

2016 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee Summary of Meeting on October 26, 2015

Meeting Objective

The objective for the first meeting of the 2016 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) was to begin planning the implementation of House Bill (HB) 2804. Each table of APAC members included at least one member from the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC).

Welcome and Introduction

Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff explained the purpose of both the ATAC and the APAC.

Charge and Scope of Work of Committee

TEA staff gave an overview of the goals and charges of the committee and explained the limits of its scope of work. Staff also reviewed the 2016 accountability development calendar, explaining that both committees' work started earlier than normal this year because of the need to develop the accountability system prescribed by HB 2804 before September 1, 2016.

Overview of Current State Assessment and Accountability Systems

Staff described the changes to the STAAR program for this upcoming year, which include a new test contractor, Educational Testing Service (ETS), for STAAR, STAAR L, STAAR A, and the Spanish version of STAAR. Pearson remains the test contractor for STAAR Alt 2, TELPAS, and TAKS. In discussing HB 743 (which specifies time limits for certain state assessments), staff explained that TEA will be collecting timing data in spring 2016 to meet legislative requirements regarding testing time. When questioned about how to collect timing data accurately, TEA acknowledged the challenge of doing so, but is making efforts to collect timing data as accurate as possible given the constraints. For the 2016 administrations, the writing tests at grades 4 and 7 will be limited to only one day and the field test questions for assessments in grades 3–8 will be removed. In response to HB 1164, TEA will conduct a pilot program to determine the feasibility of locally administered writing assessments. Finally, staff explained the changes to the student performance standards: the satisfactory standard will be raised each year until it reaches final Level II in 2022. The administrative rule that governs student performance standards is currently in the public comment period.

Following the presentation on the assessment program, staff gave an overview of the state accountability system and how accountability results are reported. Staff also explained that for 2015 accountability, districts and campuses were required to meet only three indices in order to

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earn a *Met Standard* rating: Index 1 or Index 2 and Index 3 and Index 4. Working at their tables, ATAC members reviewed the various accountability ratings reports to the APAC members.

Following the members' discussions at their tables, staff spoke about performance index targets and corresponding percentiles, explained how to calculate distinction designations, and reviewed distinction reports and system safeguards.

Review of HB 2804 Requirements

Staff presented several documents covering HB 2804: one briefly summarizes the five domains; another summarizes the domains, the A–F ratings, and the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability; and a third previews sections of chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code following the passage of HB 2804. Working at their tables, committee members reviewed the document and discussed it in small groups. When asked to list possible challenges in implementing the legislation, members mentioned the following:

- The possible negative impact to district and campus ratings that could result from the postsecondary readiness component of Domain I
- The removal of “other indicators” from Domain IV
- The prescriptive nature of the statutory language
- The benefits of using campus comparison groups to assign ratings
- Not grading based on a curve so every district or campus could earn an A
- Giving more weight to Domain II than to Domains I or III

Staff reviewed the summary of the A–F ratings, the composition and responsibilities of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability, and the timeline for the commission's work and for the development of the new accountability system.

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Review of New Indicators and Data Collection Requirements

Staff presented a summary of the September 2015 ATAC meeting and a document listing several indicators required by HB 2804 for which new data collection were necessary. Members first reviewed the section of the ATAC meeting summary that covers the new data collection requirements and discussed it in small groups. The first indicator discussed was the percentage of students who enlist in the armed forces. Members wondered how soon after graduation a student would need to enlist in order for the district and campus to get credit and whether enrollment at a military academy would count as enlisting in the military. Members asked TEA if it could explore a data-sharing agreement with the military to get the information. Members also expressed a desire to avoid using lagging indicators to assign accountability ratings. TEA staff explained that lagging indicators are a result of the timing of the data's availability combined with the statutorily required deadlines to release accountability ratings.

The next indicator discussed was the percentage of students who earn an industry certification. Members discussed the challenge of collecting accurate, meaningful data for this indicator because of the number of different types of certificates available, the number of different certifying agencies, and the fact that different agencies have different standards for certification. Staff mentioned that ATAC had agreed to TEA's preliminary recommendation to use the definition for the performance acknowledgment for certification/licensure as described in the 2015–16 TREx data standards and agreed to provide further information at the next APAC meeting.

