

Omaha North High School

4410 North 36th Street

Omaha, NE 68111

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EXCELS PLUS School Improvement Plan

2005-2010



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Introduction

In 1994, the Omaha Public Schools began implementation of the EXCELS process, an accreditation model focused on student achievement and participation in school and learning. This cycle was completed in 2000. The 2000-2001 school year was the planning year for the next cycle, which was identified as EXCELS PLUS. This model, outlined by the North Central Association, is used as a basis for the State of Nebraska accreditation of schools. This cycle was completed in 2005. The EXCELS PLUS Model was reviewed and revised for 2005-2010. District-wide schools use the EXCELS PLUS 2005 –2010 model for school improvement planning.

Executive Summary

Omaha Public Schools District Mission

The mission of the Omaha Public Schools is to provide educational opportunities which enable all students to achieve their highest potential.

Omaha Public Schools District Education Aims

1. **High Student Achievement**

High student achievement will be met by maintaining high academic standards and expectations for all students and providing assistance, which is appropriate for each student.

2. **Safe and Secure Learning Environment**

A safe and secure learning environment is an essential component in enabling students to achieve their highest potential.

3. **Professional Work Force**

A professional work force, dedicated and committed to attaining the goals of the district, is essential.

4. **Partnerships**

Community partnerships, both internal and external, are vital to the success of our students and include families, students, staff, businesses, political entities and the general public.

5. **Effective and Efficient Use of District Resources**

Effective and efficient use of available resources will be required to achieve district goals.

Omaha North High School

Mission Statement

The mission of the Omaha Public Schools and Omaha North High School is to provide educational opportunities which enable all students to achieve their highest potential.

Vision Statement

The vision of Omaha North High School is to provide a quality educational opportunity for all learners, in a safe, secure and well-organized learning environment, where students, staff and community are valuable and equitable members of a positive atmosphere that fosters life-long learning skills.

Community Description

History and Demographics

Omaha North High School is a magnet school with emphasis in the areas of mathematics, engineering, science and technology. The school was built in 1924 to service the needs of a growing population in the North Omaha area. Located in a racially mixed, inner-city area of Omaha, Omaha North High School became a magnet center to provide high academic achievement and to increase socio-economic and ethnic diversity of schools. Technology has been successfully infused throughout the entire curriculum. The school has 1000+ networked computers available for student use. All faculty, staff and students have an easily accessible email accounts. The school's curriculum attracts students from the entire metropolitan Omaha area, including the most affluent to the economically disadvantaged. Students score competitively in local, state and national educational evaluations. Each year, multicultural activities are used to foster an awareness of North High School's diverse population. The school day is successfully run on an alternating block schedule to improve instruction and climate.

Special Programs

- The school offers several special opportunities to students including mentor programs sponsored by our Adopt-A-School partners. Union Pacific's D.R.E.A.M (Directing, Recruiting, Educating and Mentoring) program targets those students who have a high interest in computer science and technology. Mutual of Omaha's NorthStar program provides adult mentors to help students reach their career and personal goals. In addition, the S.A.M.E. program provides two professional mentors to help groups of students to complete a long-term engineering project in the community during the school year.
- The school has a partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the Peter Kiewit Institute that allows students to take university courses through the Engineering Technology course. Credit applies to a student's North High School transcript, as well as any additional PKI coursework.
- The Minority Scholars program is a voluntary mentoring program for high-achieving minority students. The primary goals of the program are to: 1) create a support network of fellow students, teachers, and community leaders, 2) guide students through the college application process, 3) instruct students on the life skills that lead to success in college and careers, 4) reinforce the idea that it is highly desirable to be smart and successful. Students meet once a week during their lunch block to discuss relevant topics.
- All ninth grade biology students participate in an innovative, award winning Biotechnology unit for one academic quarter.
- The CARE program is designed to educate athletes about how to be successful students. The course also covers issues dealing with social skills, study skills,

time management, and recruitment. The class helps prepare student athletes for life after high school.

