

Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) Taskforce

October 19, 2020 Zoom Meeting Notes

Attendees

Melissa Chavez, *University of Texas University Charter School*

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Megan Evans, *Clear Creek ISD*

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Syndi Mitchell, *Office of the Governor*

Garrett Black, *TEA: School Improvement*

Kayla Fairchild, *TEA: Performance Reporting*

Peggie Garcia, *TEA: Charter Schools*

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Stacy McDonald, *TEA: Performance Reporting*

Hilda Salguero, *TEA: School Improvement*

Heather Smalley, *TEA: Performance Reporting*

Katelyn Tanis, *TEA: Performance Reporting*

Joanna Warren, *TEA: Governmental Relations*

Cynthia Wu, *TEA: Performance Reporting*

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Reviewed and Refined Statutory Recommendations

Change AEA base-eligibility

- Evaluate and update the eligibility criteria for consideration to be evaluated under alternative accountability in the accountability manual
 - Do some of these criteria need to have a safeguard provision added that will stabilize eligibility (at-risk for example)? Some students enroll at DRS, succeed, and then no longer meet the at-risk criteria. Three-year average?
- Based on modeled data, increase the enrollment requirement in grades 6–12 from 50% to 90%
 - This adjustment aligns with the original intent of limiting AEA provisions to middle and high schools.
 - Increasing the grades 6–12 enrollment requirement affects 13 campuses' AEA eligibility, 5 of which have not received ratings for the past 3 years due to minimal data.
- Positive feedback on proposed AEA base-eligibility changes that would distill AEA to ensure all campuses are truly offering alternative programs for at-risk students.
- Need to evaluate how changes will impact UT Charter (district). Most campuses RTF, but two campuses not alternative, and district receives rating. Further work to do here.

Change DRS Eligibility

- Lower “17 years of age” reference in TEC §39.0548 DRS definition.
- Based on modeled data, we recommend the 50% at age 17+ enrollment criteria be updated to 60% at age 16+.
- This change would stabilize the annual fluctuation of campuses between AEC of choice and DRS solely based on the age 17+ criteria.
 - Data shows that 45.4% of reported dropouts are 16 or younger when leaving school.
 - Rename these campuses as “Dropout Prevention and Recovery Schools” to reflect their mission more accurately.
- In alignment with the update to Dropout Prevention and Recovery Schools (DPRS), adopt an application process to allow campuses that do not meet the age criteria to apply for DPRS status.
- If a campus met the base-criteria for alternative accountability eligibility, in the application, the campus would provide TEA a program description and data to support a discretionary designation as a DPRS.
- All campuses evaluated under alternative accountability would meet the criteria or demonstrate eligibility for designation as a DPRS. AECs of Choice would be eliminated.
- Positive feedback on proposed DRS eligibility changes that would distill AEA to ensure all campuses are truly offering alternative programs for at-risk students.

Change Accountability Framework

- Develop a unique, simple accountability system for dropout recovery schools (DRS) that
 - addresses the mission and purpose of DRS;

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- reduces the number of domains;
- evaluates DRS-specific indicators;
 - focuses on outcomes for retesters and previous dropouts, completion, and CCMR; and
 - removes continuously/non-continuously enrolled student groups from accountability (especially for DRS).

Unique DRS Accountability System

- Two domains (*CMM has asked us to examine keeping 3.*)
 - Domain 1—Academic Performance and Growth
 - STAAR at Approaches, met STAAR Progress Measure, and retesters at Approaches (AEA Progress Measure)
 - This would need to have scaling set based on the modeled data. The increase in the number of campuses evaluated using this measure, including SNA, is positive.
 - What are CMM's thoughts on retesters only at Approaches? Would need appropriate scaling methodology for appropriate distribution.
 - Can we continue to consider evaluating the implementation of a high/low differentiation within Did Not Meet and Approaches? Growth within the performance level (PLD), but still growth?
 - This modeling includes similarities to the current AEA bonus point methodology. Can we continue to examine how that indicator could be used for growth if we must keep three domains?
 - Data modeling request: How can the current bonus points be scaled to award credit to more campuses? Is there a way to adjust the current methodology to award points to more campuses?
 - Domain 2—Closing the Gaps
 - DRS-specific indicators that measure outcomes for previous dropouts, completion rates, and CCMR along with indicators that meet ESSA requirements

