Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

July 16, 2025

Agenda Item: Area Education Agency (AEA) Accreditation Report – Northwest

State Board Goal: Goal 2

State Board Role/Authority: Iowa Code 273.10 and Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281 – 72 requires the Iowa Department of Education to conduct an AEA accreditation process for AEA and for the State Board to determine whether a program of an AEA shall receive initial accreditation or shall remain accredited.

Presenter(s): Seth Piro, Chief Administrator
Northwest AEA

Shari Blake, Director
Northwest AEA

Sara Klingensmith, Director
Northwest AEA

Attachment(s): Two

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board of Education grant continued accreditation to Northwest AEA through the next review period with the required improvement actions completed.

Northwest AEA will include confirmation of the implementation of all required improvement actions and its work towards recommended improvement actions in its budget reviewed for approval by the State Board of Education in March 2026.

Background: On March 27, 2024, HF2612 was enacted, which modified the current accreditation standards to add and

focus on learners with disabilities, add standards for special education compliance and learning environment, and add instructional practice requirements for media and technology. The Department of Education piloted an accreditation process this year using the updated and expanded set of statutory accreditation standards applicable for each AEA. The process resulted in a report identifying AEA required actions, recommended actions for continuous improvement and strengths upon which to build for each standard area.

Northwest AEA Accreditation Report Summary

Agency Mission and Goals

Northwest AEA provides visionary leadership and quality, student-centered services through relationships with families, schools and communities.

- Employees are confident and supported in providing services at Northwest AEA.
- Northwest AEA utilizes, communicates, and implements consistent systems.
- Educators, administrators, school boards, families, and legislators know the services that Northwest AEA provides and the impact Northwest AEA has on the educational system.
- Northwest AEA supports the Iowa Department of Education goal of ensuring equity in education by narrowing and closing achievement and opportunity gaps.

Service Area Data

- 34 public school districts
- 32 accredited nonpublic schools
- 44,858 PK-12 students
- 247 total AEA staff members
- Covers 6,226 square miles

- 2 IDEA-DA Level 3 districts
- 6 IDEA-DA Level 2 districts
- 0 ESSA CSI
- 24 ESSA TSI
- Center of Excellence: Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Required Improvement Actions

Special Education Services and Support
- Provide professional learning and implementation support on Child Find for Early ACCESS and Part B staff responsible for location and identifying children ages 3 to 5 years.

Recommended Continuous Improvement Actions

School-Community Planning
- Explore ways to ensure AEA staff participate in the Local School Plan meetings in districts.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen and expand collaboration at the secondary level to identify and address gaps and needs related to postsecondary success.

Professional Development
- Utilize data-based decision-making to align professional learning to district needs and monitor implementation.
- Leverage the approved implementation science professional learning package to continue to provide observations, coaching and feedback to districts.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Introduce a structured curriculum adoption framework to streamline support to schools and ensure fidelity of implementation.
- Ensure procurement processes include accessibility considerations to ensure equitable access for learners.
- Leverage approved professional learning, like implementation science, to support districts with activities like curriculum adoption and strategic planning.

Special Education Services and Support
- Provide system-wide training on the SDI Framework and embed it in learning across disciplines to ensure coherence.
- Identify and intensify instructional interventions to accelerate student growth, especially in English language arts and science for students with IEPs.

Technology Planning Services
- Prioritize the use of the SETT Framework to guide decisions regarding technology and work to improve documentation practices.

Learning Environment
- Consider the use of data and feedback loops to inform need and drive support provided to agency staff and districts in the area of learning environments.

Compliance
- Review how the agency is monitoring the fidelity of implementation of the procedural guidance communicated to districts.
- Utilize data-based indicators to measure the impact and guide improvements in compliance-related support.

Program Evaluation
● Implement a systemic and formalized process for program evaluation to guide planning in the AEA and districts.
Management Services
● Implement a regular review of service delivery, gather input and assess internal capacity to meet needs.
Media Services
● Engage in ongoing evaluation, seek feedback, and use data-driven decision-making to refine practices.

