

## **2017 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee Summary of Meeting on January 11, 2017**

### **Meeting Objective**

The objective for the second meeting of the 2017 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) was to make recommendations on targets for the 2017 accountability system, consider adjustments to methodology used to determine comparison groups, review the A–F accountability system as described in the report to the Texas Legislature, and discuss Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) accountability requirements.

### **2017 Accountability System**

This will be the final year of the four-index accountability system before transitioning to the A–F accountability rating system. The overall design is expected to remain relatively unchanged from the 2016 accountability system.

Beginning with the March 2017 administrations, the STAAR online testing platform will include embedded accommodations and other accessibility features. These enhancements eliminate the need for separate STAAR A and STAAR L test forms. In anticipation of this change, Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff presented the committee with data modeling how the 2016 accountability results in Index 3 and Index 4 would have been affected by the inclusion of STAAR L. The effect on statewide results was small, but a few committee members expressed concern that this may cause larger disparities for campuses and districts with a greater proportion of these testers. The committee ultimately voted to recommend the inclusion of STAAR L results in Index 3 and Index 4.

The committee also discussed whether to include STAAR Alt 2 results in Index 4, noting that the system is moving towards being as inclusive and comprehensive as possible. After reviewing modeling data, members recommended that STAAR Alt 2 results be included in Index 4 at the Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance standard.

Regarding the construction of Index 2, the committee expressed concern that the progress measure as presently designed does not adequately account for the performance of students who skip grades. For example, a student who tests in third grade and meets the Level II Satisfactory Standard, skips fourth grade, and tests again in fifth grade and meets the Level II Satisfactory Standard could possibly not meet progress measure expectations according to the STAAR progress measure. TEA staff agreed to discuss how to account for this discrepancy with the testing contractor for the future accountability system. In addition, members pointed out that many high schools are evaluated on fewer progress measures due to a reduced number of available assessments and the number of students who take the Algebra I EOC before entering high school.

Committee members also expressed a concern that ELLs who meet STAAR progress measure expectations but don't meet ELL progress measure expectations aren't included in the numerator of the Index 2 calculations even though they met STAAR progress measure expectations. Staff explained that the decision to have one progress measure per student was made by Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and it would be up to that committee to change its decision.

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For 2017, the rating labels and criteria (Index 1 OR Index 2 AND Index 3 AND Index 4) will remain the same as 2016, and there are no plans to incorporate a Required Improvement component in the 2017 index system.

### 2017 Index Targets

TEA staff presented proposed 2017 index targets for members to consider. The committee reviewed these targets and listed a variety of factors for them to keep in mind as they considered their recommendation:

- The decrease in the number of test items on STAAR
- The STAAR blueprint changes
- The new online testing platform for STAAR L and STAAR A
- The value of a more stable and comparable system from year to year
- The increase in schools with selective admissions criteria
- Upcoming rule changes to STAAR performance standards
- Stable targets may reduce anxiety at the district and campus levels
- The inclusion of STAAR L in Index 3 and Index 4
- English EOC assessment design changes
- The absence of Required Improvement

After deliberation, the committee voted as shown below:

	Option 1	In Favor	Option 2	In Favor
<b>Index 1</b>	Maintain 2016 Target	23	Increase From 2016	2
<b>Index 2</b>	Maintain 2016 Target	10	Fifth Percentile of 2017 performance	15
<b>Index 3</b>	Maintain 2016 Target	10	Fifth Percentile of 2017 performance	16
<b>Index 4</b>	Maintain 2016 Target	25	Increase From 2016	1

### Campus Comparison Groups in 2017 Accountability

The committee considered how to better construct campus comparison groups to address concerns with comparing campuses with selective admissions criteria to traditional campuses. Some of the campuses have the advantage of being able to select their students rather than accepting all students. TEA staff noted that the first challenge is to accurately identify these campuses. One member proposed that these campuses be flagged through a registration process similar to Alternative Education Accountability campus registration. It may also be possible to identify them by proxy if the campus comparison group criteria are adjusted to include the percentage of students receiving special education services and the percentage of early college high school students. The committee recommended adding both as indicators for campus comparison groups for 2017.

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### **Q & A Session with the Commissioner**

Commissioner of Education, Mike Morath, made himself available to answer the committee's questions about accountability and share reactions to the 2015–16 A–F report. The committee voiced concerns about a variety of issues, including the composition of the chronic absenteeism indicator, the limited pool of data for Domain II at the high school level, the inclusion of all performance levels in Domain I, the effect of the Community Eligibility Provision on data reporting, and the systemic advantages of campuses of choice. The commissioner expressed his intention to minimize model bias and restated a desire that the future accountability system aligns with the Texas Higher Education Coordinative Board's 60X30TX plan.

### **Domain I Methodology Considerations**

The committee reviewed the Domain I methodology, reiterating their concern with weighting each performance level equally. The commissioner assured the committee that the current methodology is fair and that the Domain I score, which averages the results at the three performance standards, is very closely correlated to the percentage of students that achieve the Final Level II Standard. In addition, the commissioner reminded members that this construction discourages schools from solely focusing their instruction on the “bubble kids” at the satisfactory standard.

### **Domain III Methodology Considerations**

The committee reviewed the Domain III methodology, recognizing that it does not evaluate subgroups other than economically disadvantaged. TEA staff mentioned that Domain III will likely be refined as it continues to be developed. Some committee members objected to the message implied in giving economically disadvantaged students lower targets. Other members suggested that the degree of poverty be considered when evaluating the economically disadvantaged subgroup.

### **Domain IV & V Methodology Considerations**

Members remarked that attendance is already becoming a source of concern for elementary and middle school campuses as a result of the Domain IV methodology. TEA staff explained that the data used to calculate chronic absenteeism is not from PEIMS fall enrollment data and that a campus is held responsible for a student's attendance record only once the student hits a certain days in membership threshold. One member pointed out the high chronic absenteeism rates for campuses that serve specialized programs for students in special education, such as PPCD, life skills, or co-op programs. This is an issue that will be considered as the A–F system continues to develop.

Other committee members indicated the need for a minimum-size criterion for the numerator of the annual 7–8 dropout rate. Applying a minimum size criterion to the numerator for this indicator would more accurately reflect Domain IV outcomes for the campus as a whole. This point will be considered as the system is refined.

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The committee discussed the differences among the components of the college and career readiness indicator for the 2015–16 A–F report and those proposed for 2017–18. TEA staff reviewed the PEIMS element that will be used to collect data for the military enlistment component. Several members expressed a preference for giving credit in the college and career readiness indicator if a student completes a CTE-coherent sequence of courses *or* earns an industry certification, rather than requiring both. Similarly, the advisory group commented on the number of students that take an AP course but do not take the AP examination. The committee recommended that Domain IV be constructed to account for this and any courses that students may have taken in middle school.

Domain V will be locally determined. PEIMS will have relevant data, including a link to the locally developed criteria that was used to determine the rating.

### **ESSA Accountability Development**

The committee reviewed a two-page summary of ESSA accountability statutory requirements. TEA staff noted that many districts are currently not meeting the requirement to administer state assessments to at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of each subpopulation. The committee expressed concern at the possibility that the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools may be rated something other than D or F in the A–F system.

### **Future Plans**

Agency staff will share proposed dates for future ATAC meetings via email.