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Reviewed AEA-Specific Indicator Data Modeling

Data modeling shared during the meeting

Student Achievement Domain

STAAR

- Consider an AEA Progress Measure using Approaches, progress, or retest passers.
 - Data run—Methodology
 - Numerator: growth or met approaches (first time testers) and then add in Approaches for retesters.
 - Denominator: # all first-time tests plus tests for retesters who met Approaches.
 - See Taskforce notes/questions in section above.
- Consider using the percentage at Approaches and awarding additional points for Meets/Masters.
 - Data run—Data for probability for retester outcomes.
 - Data run—What do the highest performing AECs show us?
 - Data demonstrates that DRS have great success at the Approaches level (EOCs) when first time tests and retests are combined.

School Progress Domain

Part A: Academic Growth

- Consider AEA Progress Measure as described above.
- Reconsider growth calculation.
 - Measure of improvement for retesters on the same subject area test.
 - Data Run—Frequency on how many times students retest over whole testing history.
 - Suggested refinement: Use Spring testing window as base, then move to student-level history. Of the # of EOC testers in spring 2019, how many were retesters? How many times had the students retested over their entire testing history? Breakout by AEA to non-AEA.

Other

- Data run—Number of attempts on the same subject area EOC in 2019 Accountability cycle.
 - Data demonstrates that the majority of EOC retests meeting the 2019 Accountability Subset are taken once (ranging from 51% in AECs of Choice to 78% in RTFs).
- Data run—What are the outcomes for previous dropouts?
 - 39% of previous dropouts returning in 2019-20 enrolled in AECs.
 - 41% of previous dropouts returning to DRSs in 2018-19 were present at snapshot and attended in the 6th six-week attendance reporting period (i.e., stayed through the end of the school year).
 - Previous dropouts from the class of 2019 that attended DRSs had a higher continuer rate and a lower dropout rate when compared to the other AEC types and non-AEA campuses.

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Indicators from April meeting to revisit

Student Achievement Domain

STAAR

- Evaluate minimum size criteria (minimum number required to receive a rating).
 - Need to research
 - Based on student count. Minimum number of tests versus minimum number of students (*research the original reasoning for tests vs. students*).
 - Or adjust minimum number of tests (*research other states' ESSA plan minimum numbers for evaluation*).
 - Look back at previous minimum sizes (*10% rule*).

College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)

(If AEA must use same CCMR indicators as traditional schools, decrease the weighting from 30%.)

- Consider reengagement.
 - Outcomes for previous dropouts. (returning and reengaging is a major success)
 - How can we measure and evaluate this? Include those students who were not present for extended periods of time but not coded as dropouts.
- Consider using auto-coded CTE data (at concentrator level).
- Consider two- or four- year school, or technical school enrollment. (current data timing hurdle)
- Consider workforce readiness/work study. (current data timing hurdle)
- Consider using workforce data as appropriate. (current data timing hurdle)
- Consider on-track to high school graduation. (define/refine this)
 - Maintenance of students who were on-track and staying on-track.
 - Improvement demonstrated for those off track.
 - Define denominator and how to credit numerator.

Graduation Rate

- Consider how to reweight to reflect strengths.
- Consider annual completion rate. (define denominator)
- Consider specific dropout rate. (for AECs which includes previous dropouts)
- Consider reengagement. (previous dropouts and graduation rate—Include students in denominator who haven't been attending for X months/3 six weeks, etc.)
- Consider longitudinal completion rates.
 - Previous dropout success (test outcomes/graduation rates)
- Consider modified denominator using only grade 12 students.

School Progress Domain

Part A: Academic Growth

- Consider a stabilization rate (kept a year). (Could this be a measure of "grit"?)
- Reconsider growth calculation.

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- English I to English II testers even within the same year.
- Consider student growth percentiles? Other growth measures?
- Measure of improvement for retesters on the same subject area test.

Part B: Relative Performance

- Taskforce recommends the continued exclusion of this domain for AECs.