Strengths

School-Community Planning
● The agency provided evidence of partnerships that supported services Early ACCESS through postsecondary services for families and students as well as crisis response and intervention.
Professional Development
● Content consultants used a coaching framework throughout professional learning offerings.
● Interview groups discussed the ability to tailor professional learning to district needs.
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
● Consultants supported districts through the curriculum adoption process, helped districts adopt HQIM and provided follow-up coaching to support implementation.
● Technology coaches supported districts with device implementation for all students as well as targeted, individualized support for some students.
Special Education Services and Support
● FGRBI is embedded within a variety of professional learning in the agency.
● SDI Coaches have dedicated time to support coaching opportunities for staff and to engage in learning.
Technology Planning Services
● The AEA used a strong team approach in determining the need for AT, AEM and AAC and to support districts.
● The agency's use of weekly team meetings and the lending library supported real-time problem-solving.
Learning Environment
● Districts in the AEA had the lowest average percent of school removals greater than 10 days and a downward trend of chronic absenteeism.
● Staff clearly demonstrated an understanding of the connection between student engagement and attendance.
Compliance
● The AEA demonstrated a strong communication cascade for sharing procedural updates and clarifications.
● Regional administrator articulated a clear vision for building capacity among agency staff and school leaders.
Program Evaluation
● The agency implemented a formal communication cascade that ensured consistent communication.
● The agency used a variety of qualitative and quantitative data to set goals and identify action steps.
Management Services
● The AEA provided a variety of managed services like superintendency, business, and technology services.
Media Services
● The Media Services Plan included a needs assessment, data analysis and agency-wide goals.
● The partnership with Prairie Lakes AEA increased the breadth and depth of resources available.

Department Accreditation Recommendation

It is recommended that the State Board of Education grant continued accreditation to Northwest AEA through the next review period with the required improvement actions completed.

Northwest AEA will include confirmation of the implementation of all required improvement actions and its work towards recommended improvement actions in its budget reviewed for approval by the State Board of Education in March 2026.

IOWA
Department of Education

**Northwest Area Education Agency
2025 Accreditation Report**

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

State Board of Education

Brooke Axiotis, Des Moines
Cassandra Halls, Carlisle
Brian J. Kane, Dubuque
Mary Meisterling, Cedar Rapids
John Robbins, Iowa Falls
Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development
Grace Bechtel, Student Member, Lake Mills

Administration

McKenzie Snow, Director and Executive
  Officer of the State Board of Education

Division of Special Education
Angelisa Fynaardt, Division Administrator - Regional

Special Education Regional
Amy Thomas-Starr, Regional Special Education Director – Central Rivers
Ivan Gentry, Regional Special Education Director – Green Hills
Sarah Voyles, Education Program Consultant

Bureau of Evaluation, Instruction and Services
Kelsey Teeter, Education Program Consultant
Nancy Hunt, Education Program Consultant

Bureau of Accountability, Data and Finance
Melissa Schnurr, Education Program Consultant

PK-12 Learning Division
Tina Wahlert, Division Administrator

Bureau of School Improvement
Sara Nickel, Education Program Consultant
Pam Spangler, Education Program Consultant

Contents

Purpose

Iowa Code 273.10 defines the purpose of this report as determining if standards have been met and making a recommendation to the Iowa State Board of Education (State Board) as to whether the programs of the area education agency (AEA) should receive initial accreditation or remain accredited.

This recommendation is based on a program audit review of documents, a clarification call with the AEA team, an on-site visit and a final verification process.

