**Mississippi Accountability Task Force Meeting**

**March 8, 2023**

**DRAFT Meeting Summary**

**Meeting Participants**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| First Name: | Last Name: | Organization: |
| Crystal | Bates | Wayne County High School |
| LaToya | Blackshear | Jackson Public Schools |
| Lindsay | Brett | Lee County Schools |
| Jermaine | Brown | Hattiesburg |
| Angela | Burch | Pascagoula-Gautier School District |
| Alan | Burrow | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Wendy | Clemons | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Alicia | Conerly | Lawrence County |
| Chris | Domaleski | The Center for Assessment |
| Deborah | Donovan | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Glen | East | State Board of Education |
| Steven | Hampton | Lamar County |
| Raina | Holmes | Jackson County School District |
| Christy | Hovanetz | Foundation for Excellence in Education |
| Lawrence | Hudson | Western Line School District |
| Tameka | Hyland | Vicksburg Warren School District |
| Tarrinasha | Jones | Greenville Public School District |
| Ryan | Kuykendall | DeSoto County |
| Lisa Renee | LaMastus | Cleveland School District |
| Greg | Paczak | Madison County Schools |
| William | Roberson | Oxford School District |
| Sonja | Robertson | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Robert | Sanders | Hinds County School District |
| Paula | Vanderford | Mississippi Department of Education |
| LaVonda | White | Rankin County School District |
| Sandi | Whiton | Mississippi Department of Education |

**Welcome and Introductions**

Following welcome and introductions, Dr. Chris Domaleski reviewed the purpose of the Accountability Task Force (ATF), indicating their role is to help the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) make good decisions about the design and implementation of the state, school accountability system. He emphasized that the ATF focuses on policy priorities and decisions to support those priorities that are technically defensible and operationally feasible. Feedback from the ATF is received as a recommendation to the MDE.

Next, Dr. Domaleski reviewed the ground rules and group norms for the meeting, highlighting the importance of making sure everyone has an opportunity to share their perspectives in an environment characterized by courteous, respectful discourse. In the best case, the ATF will build on one another’s comments and work toward shared understanding and consensus. However, from time to time, it may be necessary to take a vote to identify the group’s recommendations. When that occurs, dissenting views will be noted in the meeting summary.

Finally, Dr. Domaleski reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

**Revisions to Business Rules**

Next, Mr. Alan Burrow reviewed proposed revisions to accountability business rules that will bring the language up to date and add needed clarity and specificity. The specific edits are presented below. Additions are shown in bold; strikethrough marks deletions.

9.2.1  Dual credit courses must be credit-bearing courses **at both the high school and postsecondary institution** with a minimum of three (3) semester hours credit, and beginning in school year 2019 - 2020, shall be limited to the list of articulated courses found in Appendix V of the current *Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs* document. Refer to the current edition of the *Approved Courses for Secondary Education* for approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

9.3    The Acceleration component will consist of a Participation and a Performance component.  **Each of these components will have a score calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying the resulting value by 50.** These two (2) component~~s~~ **scores** will **then** be **added together ~~combined~~ and reported** ~~for~~ as one (1) score worth fifty (50) points. ~~and phased in on the following sliding scale:~~

9.4.3    The denominator for the Participation component calculation shall include all students whose Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) grade or peer-grade equivalent is 11th or 12th grade plus any 9th or 10th grade students who ~~are~~ **take**~~ing~~ and pass~~ing these~~ accelerated assessments/courses. ~~(Ninth (9th) and 10th grade students will not be included in the denominator unless they are also included in the numerator.)~~

9.10  For students in 9th through 12th grade that participate in ~~accelerated~~ **IB** courses as described in Section 9.2 that are designed with a two (2) year curriculum and do not have an associated assessment in the first year, the student will be included in participation calculations but will be excluded from performance measures in the first year and will be included in both participation and performance measures in year two (2).

9.12   **Ungraded SCD students, as defined in 16.4 and 16.5, will not be included in participation or performance measures once the student has reached age 18 as of September 1st of the school year.**

15.3 Progress toward proficiency will be calculated for all EL students using the state English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT). An annual progress goal will be calculated for each student based on reaching **overall** proficiency on the ELPT within five (5) years of entry into an EL program. The annual progress goal will be equal to the minimum **overall** **scale** score needed to achieve proficiency at year five (5), minus the prior year **overall scale** score, divided by the number of years the student had remaining to exit the EL program in the prior year.

