Fostering Excellent Teaching and Learning Practices Through Networked Improvement Communities
Ensuring Every Child, Teacher, and Leader Has a Champion

To ensure all students have access to a well-rounded education in safe and healthy schools, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) and the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest are collaborating on the Champions of Excellence initiative. This state-wide program seeks to build a pathway for schools to identify, share, celebrate, and learn from programs of excellence. The aim is to foster school cultures that are responsive to the unique features of each discipline and provide evidence-based resources and professional development that promotes excellent teaching and learning in all classrooms.

Investigate and Engage

As part of the Champions of Excellence initiative, REL Southwest is collaborating with OSDE to expand the agency’s capacity to serve as a hub for a network-of-networks model. Consulting of multiple networked improvement communities (NICs), this model spans numerous disciplines and seeks to shift the conversation from school performance toward continuous improvement.

Programs of Excellence

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The Oklahoma State Department of Education is developing a series of rubrics to identify Programs of Excellence that promote a well-rounded education and safe and healthy schools. The aim is to shift from an outcome-oriented vision of school accountability to an input-oriented vision. The content-specific rubrics will address those aspects of school programs that can have an impact on student outcomes, including evidence-based practices and structures that ensure all teachers are prepared and supported to meet their students where they are. Schools will use the rubrics to evaluate their programs as bronze, silver, or gold.

Programs of Excellence rubrics are

- **Emergent:** Developed with input from Oklahoma educators and ever-evolving, with updates shared regularly
- **Amplified:** Describe an idealized and robust vision that no individual program or school may be able to achieve fully
- **Visible:** Respect the unique contexts of Oklahoma’s schools, including their size, geography, and demographics

Example rubrics

**Science Aim**

By the end of the 2018–19 school year, this NIC will increase the percentage of students who contribute during science classes by generating and sharing ideas.

**Engage excellence**

- Invest in and engage a mental models that bring the discipline to life
- Engage students in a learning environment that is open and inviting
- Engage students in a learning environment that is connected to the world

**Safe and Healthy Schools Aim**

By the end of the 2018–19 school year, this NIC will increase the number of students who report having a trusting relationship with an adult at all school sites.

**Learn and grow as one cohesive and share a suite of resources that are useful, in that.

**AIM**

- **Investigate and Engage**
- **Learn and grow**
- **Celebrate and Systems learning**