Northwest AEA Service Area Data

Northwest AEA encompasses

- 34 public school districts
- 32 accredited nonpublic schools
- 44,858 students, preschool through grade 12
- 247 total AEA staff members
- Covers 6,226 square miles
- 2 IDEA-DA Level 3 districts
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- 0 ESSA CSI
- 24 ESSA TSI
- Center of Excellence: Instruction for Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

AEA Accreditation Process

Iowa Code 273.10 and Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-72 require the Iowa Department of Education (Department) to conduct an AEA accreditation process to determine if the AEA is meeting accreditation standards. Accreditation standards for the AEA were revised during the 2024 legislative session, with the new standards taking effect July 1, 2025. Therefore, the Department developed and piloted a new AEA accreditation process during the 2024-25 academic year that encompassed the existing standards that were expanded to include learners with disabilities and the new standards that were added to the expectations. The accreditation process used during the 2024-25 year included a program audit which is a review of Department collected and AEA provided data. It also included a clarification call with the AEA team, an on-site visit, and a final verification process.

For the purposes of the AEA accreditation pilot, similar standards were grouped together and reviewed collectively as a whole. The standards will become a part of Iowa Code after they become effective and the Iowa Administrative Code is updated.

Standards were grouped together as follows:
- School – Community Planning
  - Standard a – Support for school-community planning, including a means of assessing needs, developing collaborative relationships among community agencies, establishing shared direction, and implementing program plans and reporting progress toward goals for all students, including students with disabilities.
- Professional Development
  - Standard b - Evidence-based professional development programs that respond to current needs.
  - Standard q - Support for staff development and adult learners utilizing evidence-based professional development in a manner that meets the professional needs of staff and adult learners consistent with standards adopted by the state board of education.

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - o Standard c - Support for curriculum development, instruction, and assessment services that address the areas of reading, language arts, math, and science, using research-based methodologies, for all students, including students with disabilities.
  - o Standard p - Support for students using educational programs and services in a manner that is consistent with the educational standards established pursuant to section 256.11.
- Special Education Services and Support
  - o Standard d - Special education support.
  - o Standard j - Support for early childhood service coordination for families and children, age birth through three years, to meet health, safety, and learning needs, including service coordination.
  - o Standard m - Support for addressing the diverse learning needs of all children and youths, including children and youths who are eligible for special education through services that include direct services to students with disabilities.
- Technology Planning and Services
  - o Standard g - Support for school technology planning and staff development for implementing instructional technologies.
  - o Standard o - Support necessary to implement effective instruction for all students, including students with disabilities, through school technology services.
- Learning Environment
  - o Standard l - Support for schools and school districts in analyzing student achievement data related to the learning environment, comparing data to the external knowledge base, and using that information to guide schools and school districts in setting goals and implementing actions to improve student learning for all students, including students with disabilities.
- Compliance
  - o Standard k - Timely submission of required reports and documents to the state board of education, the department of education, and the division of special education of the department of education.
  - o Standard n - Support for schools and school districts to ensure compliance with rules adopted by the state board of education related to special education.
  - o Standard r - Compliance with all relevant federal and state laws in the provision of services and supports to students with disabilities.
- Program Evaluation
  - o Standard h - A program and services evaluation and reporting system that includes information related to special education.
- Management Services
  - o Standard e – Management services, including financial reporting and purchasing as requested and funded by local districts.
- Media Services
  - o Standard f – support for instructional media services that supplement and support local district media centers and services.
  - o Standard l – Support for school district libraries in accordance with section 273.2, subsection 4.

AEA Accreditation Standards and Results

The on-site visit at Northwest AEA included several staff interviews, a presentation by the administrative leadership team and an observation at the juvenile detention center education program. The following are the results for each standard area reviewed during the accreditation process.

School-Community Planning

This section includes how the AEA provides support for school-community planning, including a means of assessing needs, establishing shared direction and implementing program plans and reporting progress toward goals for all students, including students with disabilities.

Strengths

Interviews with staff and the review of permanent products demonstrated the agency's efforts towards school and community planning with Community Action Agencies, Child Health Specialty Clinics, and Health and Human Services. These meetings occur monthly and quarterly, respectively. The meetings support referral, collaboration and coordination of Early ACCESS services.

