
USD 253 District Priorities, Goals, and Accreditation

— District Team —
July 14, 2021

Accreditation Information

OVT - Outside Visitation Team

ARC - Accreditation Review Council

Descriptors:

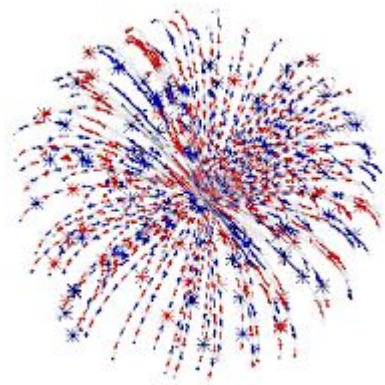
- Not addressed
- Generally addressed
- Assuredly addressed

ARC Accreditation Recommendations:

- Accredited
- Conditionally Accredited
- Not Accredited

Objectives

1. Review district priorities and goals
2. Review OVT information from the year 5 visit
3. Review ARC information and recommended accreditation status



Accredited



What does being accredited mean?

- Accredited means that the system and its schools are meeting the levels of standards stipulated by the State Board of Education.
- Accredited means that the system is in good standing with all compliance areas; and the system provides conclusive evidence of improvement in student performance; and the system provides conclusive evidence of a process of continuous improvement.
- Benefits of being accredited:
 - Ability for students to transfer to any other state accredited school.
 - Ability for student credits from another accredited school in Kansas to be accepted in the school they are transferring.
 - Ability for teacher to relicense based on experience at least once in their career.
 - Accredited systems receive state funding to operate its schools and federal funding for programs.

Mission: We build futures by preparing today's students for tomorrow's opportunities.

Vision: Building futures, one student at a time.

**What work has been
done to support
district priorities and
goals?**

PRIORITY I: Students & Programs: Foster a learning environment that demonstrates a balance of cognitive and social-emotional development.

GOAL: Improve achievement for all students.

GOAL: Support the social-emotional development of our educational community.

PRIORITY 1: ACTION STEPS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: Support the social-emotional development of our educational community.

Action Steps and Strategies:

- Implement research-based, field-proven programs, practices, and models.
 - **Second Step** pre K through 8
 - 9-12 teachers (EHS) teachers have been trained in the **Kansas College and Career Competency of Self Regulation**.
 - Teachers are trained in **Trauma Informed Practices, Bridges of Resilience, Zones of Regulation**, and **Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH)**.
- Ensure key pieces of user-friendly, social-emotional data are available in a timely manner at the district, school, and classroom levels.
 - **SRSS: IE** data pre K through 12 (replaced with SAEBRS K-12 for 2021-22)
 - **ASQ: 3** and **ASQ: SE** at pre K and Kindergarten
 - **Climate Survey data, Kansas Communities that Care data, and Chronic Absenteeism data** at the school and district level.
 - **EduClimber** data visualization

PRIORITY 1: ACTION STEPS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: Support the social-emotional development of our educational community.

Action Steps and Strategies:

- Implement timely and responsive intervention and supports to address building, classroom, and individual needs.
 - **Intervention documentation** in EduClimber
 - **SRSS: IE** three times a year; data will be analyzed and used to provide support
- Engage in strategic partnerships to educate, support, intervene, and enrich social-emotional development.
 - **Mobilizing Literacy Grant**
 - **Communities in School (CIS)**; CIS is now available in four buildings
 - **CrossWinds** partnership provides mental health services in Emporia schools
- Develop relationships, engagement, and connection through classroom and school-based activities and events.
 - **Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs)** with CIS, CrossWinds, 5th Judicial Court, and Head Start.
 - **Affective Services** staff meets throughout the school year to maintain relationships with staff and to make progress with SEL.

PRIORITY 1: ACTION STEPS and ARTIFACTS

GOAL: Improve achievement for all students.

