

2018 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee Summary of Meeting on February 13, 2018

The objective for the third meeting of the 2018 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) was to review feedback from the U.S. Department of Education and make final recommendations for the commissioner on the A–F accountability system established by House Bill (HB) 22. TEA responses to questions and concerns given during the meeting are provided in red. Some questions will require staff research and are yet to be answered. The following is a summary of the discussion at the meeting.

- TEA welcomed the committee.
 - ◆ Concern
 - It appears the agency is not considering the committee’s recommendations. [TEA staff presents the commissioner with committee recommendations and modeling data; the commissioner considers all feedback and recommendations; however, he makes the final decisions. The public will have an opportunity to provide additional feedback during the administrative-rule-making process this spring.]
- Committee members reviewed the latest Student Achievement domain model and discussed options for the School Progress domain. The committee reviewed Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) recommendations.
 - ◆ Questions
 - Where is the list of substitute assessments that ATAC recommended be included at the Masters Grade Level standard? [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter101/19_0101_4002-1.pdf]
 - For those districts that do not have the means to administer the PSAT to all their students, is the inclusion of substitute assessments fair?
 - Would the commissioner be opposed to creating three different performance levels for substitute assessments for the future? [This is a possibility TEA is exploring.]
 - How will asylee/refugee/SIFE students be included? [These students will not be included in accountability until their sixth year of enrollment.]
 - How does TEA determine the years of enrollment for English learners? [TELPAS]
 - Why is there not a Spanish version of STAAR for secondary students? [It’s not required by statute.]
 - When will TEA receive approval or denial of the ESSA state plan? [Hopefully by the end of February.]
 - Did TEA consider the demographics of the testers when determining the strong correlation between first year persistence in higher education and AP/IB examinations? [No.]

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- Will the SAT scores included be the best or most recent?
[We are working with the College Board and ACT to obtain multiple years of data to include the best result. This will likely go into effect next year.]
- Is there an assessment at the end of the college prep courses included in the CCMR indicator? [Each district has a memorandum of understanding with the college or university with which it has partnered. For the districts represented at the meeting, each had a required assessment at the end of the course to earn course credit.]
- Which dual-credit courses can be taken without meeting the TSIA criteria? [Some workforce dual-credit courses do not require students meet the TSIA criteria.]
- ♦ Concerns
 - Districts and campuses that have the financial means and resources to offer the PSAT to many of their students will have an advantage if substitute assessments are included at the Master Grade Level standard.
 - Evaluating English learners in their third and fourth year of enrollment in the same manner as other students is incongruent.
 - Because the committee is making decisions based on the approval of certain elements of the ESSA state plan, the late receipt of feedback from USDE may impact decisions and recommendations that are made by advisory committees.
 - Many AP/IB courses aren't accepted by colleges while dual-credit courses are widely accepted, yet the accountability system awards credit for meeting the criteria on any one subject area AP/IB examination but may require nine credits of dual credit in any subject area.
 - The rigor of the assessments used in the college prep courses may not be comparable to that of the other assessments that satisfy the TSI criteria. [The college ELAR and mathematics prep courses described in TEC §28.014 are required by HB 22.]
 - The industry-based certification list is incomplete. It doesn't reflect the needs of the local communities.
 - Limiting recognition of CTE achievement to the industry-based certification list may have unintended consequences. Districts may stop offering valuable programs that benefit local businesses and communities because they aren't included in the accountability system.
 - The commissioner should remain cognizant about the local needs of districts.

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- School Progress, Part B does not measure progress. To put this measure into a statutorily prescribed progress domain may be a violation of statute. The measure evaluates relative performance, not progress. [TEC §39.053(c)(2)(B) requires the School Progress domain to include “the performance of districts and campuses compared to similar districts and campuses.”]
- Districts that qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision have a difficult time retrieving free and reduced lunch forms from parents, which are used to determine the percentage of economically disadvantaged students for School Progress, Part B.
- ♦ Suggestions
 - In the future, each substitute assessment should have three performance level descriptors based on performance outcomes.
 - It is important to use substitute assessments because they serve as another measure aside from STAAR, and assessments like TSIA are linked to dual-credit participation.
 - Consider using the MAP assessment in the future because many districts are using it to evaluate growth throughout the year.
 - Provide clarification to districts on the difference between earning high school credit and college credit for the college prep course.
 - Expand the industry-based certification list.
 - Rather than including CTE-coherent sequence as an option for CCMR, award credit for completing CTE advanced courses, practicums, or capstones.
 - Consider graduation plans with CTE endorsements as an alternative to awarding credit for the CTE-coherent sequence in the future.
- ♦ Recommendations
 - A majority of the committee agreed with the ATAC recommendation to maintain the inclusion of substitute assessments at the Masters Grade Level standard in the Student Achievement domain for this year but would like to explore options for creating multiple performance standards for each substitute assessment in the coming years.
 - The committee recommended to phase out the inclusion of CTE-coherent sequence as follows:
 - For 2018 accountability, prior-year graduates who were reported as enrolled in a CTE-coherent sequence will credit CCMR with one point.
 - For 2019 accountability, prior-year graduates who completed a graduation plan with a CTE endorsement that ends in an advanced CTE course will credit CCMR with one point. The committee noted that the State Board of Education has thoroughly vetted the reliability and rigor of the CTE advanced courses.