Additional interviews and data review indicated partnerships that included teaming with emergency management to address crisis pre-vention and postvention for school districts and various mental health service agencies to support families and schools with mental health services. The interview with special education leads and discipline leads revealed that the agency has established relationships with the local community college, vocational rehabilitation partners, juvenile detention center teams, and local community agencies that offer funds for families in need.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

The review of data indicated a decrease in agency staff participating in Local School Plans. The Local School Plan is a required service delivery agreement that is collaboratively facilitated, developed, and implemented by each school district, the AEA, and Vocational Rehabilitation partners to develop an effective and coordinated system of transition service delivery. It is recommended that the agency explore ways to ensure AEA participation in the Local School Plan process.

It is also recommended that the agency explore opportunities to strengthen and expand collaboration at the secondary level to better support school districts in identifying and addressing potential gaps and needs related to preparing students for postsecondary success.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standard is met.

Professional Development

This section provides evidence that explains how evidence-based professional development programs offered by the AEA respond to current needs and are consistent with the standards adopted by the state board of education.

Strengths

Content consultants worked with directors and agency leadership in collaboration with school districts to determine professional learning needs, as referenced in the permanent product review and interview groups. A variety of data sources such as school improvement plans, SAMI (Self-Assessment of Multi-Tiered System of Supports [MTSS] Implementation), and student assessment data were analyzed to determine gaps and identify where additional professional learning was needed. Content consultants utilized a coaching framework throughout professional learning offerings.

Interview groups discussed the ability to be able to tailor professional learning to district needs when sessions were offered within the district versus large-scale professional learning opportunities that were offered at the agency. Interviews also revealed that some content teams had a clear process for ensuring fidelity of implementation after professional learning, that included using data and offering a combination of virtual coaching between sessions and opportunities for in-person classroom

observations to provide teachers with the feedback and coaching support necessary to implement practices with better fidelity.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

While some content teams demonstrated established processes for implementation fidelity and coaching support, comparable processes were not found across all content teams. It is recommended the agency continue to utilize data-based decision making in collaboration with districts to align professional learning to district need and utilize a coaching approach to monitor fidelity of implementation.

Content consultants voiced concern about the ability to continue tailoring professional learning offerings to districts due to professional learning requirements and fewer staff in 2025-26. There was also limited evidence to suggest how data were used to determine the intensification or fading of supports provided to districts and how data were used proactively to identify and drive professional development for internal and external staff. Interviews with school administrators also indicated concerns regarding opportunities for professional learning in upcoming years. Concerns reported related to cost, availability of staff and the ability to participate at the AEA were cited as limitations to moving forward with contracting for this service. While there will be fewer staff next year, the agency can look for ways to leverage the state approved Implementation Science professional learning package to provide districts with observations, feedback and coaching opportunities to improve teacher practice. Through utilization of the implementation science framework/package, consultants will be able to remain within the parameters for the approved state offering, but also be able to tailor professional learning needs within those offerings by means of providing observations, coaching and feedback.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standards are met.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

This section provides evidence of how the AEA supports curriculum development, instruction and assessment for reading, language arts, mathematics, and science using research-based methodologies for all students, including students with disabilities.

Strengths

The data review and discussions with interviewees indicated support for schools and districts throughout the curriculum adoption process. Support is provided in helping districts coordinate work with vendors in adopting High-Quality Instructional Materials in the areas of English language arts, literacy, and mathematics that are evidence-based. Furthermore, Northwest AEA consultants continued implementation support which included collecting walk-through data to help administration measure fidelity and follow up coaching support for school staff.

Discussions with interviewees indicated that technology coaches supported districts with various devices that could be used universally for students as well as for students needing targeted and individualized support.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Document review and interviews did not reference usage of curriculum adoption protocols such as "Ed Reports Selecting for Quality: 6 Key Adoption Steps," which outlines the different phases of curriculum

adoption and provides timelines for schools. Research suggests utilization of curriculum adoption protocols support schools in time management and the steps necessary in examining different curricular material options. A protocol would also support Northwest AEA consultants with an efficient means of providing support with fewer staff. Observations also revealed gaps in this support for special programs, such as the juvenile detention center. Therefore, it is recommended that Northwest AEA introduce a structured curriculum adoption framework to streamline support to schools and ensure fidelity during transitions.

