous School Improvement goals.

The same curriculum and schedule are being used for elementary math and reading which is a strength, but the newness of this transition is challenging. Finding ways to collaborate for fidelity across the district has been difficult. To help meet this challenge all elementary reading teachers have been trained in Program Specific Instruction. All teachers across the district are involved in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) by using various communication tools such as a distance learning cart, ichat, and Goggle Hangout. The PLCs help the teachers to collaborate, discuss data and strategies to improve student learning. Another challenge - trends are difficult to determine because Clay Center data has only been included for two years (Clay Center joined SCNUSD #5 in 2010-2011). A need for the district is more training for staff concerning data interpretation.

## Report Summary

### Scores By Section



# 2012-2013 SCNUSD #5 Continuous School Improvement Plan

## Overview

### Plan Name

2012-2013 SCNUSD #5 Continuous School Improvement Plan

### Plan Description

This plan was initiated in 2008 based on student data current at that time. A monitoring visit occurred in 2011 at which time the District established a goal of full District accreditation by 2013.

## Goals Summary

The following is a summary of the goals encompassed in this plan. The details for each goal are available in the next section.

#	Goal Name	Goal Details	Goal Type	Measurable Objective	Total Funding
1	All Pre-K through 12th grade students will improve in reading comprehension across the curriculum	Objectives: 1 Strategies: 6 Activities: 6	Academic	100% of Pre-K, Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth grade students will demonstrate a proficiency in reading comprehension in English Language Arts by 05/31/2013 as measured by GRADE, MAP, NESAS (Nebraska State Assessment), and DIBELS Next.	\$152800

# Goal 1: All Pre-K through 12th grade students will improve in reading comprehension across the curriculum

## Measurable Objective 1:

100% of Pre-K, Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth grade students will demonstrate a proficiency in reading comprehension in English Language Arts by 05/31/2013 as measured by GRADE, MAP, NESAs (Nebraska State Assessment), and DIBELS Next.

## Strategy 1:

Junior High Reading Program - All seventh and eighth grade students will be tested and placed in reading groups according to their test results and identified needs. Staff will be trained in Corrective Reading.

Research Cited: Florida Center for Reading Research

Activity - Corrective Reading	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
Students will receive intensive instruction in the areas of decoding and comprehension at levels meeting the individual students' reading needs. Testing will be done semi-annually and reading groups will be adjusted accordingly.  Schools: Sandy Creek Schools	Academic Support Program	08/22/2011	05/31/2013	\$1500	District Funding	Reading Specialist, Resource Teacher, Resource Para-Professionals

## Strategy 2:

Reading Meetings - Building level Reading data meetings will be used to look at DIBELS Next progress monitoring data to determine if reading interventions are meeting the needs of students.

Research Cited: DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and University of Oregon

Activity - Response To Intervention Data Meetings	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
Teachers will use the DIBELS Next Progress Monitoring Data to determine if students are making the gains with the Multi Tiered System Support. Teachers will meet by grade level on a weekly basis. Strategies and interventions to use with students will be discussed. Individual student's data results will be discussed and decisions will be made on student reading instruction.  Schools: All Schools	Professional Learning	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$12000	District Funding	All elementary teachers will be involved in the reading meetings

## Accreditation Report

South Central NE Unified #5

### Strategy 3:

Scaffolded Silent Reading - All students grades K-12 will have the opportunity to participate in the Accelerated Reading program facilitated by the school librarians. In the past all students grades K-12 participated in Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) program. The upper elementary, junior high, and high school students used the DEAR program as sustained silent reading time. The lower elementary grades used the time to read books to their students. Genre Wheels, Prompts, and Chat time were incorporated in DEAR as a move towards a more researched based Scaffolded Silent Reading.

Research Cited: Scaffolded Silent Reading: âA Complement to Guided Repeated Oral Reading That Works!â by D. Ray Reutzel, Cindy D. Jones, Parker C. Fawson, and John A. Smith

The report on Institute for Educational Sciences from What Works Clearinghouse considers the extent of evidence for Accelerated Reader to be medium to large for comprehension and small for reading fluency and general reading achievement.

Activity - Accelerated Reader	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
The Accelerated Reading Program will be used at all grade levels to promote reading. The school librarians will monitor the program and offer students incentives for earned points.  Schools: All Schools	Extra Curricular	09/24/2008	05/31/2013	\$9300	District Funding	Librarians

### Strategy 4:

Intense Intervention as part of Response To Intervention (RTI) now referred to as Multi Tiered Systems Support (MTSS) - All K-6th grade students will be administered DIBELS Next as a screen to identify individuals who may need additional support in reading. Building level RTI teams will be formed. Team members will be trained and will be a part of the UNL RTI consortium. The consortium assists with the RTI process of looking at data to provide appropriate instruction.

