**Mississippi Accountability Task Force Meeting**

**February 5, 2020**

**Meeting Notes**

Meeting Participants

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Position** | **Last Name** | **First Name** |
| Aberdeen School District | Principal | Fondren | Kristen |
| Bay Waveland School District | Director of Federal Programs | Menotti | Nicole |
| Board of Education | Board Member | Rosemary | Aultman |
| Center for Assessment | External Facilitator | Chris | Domaleski |
| Clinton Public Schools | Superintendent | Martin | Tim |
| Copiah County School District | Curriculum Coordinator | Brown | Demarrio |
| Corinth School District | Math Specialist | Jones | Marion |
| DeSoto County | Director of Accountability & Research | Kuykendall | Ryan |
| Foundation for Excellence in Education | External Expert | Christy | Hovanetz |
| Gulfport School District | Commission on School Accreditation | Michael | Lindsay |
| Lowndes County School District | Deputy Superintendent | Ballard | Robin |
| Madison County Schools | Superintendent | Seals | Charlotte |
| MDE | Data Analytics and Reporting | Deborah | Donovan |
| MDE | Chief Accountability Officer | Paula | Vanderford |
| MDE | Director of District and School Performance | Alan | Burrow |
| Mississippi Legislature | House Education Chair | Bennett | Richard |
| Mississippi Legislature | Senate Education Chair | TBD |  |
| New Albany School District | Superintendent | Evans | Lance |
| Noxubee County | Assistant Superintendent | Baliko | Richard |
| Ocean Springs School District | Principal | Tiblier | Vickie |
| Petal School District | Director of Student Assessment | Brown | Kelli |
| Rankin County School District | Principal | Pambianchi | Lee |
| Senatobia School District | Special Education Teacher | Brewer | Elaine |
| Simpson County School District | Teacher | Williams | Aaron |
| Starkville-Oktibbeha School District | Superintendent | Peasant | Eddie |
| Sunflower County School District | Superintendent | Davis | Miskia |
| Tunica County | Superintendent | Pulley | Margie |
| Union County School District | Assistant Superintendent | Faulkner | Windy |
| Vicksburg Warren | Principal | Minor | LaToya |

**Welcome and Introductions**

Following welcome remarks by the MDE and introductions, Dr. Chris Domaleski reviewed the purpose of the Accountability Task Force (ATF) and the ground rules for deliberations. Subsequently, he reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting and the proposed agenda for the current meeting.

**Growth Data and Options**

At the previous meeting, the ATF reviewed the current methodology for including growth in the accountability model and discussed whether growth expectations are reasonable and appropriate for all students and schools. In particular, the task force discussed whether growth expectations for students in levels 3A and 3B are too stringent since students in these categories earn growth points at disproportionately lower rates.

The ATF reviewed the current distribution of growth performance to better understand the nature and reasons for lower growth scores in levels 3A and 3B. Specifically, the ATF reviewed:

* Plots of absolute scale score changes for grades five and eight in ELA and mathematics
* Analyses of mean scale score change for each of the eight growth levels in grades five and eight in ELA and mathematics

The analyses revealed that growth rates diminish in higher scale regions covered by levels 3 and 4. In particular, observed growth is relatively stable or slightly declines in level 3. The decline becomes more pronounced in the upper regions of level 3 and for levels 4 and 5.

These outcomes could be interpreted as evidence supporting disproportionately lower rates of growth in the accountability model. Alternatively, the findings could support a position that the relative rigor of demonstrating gains in level 3 is elevated, which warrants changes to reward more modest rates of growth.

Many ATF members expressed the view that maintaining a score in level 3 is an accomplishment that should be valued to some degree. Others supported adding a level ‘3C’ to provide more differentiation. Still others worried that any changes that would allow schools to earn an ‘A’ or ‘B’ with most students below level 4 should be avoided.

Ultimately, the ATF resolved to further examine the impact of the “3C” model by analyzing:

* Changes to growth scores overall and for schools in each grade level based on 2019 data.
* Changes to accountability scores and grade category overall and for schools in each grade level based on 2019 data.

These analyses will help the committee better understand which schools are likely to observe increases or declines in performance if the “3C” model is implemented.

**Options for Lowest 25% Growth for MAAP-A**

Next, the ATF was asked to provide a recommendation for how growth on the MAAP-A should be calculated for the lowest 25% of students.

To start, the ATF reviewed the current methodology for calculating growth on the alternate. Then, the distribution of school level n-sizes and performance data on the MAAP-A were presented.

It was explained that the small n-size of the MAAP-A presents a unique challenge for calculating the lowest 25% growth. For this reason, having a single statewide criterion or norm-based threshold may be desirable.

However, after discussing the merits and drawbacks of a single threshold, the ATF recommended applying a school-level threshold for the lowest 25% in an attempt to replicate as closely as possible the approach used for the general assessment. Specifically, the ATF recommended:

* Remove the minimum n-size rule for the MAAP-A
* Calculate the lowest 25% at the subject level, but combine for all grades tested at the school
* Every school should have at least 1 examinee in the lowest 25%. Examples follow:
  + 1 student tested: this 1 student will be in the lowest 25%
  + 2 students tested: the lowest performing 1 student will be in the lowest 25%
  + 3 students tested: the lowest performing 1 student will be in the lowest 25%
  + 4 students tested: the lowest performing 1 student will be in the lowest 25%
  + 5 students tested: the lowest performing 2 students will be in the lowest 25%
* If multiple students have the same score as score serving as the threshold for the lowest performing 25%, all students with this score are in the lowest performing 25% group

The ATF requested to see impact data before finalizing this recommendation. Specifically, had this rule been applied in the previous year, what impact on school scores and grades would be observed?

**Banking High School Science Scores**

High school accountability scores for science are based on biology results for 10th graders. However, students often take the biology test prior to grade 10. Consequently, many scores are ‘banked,’ meaning that scores used in the current year are based on performance in previous years, most often grade 9.

With the new science tests last year, the MDE adopted a ‘hold harmless’ rule, such that performance of first-time test takers should not adversely impact a school’s accountability results. This was implemented in 2019 by giving schools the higher of: 1) the 2019 science score calculated based on using the new science tests or 2) the 2018 science score, based on the legacy tests. This remains an issue in 2020 because banked first-time examinees on the new science tests in 2019 (e.g. students in grade 9 in 2019) would be counted in 2020.

The ATF discussed the merits and drawbacks of not making an adjustment and of various approaches for making the adjustment.

Ultimately, the ATF recommended implementing a similar rule in 2020 as was applied in 2019. Specifically, this means that 2020 science results using the ‘standard approach’ will be compared with results from 2019 (in many cases this would actually be the result from 2018). The school would receive the higher of the two outcomes. This process would be applied to both school and district level computations.

Finally, the ATF recognized that some schools or districts may not have banked high school science assessments. In such circumstances, permitting this hold harmless methodology would not be appropriate. Accordingly, the ATF recommended that the MDE exclude schools/ districts with no first-time science banked scores in 2019 that would count in 2020.

**Prioritized Topics for Future Meetings**

Each member of the ATF was asked to identify topics that should considered at future meetings. Some prominent topics suggested include the following:

* Consider approaches to expand the college and career ready component of the accountability system. It is especially important provide more indicators of accomplishments with respect to career readiness such as ACT WorkKeys or similar measures.
* Follow-up with impact analysis on the ‘3C’ growth approach discussed at this meeting
* Examine the impact of the accountability system on schools with high SES enrollment and serving large populations of students with disabilities.
* Consider approaches for K-2 schools and other schools with atypical grade configurations.
* Examine growth rates based on which prior is used, specifically for students taking algebra.