While interviewees indicated support for special education teachers in considering accessible materials for individualized children, proactive approaches to recommending curriculum and instructional materials that feature accessibility universally are not always utilized or are being utilized on an as needed basis by teacher request. A systemic way to identify and address this need in a timely manner is recommended.

It is recommended that the agency ensure procurement processes for curriculum adoption and instructional technologies include accessibility considerations to ensure equitable access for learners with disabilities across all program settings. Furthermore, it is suggested the agency leverage approved professional learning such as implementation science to leverage continued embedded support for curriculum adoption, facilitating strategic planning with districts and professional learning related to proactive approaches featuring accessibility of curricular materials.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standards are met.

Special Education Services and Support

This section provides evidence of support for special education services, early childhood services for families and children and support for addressing the diverse learning needs of all children and youth.

Strengths

Based on the interview with Early ACCESS providers, it is evident that family guided routines-based intervention (FGRBI) is embedded within the variety of professional learning opportunities at the agency. Staff spoke about receiving professional learning related to FGRBI in department meetings, discipline meetings, and in one-on-one opportunities. All birth-to-three staff completed a video annually and completed the self-assessment. The internal coach was available on an as-needed basis to support staff in implementing FGRBI with fidelity. All new staff received coaching for their first year. In addition, staff spoke about their use of the primary service provider model, which included weekly opportunities for cross-discipline teams to problem-solve and update on children served, providing another opportunity to embed FGRBI coaching.

Interviews with Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Coaches indicated they have dedicated time to support more intensive coaching opportunities for special education staff, such as communities of practice and networking with statewide job-alike staff members to increase support for districts. SDI Coaches at the agency were determined based on their experience and expertise in given content areas.

Required Actions

Interview responses revealed that there is not a clear understanding of the Child Find process for learners transitioning from Part C to Part B or for special education evaluations for children ages 3 to 5. The information provided by interview participants indicated that the process is unclear to them and disjointed. Therefore, the AEA is required to provide Child Find training for Early ACCESS staff and Part B staff responsible for locating and identifying children ages 3 to 5 years who might be eligible for special education. The training must articulate the Child Find process for children who are transitioning

from Part C to Part B. It must also address Child Find practices for learners who are in preschool and learners who are not in preschool. This training must occur by November 15, 2025.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Based on interviews with staff, it became evident that special education staff are not all appropriately trained on Iowa's SDI Framework. Staff members expressed a desire for this training to be for all staff to establish a foundational understanding of diagnose, design, deliver, and engagement for learning so that staff are able to support districts consistently across the area. It is recommended that system-wide training on the SDI Framework be embedded into ongoing professional development across disciplines to ensure coherence.

Last, it is recommended that the agency work to identify and intensify instructional interventions to accelerate student growth, especially in English language arts and science for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standards are met.

Technology Planning and Services

This section provides evidence of support for school technology planning, staff development for implementing instructional technologies and support for implementing effective instruction through the use of technology, including for students with disabilities.

Strengths

Through the interview process, it was evident that a strong team approach was utilized in determining when Assistive Technology (AT), Accessible Educational Materials (AEM), and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) were required. Staff provided extensive information and coaching to local school districts regarding the availability and application of devices and services. Additionally, they assisted in determining the most appropriate device for individual students. Weekly team meetings supported real-time problem-solving, and the lending library was effectively used to trial equipment before making final decisions, ensuring that the technology was appropriate for student needs.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Staff interviews revealed that while IEP teams are responsible for determining the use of technology, there is a lack of clear, documented processes or procedures to guide the decision-making process. Additionally, the interview team identified inconsistent documentation of AT, AEM, and AAC usage. A data review further revealed a significant gap between the accommodations listed on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) and those documented in students' IEPs.

