

2020 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee Summary of Meeting on November 19-20, 2019

The objective for the first 2020 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting was to recommend improvements for the 2020 accountability system and beyond. 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.

November 19, 2019

- TEA welcomed the committee and members were introduced.
- Committee members reviewed the inclusion of English learners (EL) in the 2020 accountability system.
 - Questions
 - Can we explore having a separate state and federal accountability system? **Texas legislators and the commissioner endorse the state using one accountability system.**
 - Why does the U.S Department of Education (USDE) keep mandating these guidelines and targets for ELs? **The USDE wants to ensure all states are operating their accountability systems within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) framework.**
 - Does federal law always supersede state law? **Federal law always supersedes state law.**
 - Why does TEA want to include EL students identified as unschooled asylees, unschooled refugees, and/or students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) in accountability after their first year of enrollment? **TEA was audited by the USDE. This action item stated that TEA must provide evidence that students who are identified as unschooled asylees, unschooled refugees, or students with interrupted formal education are included in assessment and accountability systems consistent with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) statute.**
 - If asylees, refugees, and SIFEs are included in their second year, do the targets have to be adjusted? **No. Campuses with a large population of these students may address substantial impact through the appeals process.**
 - Can TEA assign a *Not Rated* label to campuses serving a large SIFE population? **We can analyze the data and consult with the commissioner about exploring this as an option.**
 - Can TEA include explicit information in the manual about asylees, refugees, and SIFEs? **Yes, to the extent that is legally possible.**

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- Will including asylees, refugees, and SIFEs in accountability in their second year of enrollment have an impact on graduation rates? **No. This inclusion applies to STAAR results. Additionally, these students are already included in College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) indicators and in the federal graduation rates in the Closing the Gaps domain.**
- Could TEA apply a hold harmless provision to asylees, refugees, and SIFEs in accountability? **TEA can explore this option, but the USDE has been clear that these students' assessment results must be included in accountability.**
- Could SIFEs be included in the Closing the Gaps domain in their second year of enrollment and in the Student Achievement and School Progress domains beginning in their sixth year of enrollment? **No, this would require running two systems.**
- Concerns
 - Asylees, refugees, and SIFEs have unique situations. The exclusion of their data from the accountability system gave campuses the time needed to individualize student learning plans outside of accountability. This could change if they are included in accountability in their second year of enrollment.
 - The *2019 Accountability Manual* states that the accountability system requires that the rules be applied uniformly. Therefore, requests for exceptions to the rules for a district, charter school, or campus are viewed unfavorably and will most likely be denied. This could cause hesitation to file an appeal from campuses with large populations of asylees, refugees, and SIFE students.
- TEA staff notes that cut points and the Closing the Gaps domain targets are to remain steady in the 2020 accountability system.
 - Questions
 - Some campuses met all their subpopulation targets and only missed the target for the all students group. These campuses have high bilingual and EL populations. Is there any way that only the subgroups would apply and not the all students group for the Closing the Gaps domain? **TEA will explore removing the all students group when identifying campuses for targeted and additional target support. The all students group must be used to calculate the Closing the Gaps domain per state statute.**
 - Can TEA amend targets so that they vary by campus type? Having this change is crucial for 3–5 schools. Results tend to improve as grade levels increase. This might mitigate over identification of elementary campuses for targeted and additional targeted support. **This would require an ESSA amendment and target resets, but it's something that we can explore for the five-year accountability reset.**

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- Can TEA amend the minimum number of evaluated indicators in the Closing the Gaps domain from five indicators to four indicators? This negatively impacts smaller campuses, especially those that are doing well in Academic Growth but aren't recognized because Academic Growth is not evaluated. **TEA can explore this option.**
- Committee members reviewed the career and technical education (CTE) coherent sequence to industry-based certification (IBC) transition plan.
 - Questions
 - Can we extend the one-half point to include 2020 graduates for use in 2021 accountability? Currently, the provision ends with 2019 graduates. 2020 graduates had already declared their endorsements and completed their freshmen year of high school when House Bill 22 was authored in 2017. Therefore, the Class of 2021 would be the first class where districts had time to implement the legislation. These students would count in 2022 accountability. **TEA can explore this option, but the one-half point CTE transition plan was already extended by one year.**
 - Concerns
 - The change to the CTE plan was made when this cohort of students had already committed to this path. We don't disagree with the shift, but these students should be allowed the time to finish the program they committed to. Removing the one-half point in 2021 could negatively impact CCMR scores in accountability.
- Committee members reviewed the plan to allow districts an opportunity to report IBCs in the fall 2019 TSDS PEIMS submission for students who earned IBCs in prior school years.
 - Questions
 - Why does increasing the number of IBCs that districts can report per student matter? **For CCMR purposes, this would not make an impact. This could potentially impact funding, as districts will begin to receive reimbursements for IBCs reported.**