Action Steps and Strategies:

- Implement research-based, field-proven programs, practices, and models.
 - **Professional Development** (PD) on on district initiatives such as CKH, CPI, Literacy First, and PBL Works.
 - **Electronic Walk-Through** (eWT) tool to monitor use and effectiveness of district programs.
- Maintain Professional Learning Time in the school calendar and sustain Professional Learning Communities as a means to continuous school improvement.
 - This is being accomplished by maintaining **120.5 hours of Professional Learning Time** (PLT) since the 2015-16 school year.
- Develop and maintain current, cohesive curriculum guides that are aligned with state standards and place curricular expectations on schools.
 - **Summer curriculum work** and **vertical alignment**; teachers utilize assessment data to adjust curriculum guides.
 - USD253 is committed to **funding district initiatives** such as Literacy First, Discovery Education, Second Step, CKH, etc.

PRIORITY 1: ACTION STEPS and ARTIFACTS

GOAL: Improve achievement for all students.

Action Steps and Strategies:

- Ensure key pieces of user-friendly data are available in a timely manner at the district, school, and classroom levels.
 - EduClimber as the **district warehouse**
 - Visualization of **multiple measures** and **other types of data** on their students to include achievement data, demographic data, attendance data, and intervention data.
- Provide early and intensive intervention for students not making progress.
 - USD253 teachers use several **software packages** to help provide intervention to their students.
 - Examples might include MobyMax, Read 180, System 44, OdysseyWare, Learning A-Z, etc.
- Ensure preschool-aged children in the district have access to free, high-quality pre-Kindergarten (pre-K).
 - **Jones Early Childhood Development Center**
 - **Mobilizing Literacy Grant** and **Mobilizing Literacy Family Liaison**
 - **Parent as Teachers (PAT)** grant

PRIORITY II: Communication & Culture: Commit to meaningful communication between the district and stakeholders foster trusting relationships and build a collaborative culture.

GOAL: Enhance communication and relationships with internal and external community members.

- Gather **perceptions** from stakeholder groups (students, parents, community, and staff members) regarding their views/perceptions of the district via an every other year climate survey.
- Evaluate, develop, refine, and further expand the district's overall communication presence.

GOAL: Engage in purposeful district-wide behaviors and activities that promote a positive culture.

PRIORITY 2: ACTION STEPS and STRATEGIES

- The USD 253 communication department works to **over-communicate** when dealing with challenging situations using multiple options such as the district website, email, texts, social media, local radio stations, and SchoolMessenger.
- The USD 253 communication department has worked to include more **proactive** communication and messaging.
- The USD 253 communication department has worked to **actively engage** district stakeholders with a variety of live streaming media productions and monthly radio shows called KVOE Emporia Showcase.
- The USD 253 communication department has **facilitated** numerous superintendent chats using Google Meet where staff members can chat and ask questions.
- The USD 253 communication department has made a point of emphasis to **connect** with all employees.

PRIORITY III: Personnel: Attract, retain, and develop high quality staff members who support our educational community.

GOAL: Actively recruit, develop, and retain skilled, caring, and student-focused staff throughout the organization.

Action Steps and Strategies:

- Develop, expand, and revise the scope of the USD 253 wellness programs based on employee needs and interests;
- Evaluate salary schedules along with non-monetary incentives to encourage employee longevity for all employee subgroups.
- Maintain accurate data in regards to employment practices
- Seek innovative ways to stay ahead of the teacher recruitment cycle.
- Increase support for teachers in their first five years in Emporia

PRIORITY 3: ACTION STEPS and STRATEGIES

- USD 253 utilizes several strategies to attract and recruit staff members to our educational community:
 - focus on **early hiring** both in January and throughout the spring,
 - utilizes our **strong relationship** with Emporia State University to get to know potential teacher candidates, and
 - offers a **recruitment dinner** and holds virtual **job fairs**.
- USD 253 utilizes several strategies to retain and develop our current teaching staff:
 - **mentorship** program,
 - approximately two weeks of paid **new teacher orientation**,
 - **instructional coach** support, and
 - employee **wellness program** to encourage healthy lifestyles.