It is recommended that Northwest AEA prioritize the use of the Student-Environment-Task-Tools (SETT) Framework to support teams in making informed decisions regarding technology services. Additionally, the agency should work to improve documentation practices, which would include supporting districts to improve the accuracy and consistency of documentation related to AT, AEM, and AAC within the ACHIEVE IEP system.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standards are met.

Learning Environment

This section provides evidence of support for districts in analyzing data related to the learning environment and in guiding districts in continuous improvement efforts towards improving the learning environment and social-emotional-behavioral outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities.

Strengths

Through the review of data, it was found Northwest AEA districts collectively have the lowest average percent of school removals greater than 10 days in the state and that the rate of chronic absenteeism continues in a downward trend. None of the districts served have required a policy, practice and procedure review for three consecutive years. Additionally, interviews with agency staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the connection between student engagement (relationships, supportive adults and mental health support) and attendance.

Furthermore, the data reviewed indicated that the agency's Early ACCESS programming has met the 100% transition target from C to B three years in a row.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

There was a lack of data to support decision making around supports provided to agency staff and districts related to student engagement and mental health. The agency should consider the use of data and feedback loops throughout these efforts to inform needs and drive support provided to agency staff and districts in this area.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standard is met.

Compliance

This section provides evidence of timely submission of required reports and documents, compliance with relevant federal and state laws in special education and support for schools to ensure compliance with rules related to special education.

Strengths

Based on the AEA presentation and interviews with internal staff and local school leaders, Northwest AEA demonstrated a strong communication cascade for sharing procedural updates and providing timely clarification.

Regional Administrators articulated a clear vision for building capacity among AEA staff and school leaders, focusing on helping them access information independently and positioning the agency as a value-added coaching partner. This commitment to empowering educators and improving implementation was further confirmed through interviews with school leaders.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

While the agency's communication and coaching around compliance are well-established, there was limited evidence of specific processes for monitoring the fidelity of implementation. It remains unclear

how the agency tracks whether schools are fully and accurately applying the guidance and support provided. It is recommended that the agency review and continue to develop the leadership team's capacity to monitor both the quality and fidelity of implementation of procedural guidance shared with districts across the AEA. Additionally, it is recommended that the agency utilize data-based indicators, building upon existing efforts, by incorporating data-driven indicators that can measure impact and guide improvement in compliance-related supports.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standards are met.

Program Evaluation

This section provides evidence of a program and services evaluation and reporting system that includes information related to special education.

Strengths

The agency has implemented a formal communication cascade system that ensured consistent and ongoing communication among staff and school districts. This system allowed team members to receive timely updates and feedback, which supported effective decision-making and service delivery.

Data review indicated that the agency utilizes a variety of qualitative and quantitative data sources when assessing needs for reviewing the agency's comprehensive improvement plan. Data sources included various surveys and student outcome data. The agency also provided evidence of contribution towards the statewide three-year strategic plan which is aligned to State Board goals. Interviewees reported that the agency utilizes the AEA SAMI, student outcome data, and qualitative feedback from employees and stakeholders. These data sources were used to set goals and identify action steps for continuous improvement.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Although interviewees highlighted the use of AEA SAMI and various data sources, there is currently no clear evidence of a systemic process for analyzing agency-wide data to guide responsive planning and service delivery. This includes a lack of processes to address areas such as high eligibility rates, inclusive practices, improved learning environments, and key special education indicators. It is recommended the agency implement a systemic and formalized process for program evaluation to guide planning in the AEA and to support districts.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standard is met.

Management Services

This section provides evidence of support for management services, including financial reporting and purchasing as requested and funded by local districts.

Strengths

The document review confirms that Northwest AEA offers management services to districts upon request. These services may include support in areas such as superintendency, personnel, business management, technology, leadership, or other specialized needs.

When a request is made, superintendents contact the chief administrator, who then meets with the superintendent and relevant district leadership to discuss the scope of services required. The agency

evaluates its internal capacity to determine how it can best meet the district's needs, ensuring that the support provided is both responsive and tailored.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

To maintain effective and responsive management services, the agency should implement regular reviews of service delivery models, gather input from district leadership, and assess internal capacity to meet evolving needs. Strengthening communication channels and aligning services with district goals will ensure that support remains timely, efficient, and impactful.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standard is met.