Closing the Gaps Domain

STAAR

- Limit to first time testers only or retester-passers only.
 - Research—Are there any other ESSA plans approved with a similar exclusion?
- Can we account for the impact of economically disadvantaged status on the all student groups?
 - Research—Are there any other ESSA plans approved with a similar exclusion?
- Meets is not appropriate for AECs. Consider using Approaches, as it aligns with the mission and graduation requirements. (any adjustments in Student Achievement for AECs would carry over)
 - Research – Are there any other ESSA plans approved with Approaches (or equivalent performance level with state-specific terminology) as the target? Yes. Approved methods used by other states include awarding partial points at the Approaches level, and utilizing two sets of targets (i.e., Approaches or above target, Meets or above target). Further research is needed.

Graduation Rate

- Consider completer rate for School Improvement identification.
 - Research – Are there any other ESSA plans approved that use a completer rate instead of graduation rate for School Improvement identification? Yes. Oregon utilizes a five-year completion rate for their alternative schools.
- Continue to work out better graduation rate methodology, especially for AECs.
- Reduce the weight of the federally required 4-year rate.
 - Research – How do other ESSA plans handle 4-year rate? Colorado utilizes a 4-year graduation rate weighted at 1% and a 7-year extended graduation rate weighted at 99%, with the graduation component being 15% of the overall rating. Nevada utilizes a 4- and 5- year graduation rate equally weighted, but only worth 2.5% of the overall rating. Multiple states utilize a completion rate as an additional indicator.

School Quality/Student Success (bucket-like concept similar to CCMR)

- Determine more appropriate CCMR indicators.
 - Consider attendance.
 - Consider reengagement.
 - Consider completer rate.
 - Consider on-track to graduate. (tie into 16/17 age run)
 - Consider FAFSA/ASVAB/workforce readiness. (current data timing hurdle)
 - Consider postsecondary preparation, career opportunity education, apprenticeships, work studies, and transition planning. (current data timing hurdle)

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- Consider a link to Texas Workforce Commission economic outcomes for graduates. (current data timing hurdle)

English Language Proficiency

- Determine targets by campus type (elementary, middle, high, and AEA).
 - Research—Are there any other ESSA plans approved with targets by campus type? Yes. We can consider this for an amendment.

Other Accountability Suggestions

Italicized items are currently being explored by TEA.

- *Weighting and targets will have to be redone. Targets for all schools need to be rerun.*
 - AECs need specific targets to differentiate between AECs/traditional.
 - Research—Are there any other ESSA plans approved with targets by campus type? Yes. Multiple states have approved targets by elementary, middle school, and high school type. Other states including Maine have individualized targets for each campus by each student group. Idaho includes alternative schools as one of their campus types. We can consider this for an amendment.
- *Award partial points based on distance from target.*
- First year campuses—How to process when STAAR is frequently the only data?
- Implement a waiver before ratings to distinguish exceptional campuses/programs. (This could possibility be addressed via the DPRS application process.)
- *Consider additional indicators to truly distinguish between AECs.*
- *Pull AECs out and identify the bottom 5% separately for comprehensive support.*
- *Rework additional targeted support to comprehensive support escalation.*
- Include a value add for recovering dropouts. (see modeled data above).

Other Suggestions

- Partner with research institution/university to finalize AEA taskforce recommendations.
- Is it possible for a student to maintain his/her at-risk status once enrolled in AEA? The AEA may address an immediate need, but the student may have ongoing needs.
- Implement as many changes as possible for 2021 Accountability.

School Improvement/Interventions

- Consider AEA specific interventions.
- Develop an intervention framework specifically for AECs.

Bonus Points or AEA Distinction Designations Ideas

- Award additional points for STAAR at Meets/Masters.
- Award points for IGC reduction as a result of improved STAAR outcomes.
- Award points for retester outcomes based on DRS averages.
- Update bonus point methodology with updated indicators.
- Recognize SAT/ACT participation/performance and/or TSIA performance.

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Summary of Data Modeling Requests

- How can the current bonus points be scaled to award credit to more campuses? Is there a way to adjust the current methodology to award points to more campuses?
- Frequency on how many times students retest over whole testing history.
- Of the # of EOC testers in spring 2019, how many were retesters? How many times had the students retested over their entire testing history?

*Note for all data runs: Disaggregate by AEA type and include non-AEA for comparison.