Special Programs, Continued

- Omaha North High School formed a Diversity Committee to organize activities and raise awareness to ensure that Omaha North High School is a just and diverse community.
- A nationally recognized pre-engineering program, Project Lead the Way, was introduced at Omaha North High School in 2003. Student may take six engineering courses to earn college credit. The school is the only one in the state of Nebraska with such a program.
- The school boasts two national academy programs in Finance and Information Technology: Academy of Information Technology and Academy of Finance.
- Each year, parents are invited to Omaha North High School for Parent Involvement Day, where they are able to attend classes with their student.
- VIKES, a teamed-based instructional program for ninth grade students, provides additional academic support for student and overall school success. It is the model program for which a Smaller Learning Community Grant was awarded.
- In addition to individualized guidance counseling services, there are several groups organized to enhance individual interest and needs, including, Grief Group, Anti-Drug Group, Anger Management Group, the Guidance Advisory Committee and Top 40 Seniors. There are also many community resources available through the guidance department. Community Counselor, Urban League, OPS Job Placement Counselor, School Psychologist, EAP--Employee Assistance Program, Creighton University--Talent Search and HPPI are represented. Finally, college representatives, Armed Services recruiters, and businesses regularly come to North High School to recruit students to join them.
- Omaha North High School believes an Engineering Partnership Team is an essential piece in linking the school technology program with the community. This Partnership Team, developed in the 2003-04 school year, is an advisory group composed of members from the school and the business/industrial/higher education community. The Advisory's main purposes are to assist teachers in the technology program, to support teachers in instruction, to enhance the program through mentoring/enrichment activities, and to assist in the development of a dual-enrollment program with neighboring community colleges and universities.
- An Advisory Board has been formed for the Smaller Learning Community program. The board consists of site coordinators of the grant, freshmen students in the VIKES program, and parents of freshmen at Omaha North High School. This board will meet periodically throughout the year to monitor the direction of this program, to field questions and concerns, and to evaluate the success of this transition program for freshmen.

Special Recognitions

In 1996, North High School was one of eight schools recognized nationally by *Redbook* magazine for excellence in community relations. In 1994 and 1995, *Redbook* magazine recognized North High School as one of America's Best High Schools.

Awards and Achievements – Grants

- In the fall of 2003, Omaha North High, along with Omaha South High and Omaha Bryan High received a Smaller Learning Community Grant of \$500,000 each. This US Department of Education implementation grant was received to implement new strategies to create academic success by establishing smaller, more responsive communities (VIKES teams) for 9th grade students. The teams consist of the core curriculum subjects. Staff has been offered additional training and professional opportunities to build skills that will help them work with students. This grant will last for three years with a one year no cost extension built in to create a fourth year. At the end of the grant, if the teaming proves successful, the concept will be self sustaining for future 9th grade classes.
- A multi-cultural awareness grant was awarded in 2003 from the Nebraska Arts Council, enabling teachers to develop and implement lesson on the study of Western expansion.
- A Creating Diversity Grant was awarded in 2002 and 2003 to create a more accepting environment for all students.
- A three-year, 21st Century Grant of \$600,000, was awarded in 2000 to provide quality after-school, weekend and summer programs to raise standardized test scores.
- A five-year, Challenge Grant of \$390,000, was awarded in 1996 from the United States Department of Education.
- A three-year state Lottery Grant of \$300,000 was awarded to produce web-based lessons in mathematics.

EXCELS PLUS Goals

All students will increase reading comprehension across the curriculum.

All students will improve problem-solving skills across the curriculum.

All students will improve scientific inquiry skills across the curriculum.

All students will demonstrate respect and responsibility for others in the learning environment and school activities.

EXCELS PLUS Planning Team

The School Planning/Implementation Council includes representatives from staff, faculty, and parents. Members of the EXCELS PLUS Planning/Implementation Council are listed below:

Mr. Gene R. Haynes, Principal
Susan Christopherson Assistant Principal
Ms. Kathy Lee, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Margaret Pavlik, Curriculum Specialist
Mrs. Jan Christensen, Curriculum Specialist
Mr. Dan Sitzman, Curriculum Specialist
Mrs. Darlene Greer, Director of Guidance
Mrs. Dawn Paulson, English Teacher
Mr. Michael Poore, Staff Development Facilitator
Ms. Kari Bulgrin, Library Media Specialist
Members of the Parent Advisory Committee:
Ms. Barbara Repair
Ms. Karen Saunders
Ms. Laura Harris
Mr. and Mrs. John and Carla Kilpatrick
Members of the Faculty Principal Advisory Committee
Members of Student Principal Advisory Committee