2017 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee
Summary of Meeting on November 14, 2016

Meeting Objective
The objective for the first meeting of the 2017 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) was to discuss topics related to 2017 accountability and review options for the implementation of the A–F system prescribed by House Bill (HB) 2804.

Overview of 2017 Student Assessment Changes
Justin Porter, Deputy Director of Assessment of Content and Programs, noted several changes to the STAAR for the 2016–17 school year. He outlined the planned changes to the assessments to comply with mandates established in HB 743.

Dr. Porter described the proposed modifications to the performance level descriptors and labels for the student performance standards on STAAR. The STAAR Confidential Student Reports (CSRs) are currently being redesigned to be more dynamic and comprehensible. Additionally, STAAR L and STAAR A will be replaced with an individualized online testing platform with options for embedded accommodations and an enhanced text-to-speech feature.

2017 Accountability
To begin the discussion on 2017 accountability, members reviewed the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee meeting summary from September 2016, which noted a concern with the postsecondary readiness distinction designation awarded to districts. Committee members agreed that the distinction criteria should be adjusted to recognize a greater percentage of high achieving districts. One member observed that, in 2016, only the top two percent of districts met the criteria of at least 70 percent of all of their campuses' postsecondary indicators in the top quartile. Members agreed that recognizing the top eight to 10 percent of districts would add value to the distinction. Subsequently, by a vote of nine to four, the committee recommended decreasing the criteria from at least 70 percent of indicators in the top quartile to 55 percent.

Overview of 2017–18 Accountability (A–F)
Commissioner of Education, Mike Morath began the discussion by pointing out the advantages of the accountability system prescribed in HB 2804. Specifically, he emphasized that the A–F system will lend itself to continuous improvement, as the varying degrees of success promote greater transparency, whereas the current accountability system is essentially binary, offering only two labels: *Met Standard* or *Improvement Required.* The commissioner reiterated the three guiding principles of the new accountability system: transparency, fairness, and rigor.

Domain I Development
Staff presented a Domain I model that awards points for students who meet the satisfactory standard, the recommended standard, and the advanced standard. Staff explained that the Domain I score would be an average of all three levels of achievement. Some members pointed out that this methodology would likely prevent districts from solely focusing on getting students to pass the test and instead encourage districts to give equal attention to students at every level of proficiency. However, other committee members expressed reservations toward weighting advanced level of achievement so heavily, as many low-income districts may not have a large number of students reach the advanced level. Ultimately, the majority of the committee voted

to either adjust the weight for the levels of achievement to put less emphasis on the advanced level or completely exclude the advanced level from Domain I. Commissioner Morath spoke about the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's goal of 60 percent of Texans ages 25–34 holding a postsecondary credential or degree by the year 2030 and encouraged committee members to recognize this goal while considering the 60 percent target for Domain I.

Domain II Development
TEA staff briefly discussed Domain II, noting that it will likely be very similar to Index 2 in the current system.

Domain III Development
Agency staff presented two models for Domain III: a performance gap model and a regression-analysis model. The performance gap model would identify a racial/ethnic group or the economically disadvantaged group with the greatest gap from the goal of 60 percent of assessments at postsecondary readiness standard. Alternatively, the regression-analysis model regresses the Domain I results for economically disadvantaged on the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged. The Domain III letter grades is determined by residuals, using multiples of standard deviations. The committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each model, which are listed in the table below.

	Performance Gap Model	Regression Analysis Model
Advantages	• Clear target • Easy to understand • Aligned with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board goals	• Addresses the disparity of performance for economically disadvantaged students
Disadvantages	• Difficult to explain that zero or negative scores are good	• Complicated • Harder to understand • Difficult to explain to the school board, parents, and members of the public

After evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each model, the committee overwhelmingly preferred the performance gap model for Domain III over the regression model.

Weighting of Domains I–III

Committee members discussed options for weighting Domain I, Domain II, and Domain III, recognizing that altogether they will account for 55 percent of the overall letter grade. Five options were identified, discussed, and voted upon:

- Weight each domain equally. (10 votes)
- Use the outcome for each domain but with differential weighting. (5 votes)
- Average the best two letter grades. (1 vote)
- Average the better letter grade of Domain I or Domain II with Domain III. (2 votes)
- Take the best of all three letter grades for an overall Domain I–III grade. (1 vote)

In hopes of maintaining transparency and meeting the legislative intent, the majority of the committee voted to average the outcomes of Domain I, Domain II, and Domain III to get an equally weighted 55 percent.

A–F List of Indicators

Committee members briefly reviewed the draft list of indicators to be included in the A–F accountability system. Agency staff pointed out the proposed list of indicators for the January 1st report to the Texas Legislature differs slightly from the proposed list of indicators for the 2017–18 accountability system. One member remarked that some industry certifications are not issued to minors, which may affect calculations for Domain IV.

Future Plans

The committee is scheduled to continue discussions about implementing HB 2804 and make recommendations on 2017 accountability at its next meeting on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.