

NEBRASKA CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EXTERNAL REPORT



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Dates of Visit:	November 18 & 19, 2025



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Introduction and Purpose of the Visit

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

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

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

The external team found the visit to be organized. The schedule was structured to leave adequate time to visit with stakeholder groups and provide time for the external team to visit and work throughout the day.

There was an overarching theme that we heard from all stakeholder groups that indicate strong school-community connections and support. Every group expressed a great deal of pride in their school and all that they have accomplished in the past five years. Students and parents expressed they felt Clarkson Public Schools provides a safe and caring environment. The school board, teachers, and parents trust the administration team and know they have the best interest of the students in mind when making decisions.

The previous external visit was completed on November 19th, 2025. Team members included Brice King (lead), Josh Warren, Olivia Alberts, Erin Craven, and Michelle Burton. During this visit Clarkson Public Schools was commended for a high level of teacher driven involvement in the MTSS process, as well as the adoption of high quality instructional materials in math and language arts.

There is a noticeably high level of community, parent, and board support for the district.

The district maintains a regular meeting structure that supports continuous improvement. The MTSS team meets weekly, and the CIP committee meets consistently to review district goals and other priorities. MTSS has been elevated as a priority and strengthens the overall improvement process.

Recommendations from the previous external team included the following:

- Research and implement best practices for vocabulary instruction, establishing consistent routines across classrooms such as word lists, morphology instruction, and structured instructional routines.
- Strengthen incidental-on-purpose vocabulary instruction through point-of-contact teaching, teacher–student talk, shared reading, and independent reading.
- Support intentional independent word-learning strategies, including dictionary skills, context clues, and morphemic analysis.
- Develop and implement an instructional model that is used consistently in all classrooms.
- Implement a formative assessment system that provides regular checkpoints throughout the year, rather than only beginning and end-of-year assessments.
- Ensure professional learning opportunities clearly align with the improvement goal.
- Create a formal process for sharing professional development information with staff.

The evidence for the on-site review was organized on a school generated profile that was created by the administration and School Improvement team members. Information included their available data as well as a brief summary and description of the processes and systems they utilize. The page can be found [here](#). Prior to the visit members of the External Team reviewed the Action Plan and School Profile and met for an orientation of expectations. While we each spent time reviewing the data and action plans, we each took an area of data to analyze deeply and reported our findings to the group. In addition, we cross-referenced our data with one another as well as what we saw during our observations in the school district.

The visit opened with a comprehensive overview for the on-site team presented by the continuous improvement team. Data from the school profile was provided as well as answers to team follow-up questions. The remainder of the first day included focus group interviews with the Continuous Improvement Team, community members, teachers and Board of Education members. On the second day of the visit, the agenda included time for additional interviews with the students and administration as well as classroom observations. These interview opportunities provided correlations between the artifacts submitted and the information shared during the opening presentation ([schedule](#)).

External Visitation Team

The responsibilities of the external team include:

- 1) Review school system evidence of continuous improvement.
- 2) Observe educational services provided by the school system.
- 3) Assess the progress and effectiveness of the action plan.
- 4) Provide feedback for continued improvement.

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

Serving as an external visit volunteer is an important responsibility. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) appreciates the leadership skills and peer collegiality of educators throughout the state that volunteer for this role.

	Name	Position	Phone	Email
Team Leader	Brice King	Superintendent Humphrey Public Schools	402-366-9645	briceking@humphrey.esu7.org
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Member	Michelle Burton	JH/HS Principal Oakland-Craig Public Schools	402-427-4051	mburton@ocknights.org
Member	Erin Craven	Elementary Principal Lakeview Community Schools	402-564-8008	ecraven@lakeview.esu7.org
Member	Josh Warren	Superintendent Newman Grove Public School	308-325-7242	josh.warren@ngpublicschools.com

Schedule

The On-Site Visit was scheduled for November 18 and 19, 2025 with approximately one and a half days needed to complete the visit. Prior to the visit, Clarkson's Continuous Improvement Team created a draft agenda and requested feedback from the external team lead. After reviewing the requirements of the Continuous Improvement visit process, the agenda was finalized and communicated with the remaining team members and staff. The External Team participated in an Orientation Meeting prior to the visit to discuss responsibilities and to plan for the review of the Action Plan and School Profile.

External Visitation Schedule

Day 1	
2:00-2:30	External team arrives at school; External team orientation
2:30-3:15	Opening Presentation
3:15-4:00	Tour of the facility
4:00-4:30	Teacher Interview
4:30-5:00	Work Time
5:00-5:30	Board Interview
5:30-6:00	Parent Panel Interview
6:00-7:00	Dinner and CIP Team Interview
Day 2	
7:45-8:30	External Team Work Time (Blue Barn and Bakery) – Follow up with CIP Team
8:30-9:00	Classroom Observation (elementary)
9:00-9:30	Classroom Observations (middle school)
9:30-10:00	Student Interview (split EL 2-6 and HS 7-12)
10:00-10:30	Classroom Observations (HS)
10:30-12:00	Work time
12:00-12:30	Lunch(Contact cooks about salad bar & subs?)
12:30-3:45	External Team Work Time
3:45-4:15	Exit Presentation

Review of Continuous Improvement

NAC 92 Chapter 10

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

The Continuous Improvement Process at Clarkson Public Schools is guided by a School Improvement Committee. This committee collaborates with administration and the ESU lead consultant to plan in-service meetings. They determine the content for these sessions to facilitate meaningful discussions and data reviews.