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- A majority of the committee agreed with the ATAC recommendation to include high schools in Student Progress, Part A. Even though there are limited progress measures for high school students, this methodology maintains the intent that School Progress evaluate progress rather than solely relative performance.
- The committee unanimously voted that the School Progress letter grade should be the better of part A or B.
- Committee members discussed the graduation rate component of the Student Achievement domain, the weight of each of the components in the domain, and cut points for the Student Achievement domain letter grades.
 - ♦ Concerns
 - Districts have strived to improve graduation rates. These efforts should be recognized in the accountability system by weighting graduation rates more heavily.
 - One member noted that some districts may not have rigorous standards for obtaining a diploma.
 - ♦ Suggestions
 - The CCMR indicator is still under construction; therefore, the foundational data elements, such as graduation rates should be emphasized.
 - Use equal weights for Student Achievement to better emphasize the value of graduating from high school.
 - Consider working with the Department of Defense to link ASVAB performance to military readiness in the future. Some members noted that ASVAB participation doesn't necessarily mean that the student enlisted in the military.
 - Consider adding ROTC to the military readiness indicator.
 - ♦ Recommendation
 - Use equal weight for STAAR, CCMR, and graduation rates. All components are equally important. One member expressed a strong desire to weight graduation rates more heavily than STAAR and CCMR.
- Committee members reviewed the Closing the Gaps domain considering the U.S. Department of Education response to the ESSA state plan.
 - ♦ Question
 - Will the Closing the Gaps report be the Federal Report Card?
[No. The data in Closing the Gaps will be used for federal and state accountability, but the Closing the Gaps report will not be the Federal Report Card.]

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- ◆ Concern
 - For small campuses with few students, the “artificial failers” created to meet the participation rate in the Academic Achievement indicator could be a significant issue.
- ◆ Suggestions
 - Weight the Growth indicator more heavily than the Academic Achievement indicator.
 - Consider having different targets for Title I campuses.
- ◆ Recommendation
 - Adjust the targets for the Academic Achievement indicator for 2017–18 through 2021–22 to the baseline targets.
- Committee members reviewed scaling and methodology for overall grades.
 - ◆ Question
 - Will districts receive ratings before the public? [The agency plans to provide the ratings to districts before releasing them to the public, as has been the practice.]
 - ◆ Concerns
 - The scaling of the letter grades may create unnecessary confusion for the public.
 - The majority of districts rated A will be affluent.
 - A qualitative description for each of the letter grades needs to be available before ratings are released.
 - The system uses forced distribution. [The plan is to use 2016–17 accountability data to develop cut points that will remain stable for five years. It will be mathematically possible for any district or campus to earn an A.]
 - ◆ Suggestions
 - Rather than scaling the scores, calculate a GPA.
 - Use social media and various other media to ensure that the public understands the system prior to the release of ratings. [TEA is working with a vendor to solicit feedback from the public on our communication plan to ensure that our communication is effective.]
 - TEA needs to provide districts with templates for press releases and resources that help convey the meaning behind the ratings.
 - There must be tangible descriptions of the grades. The agency should be able to qualitatively describe each letter grade.
 - Explain to the public that while the system uses a forced distribution for the first year, it will not in the future. [Because TEA will use 2016–17 accountability data to develop cut points, it is not a forced distribution. It will be mathematically possible for any district or campus to earn an A in 2018.]

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- Committee members reviewed ATAC recommendations for distinction designations methodology.
 - ♦ Questions
 - How will the agency identify and incorporate campus enrollment types to mitigate the advantage of schools of choice because of their selective enrollment practices? [The agency is exploring options. In the future, campuses may be able to identify their enrollment type in TSDS PEIMS or AskTED.]
 - Is there a way to include continuously enrolled students as another indicator? [This may be an option for distinction designations in the future.]
 - ♦ Suggestions
 - TEA is collecting a lot of data on kindergarten students. Maybe this should be explored as an additional indicator for elementary campuses.
 - Consider the adding the percentage of grade 3–8 results at Meets Grade Level or above in both reading and mathematics for continuously enrolled students as an indicator in the future.
 - ♦ Recommendation
 - Members agreed with ATAC’s recommendation that the following indicators be used for the campus postsecondary readiness distinction designation:
 - Percentage of STAAR Results at Meets Grade Level or Above
 - Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate
 - Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Plan Rate
 - College, Career, and Military Ready Graduates
 - SAT/ACT/TSIA Participation (4 years)
 - AP/IB Examination Participation: Any Subject (4 years)
 - CTE-Coherent Sequence Graduates
 - Percentage of Grade 3–8 Results at Meets Grade Level or Above in Both Reading and Mathematics