15.3.1 In year five (5) and beyond, the annual progress goal is equal to the minimum **scale** score needed to achieve **overall** proficiency, minus the prior year **overall scale** score.

15.4 EL performance will be measured by the annual progress achieved by EL students. Each student will have a rate ranging between zero (0) and one (1) based on the student’s current year ELPT **overall scale** score, minus the prior year **overall scale** score, divided by the annual progress goal as defined in 15.3. Any student who does not demonstrate progress will have a rate of zero (0). No student will receive a rate higher than one (1).

15.4.1 The student must meet FAY requirements in the current year but is not required to meet FAY requirements in the prior year.

15.4.2 The student must have a prior year score to be included in the calculation.

**15.4.3 EL students that have reached overall proficiency on the ELPT shall not be included in the EL Performance component in subsequent years**.

19.1    In the calculation of each of the components in the statewide accountability system ~~that are reported to schools~~, the final value of each component will be rounded to one (1) decimal place (tenths place). **Any weighting of components is then applied to the rounded value**.  After the **weighted** components are summed, the total value will be rounded to a whole number and reported for the final performance classification calculation.

**25.15    ACT WorkKeys is not included in participation calculations and does not replace the ACT participation requirement defined in 25.14.**

27.2.1    Beginning in school year 2013-2014, foreign exchange students will automatically be included in accountability calculations just as any other students. However, if a ~~school/~~district wishes to have a foreign exchange student excluded from the accountability calculations, the request should be made through the Internal Review Process **and documentation of the student’s participation in the foreign exchange program must be provided in the request.**

There were no objections to the proposed business rule changes.

There was a brief discussion about how points should be reported. Task force members requested that MDE always report the final points for each component so that it is additive to correctly produce the total reported score.

**Beyond Academics**

Next, Dr. Domaleski explained that the MDE has received feedback suggesting the indicators of school quality and student success included in the state accountability model should be broadened. Often the feedback is framed as a desire to include more sources of information beyond academic achievement given the prominent role of proficiency and growth in the current model. Therefore, the accountability task force was asked to help the MDE identify priorities for broadening the range of indicators.

Dr. Domaleski reviewed some prominent research related to post-secondary success and trans-academic skills. He also summarized the range of state accountability practices for these components. Most states have expanded the range of readiness indicators in recent years to include advanced coursework and selected career-ready credentials similar to Mississippi. However, apart from these readiness indicators, few states have explored School Quality Student Success (SQSS) options other than 1) additional academic indicators and 2) attendance/ absenteeism. Infrequently, states incorporate school climate or discipline in their model. Dr. Domaleski found no states that have incorporated formal, direct measures of trans-academic skills. Some indirect measures may be found in indicators such as service, co/extra-curricular activities.

To further explore the topic, committee members were asked to break into groups and review a series of worksheets that listed a very broad range of candidate indicators related to 1) socioemotional measures 2) school climate and 3) post-secondary readiness. Committee members were asked to indicate:

* To what extent is this indicator a priority?
* What sources of data should be prioritized?
* What recommendations do you have for using the data (e.g., ESSA system or collect/report only)?

After reviewing the worksheets and discussing with colleagues in small groups, summary feedback was shared with the full group. Some prominent points from this discussion included:

* Many committee members acknowledged that the candidate indicators presented were very important, but it would be challenging to incorporate them into the state’s accountability model in a manner that is valid, reliable, and fair. For this reason, more emphasis should be placed on supporting district and school capacity.
* Some committee members suggested exploring rewarding attainment of different diploma options.
* Several committee members emphasized the importance of digital literacy especially as it relates to promoting responsible use of social media.
* The state may be able to support districts by helping define, collect, and report key sources of data on whole student development. The state may also be able to play a role as a partner in curating research and identifying best practices to promote student development.
* Consider the unique role of the district in accountability. Could the district be held accountable using measures that are not just a ‘roll-up’ of school performance?
* The MDE may also consider some updated reporting practices such as:
  + Discontinue reporting the ‘bottom 10’
  + Reward districts/schools that are showing particularly commendable progress
  + Report the accountability score only and not the grade

The accountability task force did not vote on any of these options. Rather, this was a brainstorming session and members were encouraged to share a wide range of ideas to help sharpen MDE’s focus for future efforts.  More discussion and follow-up will occur at future meetings.