Research Cited: UNL Consortium information on research of the RTI model and data based decisions-Research includes (Carnine, Wilbert, Kameâenui, Tarver, & Jungjohann, 2006; Coyne, Conner, & Petscher, 2009; Haager, Klingner, & Vaughn, 2007; Shinn, Walker, & Stoner, 2002), The National Research Council Panel on Minority Overrepresentation, The National Summit on Learning Disabilities, and The Presidentâs Commission on Excellence in Special Education.

Activity - Ashlock Lesson Maps/Program Specific Training	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
Ashlock Lesson Maps will be implemented into the core reading program. A separate 30 minute Intervention/Enrichment (I/E) time outside the 90 minute reading block will also be implemented. That time will be utilized to implement reading interventions for students who are below grade level based on the DIBELS Next screening data. Background - Sandy Creek and Lawrence-Nelson Elementary reading teachers received Program Specific Training in August 2010. Changes in leadership at Lawrence-Nelson affected the fidelity of its implementation; Lawrence-Nelson teachers were re-trained in August 2012 when Sandy Creek at Clay Center and all new reading teachers district-wide were trained. Starting in 2012, all K-6 reading curriculum will be consistent across the district elementary schools.  Schools: All Schools	Academic Support Program	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$20000	District Funding	All paras and teachers will be trained in the Program Specific Training which is part of the Ashlock Lesson Maps and DIBELS Next Universal Screener.

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**Strategy 5:**

Workshops and Trainings - Staff will be trained in several grade appropriate interventions and strategies.

Research Cited: University of Oregon

Center on Teaching and Learning

International Reading Association

Activity - Interventions/Strategies Training	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
<p>Staff members will attend state and national reading conferences, Educational Service Unit workshops, and staff inservice trainings. Various teachers/paras will attend trainings that include: Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, Sound Partners, Graphic Organizers, Five Big Ideas, RTI, Adolescent Literacy Project, Phonics for Reading, Rewards, Program Specific, Explicit Instruction, Lesson Mapping, Foundations of K-12 Reading Interventions by Jeri Powers-Kansas Teacher of the Year, Visual Phonics, and Language For Learning. All teaching staff will attend a presentation on Effective Thinking and Learning Strategies for the Engaged Learner by ESU staff, Assistive Technology presentation, and the Nebraska Educational Technology Association (NETA) conference. Lynette Block is the South Central Nebraska Unified School District's technical assistant through the UNL consortium and will assist/coach all elementary teachers to improve core reading instruction. K-12 Professional Learning Communities will be used as a book study on grade appropriate reading interventions/strategies. Book choices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension by Cris Tovani</li> <li>*In a Reading State of Mind: Brain Research, Teacher Modeling, and Comprehension Instruction by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey and Diane Lapp</li> <li>*Four Powerful Strategies for Struggling Readers, Grades 3-8 Small Group Instruction That Improves Comprehension by Lois A. Lanning</li> <li>*Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in Primary Grades by Debbie Miller</li> <li>*Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement 3-6 by Harvey and Goudvis</li> <li>*Reading Instruction for Students who are at Risk by Bursuck and Damer</li> </ul> <p>Schools: All Schools</p>	Professional Learning	08/27/2008	05/31/2013	\$30000	District Funding	All Paras and Teachers

**Strategy 6:**

90 Minute Block Core Reading Block - All K-6 students will be grouped according to DIBELS Next benchmark screening scores.

Research Cited: Ashlock Consultants

Activity - Macmillan McGraw-Hill Treasures 2011 with Support from Ashlock Lesson Maps	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible

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All students will receive 60 minutes of large group instruction and 30 minutes of small group differentiated instruction using the Five Big Ideas in reading (Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principles, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension). All teachers will be trained from the Treasureâs Representative. All teachers and paras will attend Program Specific Training to implement Ashlock Lesson Maps. The Ashlock Lesson Maps will provide students with extra practices so the Big Five Ideas in reading will be implemented at all grade levels.	Direct Instruction	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$80000	District Funding	All K-6 teachers and Paras
Schools: All Schools						