Media Services

This section provides evidence of support for instructional media services that supplement and support local districts.

Strengths

Interviews and document reviews indicated that the media specialist works closely with content consultants to determine high-quality instructional materials, as well as other necessary resources and materials for the media library.

Northwest AEA is also actively participating in a statewide collaborative approach to address media needs and coordinate services more efficiently. A notable example is the partnership with Prairie Lakes AEA, which has resulted in the combination of physical media resources. This joint effort has created a more robust and economically efficient media collection available to educators throughout the region.

Northwest AEA's Media Services Plan for 2024-25 included a needs assessment, data analysis and developing agency-wide goals. This included action steps, service development, baseline data and data sources to monitor progress towards those goals, reporting progress and following continuous improvement of the agency's media services for schools.

Required Actions

There are no required actions for this standard area.

Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

To ensure the continued delivery of effective and efficient services, the agency should engage in ongoing evaluation of internal processes, actively seek feedback from stakeholders, and use data-driven decision-making to refine practices. Regular collaboration across departments and with district partners will support responsiveness to emerging needs and promote consistent, high-quality service delivery.

Standard Met/Not Met

The accreditation standard is met.

Conclusion

The team determined the following standards have been met based upon the program audit, clarification call, on-site visit and final verification process:

- School – Community Planning

- o   Standard a – Support for school-community planning, including a means of assessing needs, developing collaborative relationships among community agencies, establishing shared direction, and implementing program plans and reporting progress toward goals for all students, including students with disabilities.
- Professional Development
  - o   Standard b - Evidence-based professional development programs that respond to current needs.
  - o   Standard q - Support for staff development and adult learners utilizing evidence-based professional development in a manner that meets the professional needs of staff and adult learners consistent with standards adopted by the state board of education.
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - o   Standard c - Support for curriculum development, instruction, and assessment services that address the areas of reading, language arts, math, and science, using research-based methodologies, for all students, including students with disabilities.
  - o   Standard p - Support for students using educational programs and services in a manner that is consistent with the educational standards established pursuant to section 256.11.
- Special Education Services and Support
  - o   Standard d - Special education support.
  - o   Standard j - Support for early childhood service coordination for families and children, age birth through three years, to meet health, safety, and learning needs, including service coordination.
  - o   Standard m - Support for addressing the diverse learning needs of all children and youths, including children and youths who are eligible for special education through services that include direct services to students with disabilities.
- Technology Planning and Services
  - o   Standard g - Support for school technology planning and staff development for implementing instructional technologies.
  - o   Standard o - Support necessary to implement effective instruction for all students, including students with disabilities, through school technology services.
- Learning Environment
  - o   Standard l - Support for schools and school districts in analyzing student achievement data related to the learning environment, comparing data to the external knowledge base, and using that information to guide schools and school districts in setting goals and implementing actions to improve student learning for all students, including students with disabilities.
- Compliance
  - o   Standard k - Timely submission of required reports and documents to the state board of education, the department of education, and the division of special education of the department of education.
  - o   Standard n - Support for schools and school districts to ensure compliance with rules adopted by the state board of education related to special education.
  - o   Standard r - Compliance with all relevant federal and state laws in the provision of services and supports to students with disabilities.
- Program Evaluation
  - o   Standard h - A program and services evaluation and reporting system that includes information related to special education.
- Management Services
  - o   Standard e – Management services, including financial reporting and purchasing as requested and funded by local districts.
- Media Services
  - o   Standard f – support for instructional media services that supplement and support local district media centers and services.

- o Standard I – Support for school district libraries in accordance with section 273.2, subsection 4.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the State Board of Education grant continued accreditation to Northwest AEA through the next review period with the required improvement actions completed.

Northwest AEA will include confirmation of the implementation of all required improvement actions and its work towards recommended improvement actions in its budget reviewed for approval by the State Board of Education in March 2026.