PRIORITY IV: Facilities & Infrastructure: Provide appropriate infrastructure that meets the needs of the educational community.

GOAL: Ensure an infrastructure that allows a safe and secure learning environment.

GOAL: Provide learning spaces that meet the diverse needs of students and staff.

PRIORITY 4: ACTION STEPS and STRATEGIES

- During the 2018-2019 school year, USD 253 worked with HTK Architects to complete a **facilities needs assessment**.
- Piper Jaffray also provided the Board of Education with a variety of **financial information** associated with a potential bond election.
- During the 2019-2020 school year, USD 253 has provided many opportunities for stakeholder input. USD 253 **provided stakeholders with the opportunity** to complete a district needs assessment, to attend open houses, to tour our current facilities, to provide input on future needs, and to ask questions.
- On November 5, 2019, USD 253 **passed** a bond election with 2,571 Yes Votes, 1,472 No Votes, and 64% Voter Approval.
- Since December 18, 2019, USD 253 has been working with HTK Architects and McCownGordon to **develop a proposed construction schedule** for building improvements as a result of the successful bond election.
- The Walter S. and Evan C. Jones Testamentary Trust has awarded a multi-year grant in the total amount of \$6 million to the school district to expand the size of the early childhood center for community-based services.
- HTK Architects and/or McCownGordon staff have been available to our local BOE and district leaders to provide updates on current projects.

**What did the OVT and
ARC say about our
district and school
improvement
processes?**

Compliance Areas - Takeaways

The state or act of fulfilling official requirements, (i.e., statutes and regulations).

In KESA, compliance is prerequisite to receiving an accreditation rating from the State Board.

Examples of Compliance Areas:

- Graduation requirements
- Educator licensure
- System professional development plan
- System mentoring plan
- Educator evaluation
- Child nutrition and wellness
- Bullying policy
- Jason Flatt Act
- Data submissions

Compliance areas are assuredly addressed.

Foundational Structures - Takeaways

“Foundational Structures” means programs, structures, or practices considered to be essential and, in KESA, prerequisite to receiving an accreditation rating from the State Board. To be accredited, systems must have structures (systemic plans, processes, programs) in place to support certain best practices and the Rose Capacities.”

Examples: Tiered System of Supports, Family, Business, and Community Partnerships, Diversity, Equity, and Access, Communication and Basic Skills, Civic and Social Engagement, Physical and Mental Health, Arts and Cultural Appreciation and Post-Secondary and Career Preparation

Foundational structure areas are assuredly addressed.

What did the OVT and ARC say about our progress with the social emotional goals?

Evidence of meeting our goal:

- The OVT conversations with the various stakeholder group emphasized the alignment between the district and the buildings in this goal area.
- Implementation of EduClimber as a tool to identify students who need intervention.
- Implementation of SEL screener
- Chronic Absenteeism trending downward; Chronic absenteeism declined from 19.45% in 2018-2019 to 17.94% in 2019-2020. Current 2020-2021 chronic absenteeism data shows an increase to 19.45%.
- Emporia High School stakeholders spoke to the high school's responsiveness in providing communication choices for parent/teacher conferences.
- Elementary and middle school staff use the Second-Step curriculum.
- Buildings are utilizing SEL support strategies that fit the needs of each building while allowing for individualization.

Evidence is assuredly documented that Goal 1 (Relationships) activities and strategies were identified, implemented and produced reasonable results.

What might be some next steps with our social emotional goals?

The OVT recommended several next steps:

- Continue using the an SEL screener to help identify students who need interventions.
- Identify ways to evaluate the screener's effectiveness.
- Identify ways to evaluate your SEL strategies' effectiveness so that you can respond when more effective methods or modifications are needed.
- Set SEL measurable goals at the district and building level to guide your path toward full implementation.
- Continue to provide SEL professional development to new teachers entering the district and those who need additional training to increase their skill level.
- Continue to differentiate professional development for staff.