## Activity Summary by Funding Source

Below is a breakdown of your activities by funding source

### District Funding

Activity Name	Activity Description	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Staff Responsible
Accelerated Reader	The Accelerated Reading Program will be used at all grade levels to promote reading. The school librarians will monitor the program and offer students incentives for earned points.	Extra Curricular	09/24/2008	05/31/2013	\$9300	Librarians
Response To Intervention Data Meetings	Teachers will use the DIBELS Next Progress Monitoring Data to determine if students are making the gains with the Multi Tiered System Support. Teachers will meet by grade level on a weekly basis. Strategies and interventions to use with students will be discussed. Individual student's data results will be discussed and decisions will be made on student reading instruction.	Professional Learning	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$12000	All elementary teachers will be involved in the reading meetings
Corrective Reading	Students will receive intensive instruction in the areas of decoding and comprehension at levels meeting the individual students' reading needs. Testing will be done semi-annually and reading groups will be adjusted accordingly.	Academic Support Program	08/22/2011	05/31/2013	\$1500	Reading Specialist, Resource Teacher, Resource Para-Professionals

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Interventions/Strategies Training	<p>Staff members will attend state and national reading conferences, Educational Service Unit workshops, and staff inservice trainings. Various teachers/paras will attend trainings that include: Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, Sound Partners, Graphic Organizers, Five Big Ideas, RTI, Adolescent Literacy Project, Phonics for Reading, Rewards, Program Specific, Explicit Instruction, Lesson Mapping, Foundations of K-12 Reading Interventions by Jeri Powers-Kansas Teacher of the Year, Visual Phonics, and Language For Learning. All teaching staff will attend a presentation on Effective Thinking and Learning Strategies for the Engaged Learner by ESU staff, Assistive Technology presentation, and the Nebraska Educational Technology Association (NETA) conference. Lynette Block is the South Central Nebraska Unified School District's technical assistant through the UNL consortium and will assist/coach all elementary teachers to improve core reading instruction. K-12 Professional Learning Communities will be used as a book study on grade appropriate reading interventions/strategies. Book choices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension by Cris Tovani</li> <li>*In a Reading State of Mind: Brain Research, Teacher Modeling, and Comprehension Instruction by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey and Diane Lapp</li> <li>*Four Powerful Strategies for Struggling Readers, Grades 3-8 Small Group Instruction That Improves Comprehension by Lois A. Lanning</li> <li>*Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in Primary Grades by Debbie Miller</li> <li>*Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement 3-6 by Harvey and Goudvis</li> <li>*Reading Instruction for Students who are at Risk by Bursuck and Damer</li> </ul>	Professional Learning	08/27/2008	05/31/2013	\$30000	All Paras and Teachers
Ashlock Lesson Maps/Program Specific Training	<p>Ashlock Lesson Maps will be implemented into the core reading program. A separate 30 minute Intervention/Enrichment (I/E) time outside the 90 minute reading block will also be implemented. That time will be utilized to implement reading interventions for students who are below grade level based on the DIBELS Next screening data.</p> <p>Background - Sandy Creek and Lawrence-Nelson Elementary reading teachers received Program Specific Training in August 2010. Changes in leadership at Lawrence-Nelson affected the fidelity of its implementation; Lawrence-Nelson teachers were re-trained in August 2012 when Sandy Creek at Clay Center and all new reading teachers district-wide were trained. Starting in 2012, all K-6 reading curriculum will be consistent across the district elementary schools.</p>	Academic Support Program	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$20000	All paras and teachers will be trained in the Program Specific Training which is part of the Ashlock Lesson Maps and DIBELS Next Universal Screener.

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Macmillan McGraw-Hill Treasures 2011 with Support from Ashlock Lesson Maps	All students will receive 60 minutes of large group instruction and 30 minutes of small group differentiated instruction using the Five Big Ideas in reading (Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principles, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension). All teachers will be trained from the Treasureâs Representative. All teachers and paras will attend Program Specific Training to implement Ashlock Lesson Maps. The Ashlock Lesson Maps will provide students with extra practices so the Big Five Ideas in reading will be implemented at all grade levels.	Direct Instruction	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$80000	All K-6 teachers and Paras
					<b>Total</b>	\$152800

## Activity Summary by School

Below is a breakdown of activity by school.