The next indicator was the percentage of students in grades 7 and 8 who receive instruction in preparing for high school, college, and a career. APAC members commented that, because of HB 18, all campuses should have 100%, which limits the effectiveness of the indicator.

The APAC members next moved to options for the Domain IV indicators that will comprise thirty-five percent of the overall rating in the A–F system. The APAC agreed that HB 2804 provides a comprehensive list of Domain IV indicators for high schools. The committee discussed several of the possibilities for additional indicators that ATAC suggested for elementary and middle schools. The discussion included members expressing concern that using A/B honor roll could create an incentive for grade inflation and that it could also disadvantage schools that use alternative grading systems. Members also indicated that attendance rates would not be a useful indicator because attendance is already highly incentivized by the Foundation School Program. Furthermore, dropout-rates would not be useful because drop-out rates aren't calculated for grades K–6 and are typically very low in middle school. Some suggested combining the

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participation indicators (e.g., participation in band or clubs). Members expressed concern about the climate survey because it would not be a consistent survey across all districts and campuses. Others expressed the concern that some of the options could make Domain IV too similar to Domain V. Members also commented that the additional indicators shouldn't result in any additional costs to a district or campus.

To facilitate the committee's decision on which possible indicators to pursue further, staff listed all the indicators being discussed on a board at the front of the room and asked each member to put a check mark by the five that he or she prefers. Those potential indicators with the most check marks will be the ones that staff will research to determine their feasibility. The list is as follows (the italic number in brackets indicates the number of check marks an option received, indicating how many APAC members listed it among their top 5):

- Academic enrichment (participation in clubs, fine arts, UIL, G/T, science fair, etc.) [17]
- Number of middle school students completing high school courses [15]
- Participation in language instruction (including world languages and technical languages, such as HTML and computer programming) [15]
- Opportunities for teacher enrichment or professional development [12]
- Fifth- and eighth-grade inventory [9]
- Participation in accelerated instruction [9]
- Disciplinary data [5]
- A/B honor roll [3]
- Fitnessgram® [1]
- Climate survey [1]
- Student Success Initiative (SSI) [1]
- Early childhood participation [1]
- STAAR participation [0]
- No additional indicator: attendance rate only [0]
- Item response rates on STAAR [0]

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Transition Issues from Four Indices to Five Domains

Staff presented a side-by-side comparison of indices and domains. Members reviewed the document and discussed it in small groups. There were discussions about how to weight the first three domains, which included weighting Domain II the most and Domain I the least. Members again expressed concern about the potential impact on ratings of having the postsecondary readiness standard in Domain I and asked if the domain's target could be adjusted to mitigate any negative impact.

Preliminary Options for Assigning A–F Ratings to Domains I–IV and the Overall Rating for Districts and Campuses.

One of the ATAC participants proposed an option in which a campus could earn an A for either absolute performance or performance relative to the 40 campuses in its comparison group,

The option is explained by the table below. The column on the left indicates the quartile into which a campus falls relative to its comparison group; the top row represents a domain or overall score. A campus that is in the top quartile of its comparison group would earn an A (either for a domain or overall) if it earns a score of 90, 80, 70, or 60. A campus that earns a score of 90 would earn an A regardless of which quartile it falls. A campus that is in the second quartile of its comparison group would earn a B (either for a domain or overall) if it earns a score of 80, 70, or 60. A campus that earns a score of 80 would earn a B regardless of which of the lower three quartile it falls into.

	90	80	70	60
Q1	A	A	A	A
Q2	A	B	B	B
Q3	A	B	C	C
Q4	A	B	C	D

The consensus among the APAC members was to explore this option further at the December ATAC meeting.

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Next Steps

APAC members agreed to a one-day meeting scheduled for Friday, January 22, 2016. At that meeting, APAC will review the ATAC recommendations for 2016 accountability, develop its own recommendations for 2016 accountability, and continue its work on the implementation of HB 2804.