Staff participate in monthly professional development during a regularly scheduled late-start day. On these days, the Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) committee meets first, followed by a district-wide professional development session guided by the committee's identified needs. Activities include data analysis and "data digs" with support from ESU 7, instruction in Marzano strategies, curriculum discussions, MTSS implementation, and other targeted learning opportunities.

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



It was evident that staff and students valued the identified beliefs of the school district. Throughout our interviews and observations, we were able to witness that education is a true partnership among school, family, and the community. Students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders indicated the school is a safe and supportive environment. It was shared with the external team in many of the interviews that Clarkson Public School has hard working students and staff, which correlates with the district's mission statement.

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

During the initial presentation, the external team learned that Clarkson Public Schools has a process in place to address the school improvement goals the district has set forth. One area that was lacking was the inclusion of information on former high school students that previously attended Clarkson. The CPS continuous improvement team focused on three goals, two academic and one for their strategic planning. The two academic goals were: (1) All classes will increase reading proficiency, with an emphasis on comprehension, across all content areas, and (2) All classes will increase academic vocabulary in all content areas. The strategic planning goal was to advance communication and engagement with all stakeholders to foster the development of Clarkson Public School's students. The most recent proficiency rates for Clarkson on the statewide assessments are included below. In addition, they earned an AQuESTT classification of, "Great," in 2023-2024 with their junior high earning an, "Excellent," that same year.

Elementary NSCAS Proficiency Data			
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Math	66%	62%	59%
Reading	57%	64%	73%
Science	94%	*	85%

NSCAS/ACT Data taken from NEP

Jr/Sr NSCAS/ACT Proficiency Data			
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Math	46%	71%	50%
Reading	56%	67%	76%
Science	81%	78%	75%
ACT - ELA	*	50%	63%
ACT - Math	*	*	*
ACT - Science	*	55%	*

NSCAS/ACT Data taken from NEP

The continuous improvement team focused their efforts on improvement priorities which included the following and what they did to address each priority:

- Priority #1: All classes will increase reading proficiency, with an emphasis on comprehension, across all content areas.
 - The school will utilize data from sources including Fastbridge to develop MTSS and CTE student supports, revise Title I interventions, and establish SOC compliance measures.
- Priority #2: All classes will increase academic vocabulary in all content areas.
 - Teachers will implement pre-tests and post-tests for data collection and use explicit instruction of guaranteed vocabulary.
- Priority #3: Advance communication and engagement with all

stakeholders to foster the development of Clarkson Public School's students

- Improve transparency and communication between the school board, administration, staff, and stakeholders.

Throughout our interviews as well as the opening presentation, stakeholders noted a dedicated and hard working staff, something we observed throughout our visit as well. Stakeholders interviewed also noted a family oriented and inclusive environment, strong communication, a safe environment, and a vast array of opportunities for students to get involved in extracurricular activities, CTE programs, and college level courses.

Throughout our visit we also had the opportunity to visit classrooms. It was evident that students were respectful and maintained positive relationships with one another. Teachers at the elementary were observed supporting students in small group and whole group instruction. Students were actively engaged in their learning. Teachers were all observed to be using district selected HQIM. At the high school, an increasingly wide array of CTE opportunities provides students with engaging, hands-on learning experiences. The new CTE building will provide more programs that will further prepare students for a range of careers while enhancing real-world skill development.

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

LIST EACH GOAL AND PROVIDE ANY SUPPORTING DETAILS ON HOW THE GOALS WERE SELECTED. INCLUDE ANY PREVIOUS EXTERNAL VISIT INFORMATION THAT SUPPORTED THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT GOALS.

Clarkson Public School formulated two academic goals based upon student data as well as connecting the district targeted improvement plan (TIP). The two goals are as follows:

- All classes will increase reading proficiency, with an emphasis on comprehension, across all content areas.
- All classes will increase academic vocabulary in all content areas.

To address the reading goal, K-12 teachers utilize data to determine student growth, which allows teachers to reflect on instructional practices. This is another goal that was identified from the previous school improvement cycle the leadership team felt was important to address. According to the NEP site, it does show that their reading scores have improved over the past three years.

To address the vocabulary goal, K-12 teachers determined their classroom guaranteed vocabulary based upon subject area standards. Each teacher is responsible for conducting a pre-test at the beginning of the year and post-test at the end of the course or year with each of their students. Teachers utilize data to determine student growth, which allows teachers to reflect on instructional practices. It was evident in their opening presentation and through interviews that the vocabulary process has been a continuation from the previous five year cycle, which has built consistency among staff and students .

It was noticed that the CIP goals for this cycle were an extension of their previous goals. It was noted that the continuation was connected to the end of the previous cycle disruption of COVID-19.

