

2017 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee

Summary of Meeting on September 26–27, 2016

Meeting Objective

The objective for the first meeting of the 2017 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) was to review the preliminary 2016 accountability results, discuss topics related to 2017 accountability, and consider options for the implementation of the A–F system prescribed by House Bill 2804.

Overview of Accountability Results

Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff presented a summary of the 2016 accountability. TEA released 2016 ratings prior to the deadline required by statute; distinction designations and system safeguard reports were released approximately one month later than originally planned due to reporting delays by the test contractor, ETS. TEA staff reminded committee members that the window for appeals would close at the end of the month.

TEA staff opened discussion on 2016 rating results. Members remarked on overall statewide performance and the influence of grades 3–8 mathematics and STAAR A inclusion in certain indices.

State Assessment Update

Justin Porter, Deputy Director of Assessment of Content and Programs, addressed the committee regarding upcoming changes in assessments. He informed the committee that STAAR A and STAAR L will be administered for the final time in December. Moving forward, accommodations will be available through an individualized online testing platform. Districts will decide which accommodations a student needs prior to test administration.

Committee members expressed concern with the cost of specialized equipment, e.g. headphones, that may be required to administer the new TELPAS assessment and accommodated STAAR test.

2017 Accountability

To begin the discussion on 2017 accountability, the committee asked to see what this year's results would have been if ELLs had been included in Index 3 and Index 4, noting that including STAAR A in those indices and excluding STAAR L seems inconsistent. The committee also asked how including STAAR Alt 2 in Index 4 would affect district and campus results. While agreeing to postpone discussion of index targets until the commissioner of education releases forthcoming information about STAAR passing standards, the members unanimously decided to recommend removing writing (and any ELL progress measure for writing) from Index 2. English I and II will still be included in Index 2. Staff agreed to provide modeling data showing accountability results with STAAR L included in Index 3 and Index 4 and STAAR Alt 2 included in Index 4. Staff also agreed to investigate the possibility of options for multi-year Required Improvement for each index. The committee expressed reservations toward the term "Required Improvement," which too closely resembles the unrelated "Improvement Required" rating.

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Several members expressed concerns regarding the equity of including campuses of choice (early college high schools and charters, for example) in campus comparison groups with traditional districts and campuses that do not have the option to select students. The discussion included the possibility of weighting the percent of ELLs more than the other variables used to determine 40 “most like” campuses. A concern was also expressed about the equitability of applying a new A–F rating system that rated campuses of choice using the same indicators and targets as traditional districts and campuses that are required to accept students who live in their attendance zones. Both of these concerns will be considered as the A–F system is being built.

A workgroup was formed from the committee members who have been tasked with investigating options for addressing this issue and developing a recommendation to discuss with the full committee when it reconvenes in January 2017. The members of the campus comparison group workgroup are as follows:

- Susanne Carroll
- Keith Haffey
- Francisco Rivera
- Lisa Diserens

Several members proposed that the 70 percent target for the district postsecondary readiness distinction designation be reevaluated for the 2017 accountability cycle. Another member suggested a tiered system with regard to eligible indicators in order to provide an equitable opportunity for smaller districts to earn the postsecondary readiness distinction.

Overview of 2017–18 Accountability (A–F)/ESSA

Staff described the work of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability and explained the report and recommendations. Staff also noted that there is still work to do to align the A–F accountability system with the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Members were given a questionnaire regarding Title III and ELLs. Members agreed to get their respective districts’ input and provide responses to each of the ten questions. Members of the ELL workgroup agreed to work together to make recommendations for the inclusion of ELLs in the state accountability system and aligning the state and federal inclusion policies. The members of the workgroup are as follows:

- Sara Arispe
- Keith Haffey
- Julie Conde
- Francisco Rivera
- Michael Bohensky
- Kelly Legg
- Sue Thompson
- Theresa Urrabazo
- Donna Porter