What did the OVT and ARC say about our progress with the academic goals?

Evidence of meeting our goal:

- All buildings referenced the use of tiered interventions in reading and math.
- The percent of graduating seniors using XELLO to plan all 24 credits during their high school career has increased from 18% in 2019 to 24% in 2020 and 35% in 2021.
- EPS offers 16 different pathways.
- The system has remained committed to research-based initiatives such as differentiated instruction and PBL.
- Building stakeholder discussions emphasized the importance of explaining the “why” to students, posting and stating objectives throughout lessons, and ensuring that all lessons end with closure.
- EPS has created a technology cadre that receives timely professional development in integrating technology into instruction and influences the professional development provided to support teachers throughout the district.

Evidence is assuredly documented that Goal 2 (Responsive Culture) activities and strategies were identified, implemented and produced reasonable results.

What might be some next steps with our academic goals?

The OVT recommended several next steps:

- Complete its district/building needs assessment.
- Set academic SMART goals at the district level to create measurable academic targets.
- Continue to refine the implementation of academic strategies through PLCs.
- Continue to make course-offerings that align with based current student interests.
- Continue to evaluate and improve vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment.
- Prepare for the likelihood of academic loss due to the pandemic for certain groups of students.

What did the ARC say about our long term sustainability?

- Emporia Public Schools and its Board seem committed to the KESA process.
- Monies have contributed to hiring new staff, purchasing materials, and providing professional development.
- All departments are involved in the process.
- The community recently approved a 78-million-dollar bond issue to support the repair and/or expansion of current buildings.
- The bond issue will also support the building of a new preschool center.

Evidence is assuredly documented that policies, procedures, and regulations guiding the system for the purpose of long term sustainability have been created and or updated.

What did the ARC say about our progress towards meeting the expectations of the State Board Outcomes?

State Board Outcomes

- Social-Emotional Growth
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Individual Plans of Study
- High School Graduation Rate
- Postsecondary Success

The evidence submitted to the Accreditation Review Council indicates the system does **assuredly** demonstrate significant gains in meeting the expectations of the Kansas Vision for Education and State Board Outcomes.

What did the ARC say about our stakeholder involvement and district leadership?

- Emporia School District worked with internal and external stakeholders as goals were developed and programs were implemented.
- It was stated several times in the OVT report that the district worked closely with the visiting team and provided all needed data and evidence.

System stakeholders relevant to each part of the KESA process were **assuredly** involved during the accreditation cycle.

System leadership was **assuredly** responsive to the Outside Visitation Team throughout the accreditation cycle.

What did the ARC say about our fidelity to the KESA processes?

- The OVT feels the system has done a fantastic job balancing the KESA implementation with Redesign.
- EPS provided annual system summaries and evidence of completion of tasks.
- At this time the district is working on completing a new needs assessment that will guide their work for the next 5 years.

The system has **assuredly** followed the KESA process with an expected level of fidelity.

**What accreditation
recommendation did
USD 253 receive from
the ARC?**

Accredited

Strengths:

- The district is to be **complimented** on the works they have been able to complete during this first cycle.
- It was noted that during Year 3 the district took **time to set the stage** for how the district moved forward. By setting these priorities and communicating them to staff, the work began to take hold.
- The district will continue to **implement** the plans that are in place and **adjust** as needed moving forward.

Challenges and Recommendations from ARC and OVT:

- For the next cycle the district needs to **write specific, measurable goals with targets** to meet the goals. This will enable the district to focus on the most urgent needs of the district.
- EPS will need to complete its **needs assessment** before moving into the next accreditation cycle.
- The system might consider **evaluating** its current school improvement process in KansaStar.
- EPS may find it beneficial to **identify what practices are working best** and **which require refinement**.
- Some buildings may **benefit** from strengthening their building improvement plans.

Questions