### All Schools

Activity Name	Activity Description	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Staff Responsible
Response To Intervention Data Meetings	Teachers will use the DIBELS Next Progress Monitoring Data to determine if students are making the gains with the Multi Tiered System Support. Teachers will meet by grade level on a weekly basis. Strategies and interventions to use with students will be discussed. Individual student's data results will be discussed and decisions will be made on student reading instruction.	Professional Learning	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$12000	All elementary teachers will be involved in the reading meetings
Accelerated Reader	The Accelerated Reading Program will be used at all grade levels to promote reading. The school librarians will monitor the program and offer students incentives for earned points.	Extra Curricular	09/24/2008	05/31/2013	\$9300	Librarians
Ashlock Lesson Maps/Program Specific Training	Ashlock Lesson Maps will be implemented into the core reading program. A separate 30 minute Intervention/Enrichment (I/E) time outside the 90 minute reading block will also be implemented. That time will be utilized to implement reading interventions for students who are below grade level based on the DIBELS Next screening data. Background - Sandy Creek and Lawrence-Nelson Elementary reading teachers received Program Specific Training in August 2010. Changes in leadership at Lawrence-Nelson affected the fidelity of its implementation; Lawrence-Nelson teachers were re-trained in August 2012 when Sandy Creek at Clay Center and all new reading teachers district-wide were trained. Starting in 2012, all K-6 reading curriculum will be consistent across the district elementary schools.	Academic Support Program	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$20000	All paras and teachers will be trained in the Program Specific Training which is part of the Ashlock Lesson Maps and DIBELS Next Universal Screener.

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Interventions/Strategies Training	Staff members will attend state and national reading conferences, Educational Service Unit workshops, and staff inservice trainings. Various teachers/paras will attend trainings that include: Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, Sound Partners, Graphic Organizers, Five Big Ideas, RTI, Adolescent Literacy Project, Phonics for Reading, Rewards, Program Specific, Explicit Instruction, Lesson Mapping, Foundations of K-12 Reading Interventions by Jeri Powers-Kansas Teacher of the Year, Visual Phonics, and Language For Learning. All teaching staff will attend a presentation on Effective Thinking and Learning Strategies for the Engaged Learner by ESU staff, Assistive Technology presentation, and the Nebraska Educational Technology Association (NETA) conference. Lynette Block is the South Central Nebraska Unified School District's technical assistant through the UNL consortium and will assist/coach all elementary teachers to improve core reading instruction. K-12 Professional Learning Communities will be used as a book study on grade appropriate reading interventions/strategies. Book choices include: *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension by Cris Tovani *In a Reading State of Mind: Brain Research, Teacher Modeling, and Comprehension Instruction by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey and Diane Lapp *Four Powerful Strategies for Struggling Readers, Grades 3-8 Small Group Instruction That Improves Comprehension by Lois A. Lanning *Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in Primary Grades by Debbie Miller *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement 3-6 by Harvey and Goudvis *Reading Instruction for Students who are at Risk by Bursuck and Damer	Professional Learning	08/27/2008	05/31/2013	\$30000	All Paras and Teachers
Macmillan McGraw-Hill Treasures 2011 with Support from Ashlock Lesson Maps	All students will receive 60 minutes of large group instruction and 30 minutes of small group differentiated instruction using the Five Big Ideas in reading (Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principles, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension). All teachers will be trained from the Treasure's Representative. All teachers and paras will attend Program Specific Training to implement Ashlock Lesson Maps. The Ashlock Lesson Maps will provide students with extra practices so the Big Five Ideas in reading will be implemented at all grade levels.	Direct Instruction	08/25/2010	05/31/2013	\$80000	All K-6 teachers and Paras
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$151300</b>	

**Sandy Creek Schools**

**Accreditation Report**

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Activity Name	Activity Description	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Staff Responsible
Corrective Reading	Students will receive intensive instruction in the areas of decoding and comprehension at levels meeting the individual students' reading needs. Testing will be done semi-annually and reading groups will be adjusted accordingly.	Academic Support Program	08/22/2011	05/31/2013	\$1500	Reading Specialist, Resource Teacher, Resource Para-Professionals
<b>Total</b>					\$1500	

# Assurances Report

## AdvancED Assurances

Assurance	Certified	Comment/Attachment
The institution has read, understands, and complies with the AdvancED Policies and Procedures.	Yes	
The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED Standards for Schools. Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions.	Yes	South Central Unified participates in the AdvancED QAR process.
The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.	Yes	Auditing is done by Meirau and Co., P.C. Certified Public Accountants of York, NE on a yearly basis.
The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).	Yes	
The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional)	Yes	<u>Updated SC Crisis Plan.doc</u>
<p>The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction</li> <li>•Mission and purpose of the institution</li> <li>•Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership</li> <li>•Grade levels served by the institution</li> <li>•Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel</li> <li>•Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance</li> <li>•Level of funding</li> <li>•School day or school year</li> <li>•Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus</li> <li>•Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s)</li> <li>•Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities</li> </ul>	Yes	The restructuring changes of the district are explained in the Executive Summary.