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

Commendations:

Clarkson Public Schools promotes a welcoming and supportive environment where all students feel valued each day. The district provides a comprehensive support system tailored to both academic and extracurricular success.

Structured processes for school improvement and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) are in place, with a strong emphasis on improving grade level vocabulary across content areas to meet student needs. These initiatives have the potential for further expansion, reinforcing the district's commitment to student achievement across all areas.

The Board of Education and administration have dedicated significant resources, through staffing, programming, and intentional scheduling, to advance the district's school improvement goals.

Stakeholders across the district consistently highlight the dedication and compassion of certified staff, non-certified staff, and administration, all of whom are deeply invested in student success and take pride in representing their community.

The Clarkson community demonstrates unwavering support for its schools and students, as seen through strong attendance at extracurricular events and active participation in volunteer opportunities, including the recent external review process.

It is evident that the development of the Clarkson Career Readiness Program has been highly supported by the students, staff, and community and has enhanced their focus on career development. This program is something that the students, teachers, and admin team are proud of and understand the impact it is having on student futures. It was communicated by both parents and students the excitement to explore potential careers while in high school to maximize their post secondary education decisions and rule out certain careers ahead of graduating high school. It also provides an avenue for students to expand their connections with community businesses that will one day potentially become their employer.

Recommendations:

- To support all PK-12 students and staff, we recommend Clarkson Public Schools develop evidence-based common practices to strengthen core instruction with fidelity, utilizing recently adopted high quality instructional materials to build coherence.
 - Develop a process that moves collected data into a usable system and incorporates all required data points.
 - Audit current data sources to determine which are necessary.
 - Generate system-wide decision rules based on non-negotiable data.
 - Strengthen vocabulary instructional practices:
 - Utilizing Science of Reading & LETRS training through the ESU.
 - Consistently implement vocabulary instructional practices

that reflect the district instructional model and ensure fidelity in all classrooms.

- Provide consistent opportunities to apply reading, writing, and thinking skills to increase Depth of Knowledge levels.
- To support all PK-12 students, we recommend Clarkson Public Schools develop a math goal using a multi-step, data-informed process. By examining multiple data sources—such as NSCAS scale scores, MAP, FASTBridge, common assessments, and student work—to identify high-leverage math skills such as number sense, problem-solving, and mathematical vocabulary that most directly influence achievement.
 - Establishing clear indicators of success and selecting shared instructional strategies ensures consistency across classrooms, while a regular monitoring cycle keeps the work responsive and aligned.
 - Ensuring HQIM are being utilized with fidelity at all grade levels.

Because Clarkson Public Schools works with small class sizes, student-level data analysis is not only helpful—it is essential. When the number of students is low, percent-proficient measures can swing dramatically based on individual student performance, making it difficult to determine whether instructional strategies are truly effective. Examining learning at the individual student level provides a clearer, more reliable picture of instructional impact, especially for targeted initiatives such as vocabulary development.

Correlating improvements on vocabulary measures with improvements on reading assessments such as NSCAS, MAP Growth, or local diagnostics. A pattern of parallel growth strengthens the claim that vocabulary instruction is driving reading improvement.

009.01A5 Evaluation of progress toward improvement goals.

All classes will increase reading proficiency, with an emphasis on comprehension, across all content areas.

Based on the table below, Clarkson saw stable RIT scores at each grade level. As each cohort progresses through grade levels, all cohorts are seeing Winter RIT averages that are at or above the national norm RIT. Clarkson also saw increased percent proficiency on the NSCAS assessments over the current CIP

cycle in ELA. Clarkson recently implemented a high-quality instructional reading program K-12. The external team believes that with the adoption of the new curriculum and a focus on MTSS interventions, both implemented with fidelity, the scores for Clarkson will continue to grow and be consistently higher than the state average at each grade level.

Grade level MAP RIT Winter Scores

Grade	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
K	152.5	154.8	148.3	151.9
1	172.8	169.6	171.9	171.8
2	187.7	183.5	187.5	188.4
3	197.8	202.8	194.3	195
4	204.4	202.6	199.7	204
5	209.1	209.6	207.4	206.3
6	217.4	215.6	213.8	216.6
7	226.1	219.6	220.2	215.7
8	221.3	227.8	218.9	223.6
9	221.8	225	229.3	224.4
10	221.9	223.8	220.9	231

Summary

The external team commends Clarkson Public Schools on their efforts toward continuous improvement in their school district. It was evident throughout the visit that staff are passionate about the school district, students, and community. In the 2020 external visit, it was recommended that Clarkson research best practices for vocabulary instruction and ensure routines are established in all classrooms. It was evident during the visit that the staff was aware of the school improvement process as well as the goals, and continues to work towards previous recommendations. To support this work, the External Team suggests creating a cohesive plan to strengthen literacy by ensuring fidelity of core curriculum implementation, using data to guide instruction, and developing a

usable system with clear, non-negotiable data points. Clarkson Public Schools should also audit current data sources, provide PK-12 Science of Reading and LETRS training, and consistently implement vocabulary practices aligned to the district model while offering regular opportunities for students to apply reading, writing, and thinking skills.

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