Domain I Development

Staff presented a Domain I model that awards points for students who meet the level II satisfactory standard, the level II college-readiness standard, and the level III advanced standard. Staff explained that advanced level III is included in Domain I because that is the only place in the new system that it can be. Members expressed concern that a district or campus at which

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every student meets only the satisfactory standard would receive only 33 out of a possible 100 points (A grade of *D* according to the model) and suggested weighting some levels. Staff told of the commissioner’s expectation that, ultimately, 90% of students reach the satisfactory standard, 60% of students reach the college-readiness standard, and 30% of students reach the advanced standard. One member observed that point ranges for each letter grade should conform to public expectations (e.g., 90–100 = A, 80–89 = B) to ensure that the public can understand the system. Members also discussed how multi-year Required Improvement could work for Domain I, assuming the underlying data are comparable across years.

Domain II Development

TEA staff introduced five options for Domain II assuming a growth measure based on transition tables were available for Domain II. There was limited discussion on these options given the plans on future growth measures were still in preliminary stages.

Domain III Development

TEA staff presented a performance gap model for Domain III. Members expressed concern about counting some students more than once. One member suggested including all Domain III students in one group and calculating the domain score using that group, counting each student only once. The commissioner of education joined the meeting during this discussion and presented an alternative, two-part model for Domain III that uses a regression analysis to determine the Domain III score. This model would also raise or lower the scores for Domains I and II based on the performance in Domain III. The committee considered the advantages and disadvantages of each model, which are listed in the table below.

	Performance Gap Model	Regression Analysis Model
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target would remain the same • Aligned with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board goals • More transparent • Simpler • Required Improvement would be an option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economically disadvantaged group would be separate • Reporting would be simple • Statistically more precise

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Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to explain that zero or negative scores are good • Students may be counted twice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not conform to statute • Unsure of what exactly is being measured • Target would change from year to year • Lack of variability in the residuals • Domain scores would not be independent • Not a stand-alone domain • Complex and difficult to explain • Required Improvement would not be an option • Students would be counted twice
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After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each model, the committee unanimously preferred the gap model (with a target of 60) for Domain III over the regression model, noting that the regression analysis model would count some students more than once, whereas the gap model may only count students more than once under certain circumstances. In addition, under the regression analysis model, the domain target would vary each year, depending on the performance of the subgroups used in that domain.

Domain IV Development

Agency staff presented options for Domain IV indicators. The committee discussed the definition and scope of attendance and requested districts report chronic absenteeism by student group so the committee can review the data for future application in the accountability system. One member recommended using ELL exit rates as an additional indicator for elementary and middle schools, but members had a concern with districts exiting students for accountability reasons rather than basing the decision on the student's needs. Staff also explained that not all of the Domain IV indicators will be available in time to be used in calculating the provisional A–F ratings that are to be released on January 1, 2017. Staff also reviewed the letter sent to district administrators asking for a list of industry certifications that are offered locally.

Plans for January 1, 2017, Report

The committee recommended TEA produce a thorough report—possibly beyond the requirements of statute—in the interest of transparency. They also recommended that the report show the effect of increased standards, looking forward to 2018 standards when A–F officially begins instead of the current 2016 standards.

Agency staff introduced a proposed outline for the January 1, 2017, report to the legislature and noted that correlations between each domain rating and student demographics will be a substantial portion of the report. The committee requested to see the report before it is formally submitted to the legislature and released to the public, explaining that they wanted to

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be able to describe the report, its exploratory nature, and how each letter grade was determined. Additionally, the committee requested that TEA provide to districts a narrative describing the origin and purpose of the report so they can begin to inform their communities before the report is public. TEA staff conveyed that because of the timeline, these requests may not be met, but the agency will do what it can to help districts inform their communities before the report of provisional A–F ratings is released publicly. It may be possible to have members of the committee review sections of the report.

Future Plans

Agency staff informed the committee that they will be making recommendations on the 2017 index targets at its next meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2017. The committee also agreed to continue discussions regarding the implementation of HB 2804 at that time.