**Examining Growth**

Next, Dr. Domaleski explained that the MDE has received questions and suggestions about growth in accountability such as:

* Should equal credit be assigned to levels 4 and 5?
* Should growth be more sensitive to progress at or above level 3, such as by creating a level ‘3C’ or by giving partial credit for maintaining a level 3?
* Should more weight be given to students showing progress from levels 1-3?

Then, the current method for computing growth was reviewed and committee members were asked to complete an online survey to register their feedback about potential growth improvements and the adequacy of the growth weights. Prominent feedback from the survey and subsequent discussion included:

* Some committee members expressed concern that it is challenging for students to progress from 3A to 3B or from 3B to 4 and higher.
* The state should consider awarding some points for maintaining level 3 since ‘passing should mean something.’ However, others disagreed pointing out that level 3 performance remains below proficient.
* Some committee members called for either more granularity in levels 1-3 or more influence in the model (or both) to better detect and incent progress from lower performing students.
* A few respondents disagreed with the practice of giving additional weight to growth of the lowest 25%
* Some committee members advised against making changes to the growth model.
* Views were split on weights. Most respondents indicated that the weights are appropriate especially for overall growth. A plurality of committee members responded that the weights were appropriate for low 25% growth but there was less agreement. Those disagreeing with the weights for low 25% growth were fairly evenly divided between increasing or decreasing the weights. The results are summarized in the figure below.

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

To inform the next steps, the accountability task force should research the following questions:

* What is the growth rate of students across the distribution? In particular, are level 3 students growing at similar rates compared to other students but the model isn’t detecting it? Or are level 3 students demonstrating lower rates of growth?
* What is the impact of changing growth model specifications, especially for level 3, such as by adding a level 3C? To what extent is the impact distinct across schools?

**Chronic Absenteeism**

The MDE has received feedback suggesting that attendance/ absenteeism should be considered for accountability.  The task force reviewed how chronic absenteeism is calculated and explored some accountability practices related to chronic absenteeism in other states.

While task force members emphasized that attendance is very important they were also very clear in emphasizing that it should not be a component in school or district accountability. They voiced concern that attendance is outside the control of schools and districts particularly because many are under-resourced and lack systems and personnel to appropriately support attendance. Moreover, several committee members indicated that adding absenteeism to the model would spark negative feedback and erode support for school accountability.

The accountability task force advised that the state should focus on strategies such as:

* Celebrate accomplishments of districts and schools that improve attendance
* Share strategies for helping districts and schools improve attendance
* Provide more resources for hiring and placement of support staff

**Missing Test Scores in 2020**

Due to pandemic disruptions in 2020, scores from 7th grade examinees that would have otherwise been banked are missing for 2023 calculations. This primarily impacts two districts. One suggestion is to allow districts with missing scores from 7th grade examinees in 2020 to include scores from current year 7th graders in the corresponding course (i.e., Algebra I) to count for accountability purposes.

Dr. Domaleski asked the task force to register objection if they did not support this practice. No committee members objected.

**Future Topics**

In the last session, Dr. Domaleski invited members to identify their priorities for topics the ATF should address at future meetings. Suggestions included the following:

* Several committee members emphasized the importance of exploring changes in the growth model especially growth in levels 1, 2, and 3.
* Consider changes in growth for students with significant cognitive disabilities
* Explore providing credit for earning certifications and diploma endorsements
* Discuss whether the state should test students in US history in the 8th grade instead of 11th grade
* Consider strategies for how the state can better address social emotional learning. While it may not be appropriate to put it in the accountability model, we need to focus on supporting students in areas beyond academics.
* Many committee members expressed appreciation for meeting in person and affirmed that it is beneficial to the quality of discussions.
* Follow-up on reporting suggestions, especially the suggestion to no longer report the bottom 10 and to reward high progress schools.
* Study the impact of n-size on accountability and whether it needs to be adjusted.