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- Committee members reviewed information about the cessation of substitute assessments in accountability.
 - Questions
 - We use this information at the district level to close out a graduate's file. Why did TEA remove the substitute assessment bubble from the test answer documents? **Answer documents typically do not include items that are not used in the accountability calculations. Including this option could increase data reporting errors. We can, however, continue to provide this via the currently available substitute assessment report to assist districts in closing these records for graduates.**
 - With student mobility in mind, how would a campus know if a student has taken a substitute assessment in other districts? **TEA could provide districts a list that indicates whether a student took a substitute assessment in another district.**
 - Where can we find the report that lists substitute assessments by student? **This information is provided to districts through the [Texas Assessment Management System \(TAMS\)](#). Please note, if a district or campus does not have students who took a substitute assessment, they do not have a report.**
- Committee members reviewed the changes for accelerated testers in 2021 accountability.
 - Questions
 - If an 8th grader takes the English I EOC, will they need to double test? **Yes. The exception only applies to grade 8 students who take the Algebra I EOC.**
 - Why is an 8th grade Algebra I student the only exception? **This is the only allowable exception in ESSA.**
 - How could this change affect accountability? **Only the typical grade-level assessment (i.e., grade 8 reading) would be used for accountability calculations.**
 - Is this change a result of federal guidelines? **TEA was audited by the USDE. This action item stated that TEA must provide evidence that it administers the same grade-level assessments to all public-school students, including those students enrolled in advanced mathematics, reading/language arts, and, if applicable, science courses.**
 - Is TEA thinking of banking tests in the future? **TEA will not bank tests.**
 - Why do we need to extend this change beyond mathematics and reading? **Including science as part of this change is a federal requirement. History and social studies will not fall under this federally-mandated change.**

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- Can a chart be included in the 2020 accountability manual outlining different examples? **The Student Assessment Division will provide guidance for the 2020-21 assessment cycle.**
- Will this data lag? **It will follow our accountability cycle, June-May, and will be treated like any other assessment in accountability.**
- The College Board currently does not prepopulate the state unique IDs onto the student's TSI assessment answer document. Students must physically bubble in this information, possibly causing errors data reporting. Could TEA request that the College Board include this information to decrease matching errors? **TEA will explore this option. In the meantime, we will provide the college, career, and military readiness (CCMR) student listing preview and make corrections to data as needed during the CCMR corrections window.**
- Concerns
 - An 8th grader taking biology will be required to take the 8th grade science STAAR test. The content for these two classes is not the same and does not align.
- Committee members participated in an open forum.
 - Questions
 - Can you make the methodology for School Progress: Relative Performance more transparent? **Yes.**
 - Will campus enrollment type collected in TSDS PEIMS be made public? **Yes.**
 - Can the agency consider differentiated targets by school type (elementary school, middle school and high school) for the English Language Proficiency component in the Closing the Gaps domain? **This would require an ESSA amendment and updated targets, but it's something that we can explore at the five-year accountability reset.**
- The committee reviewed potential ESSA amendments for 2020 accountability.
 - Questions
 - If we don't graduate students in two additional years, won't that negatively impact our graduation rate? **This would only affect the Closing the Gaps federal domain. Districts should continue to make decisions that are in their students' best interest.**
 - If you use the six-year graduation rate for alternative education campuses (AECs), how many campuses would benefit? **Using a six-year graduation rate with a 92 percent interim target would result in the same or an improved Closing the Gaps letter grade for nearly all campuses.**

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- Would this potential ESSA amendment change the 67 percent graduation rate target for comprehensive support and improvement identification? **No, that is a federally mandated target. We could shift to using a six-year rate below 67 percent to identify campuses for comprehensive support.**
- The committee discussed alternative education accountability (AEA).
 - Questions
 - Do districts have leeway with the criteria for alternative education campus (AEC) registration? **No, at least 75 percent of students served by the campus must be at risk, and at least 50 percent of students must be enrolled in grades 6–12. Texas Education Code §29.081(d) defines the at-risk criteria.**
- Members discussed using the four-year versus the six-year graduation rate in the Closing the Gaps domain for AECs.
 - Concerns
 - Dropout recovery schools (DRS) and AECs are complicated but are recognized to be one and the same. The current at risk definition includes 14 indicators, and age is just one of those. There needs to be recognition that an AEC and a DRS are different.
- The committee discussed graduation rate methodology for P-TECHs.
 - Question
 - How does this differ from individualized education program (IEP) graduates? **IEP graduates are special education students who are trying to satisfy IEP requirements and need extra time to do so. P-TECH students finish the minimum requirements in four years and stay an additional two to complete their associate degree.**
- Members discussed graduation rate methodology for traditional campuses.
 - Question
 - If a student transfers to your district but leaves, and you cannot find out the status of the student, how should you code that student? **The student should be coded as a dropout.**
- The committee discussed the potential change to escalate additional targeted support to comprehensive support and improvement after three years.
 - Question
 - If we update the methodology to escalate additional targeted support campuses to comprehensive support after three years, will that go into effect immediately? **Yes. However, we will consult with the USDE to see when the state must implement interventions and supports.**

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- When we had adequate yearly progress (AYP), we had to be concerned with focus and priority campuses with few interventions at the state level. Now, there's so much more from the federal level, and it throws attention away from state school accountability. It's so much work within one single system.
- The committee reviewed the five-year accountability reset timeline and updates.
 - Questions
 - How would TEA define chronic absenteeism? **The definition is under discussion. We are looking into what other states have done.**
 - Is there a relationship between campus performance and absenteeism? **There is research demonstrating an impact on student outcomes.**
 - Why is TEA exploring using chronic absenteeism in the Closing the Gaps Student Success component? **Currently, over half of states include this component in their accountability system. It would add a non-STAAR accountability indicator for elementary and middle schools. Research has also shown that chronic absenteeism has an impact on dropout and completion rates.**
 - Could TEA use survey data instead of chronic absenteeism in Closing the Gaps? **The agency is exploring the feasibility of adding extra- and/or cocurricular indicators to future systems.**
 - Concerns
 - This timeline appears to be a four-year reset. This does not align with the messaging from the commissioner about holding steady for five years.
 - Chronic absenteeism is challenging for a campus to influence. There are many unique factors that can cause a student to be chronically absent.
- Committee members reviewed proposed accelerated mathematics recognitions.
 - Questions
 - Why is TEA proposing these new mathematics recognitions? **TEA tracked 5th grade mathematics students who performed in the top two quartiles from 5th grade through 8th grade mathematics. In 8th grade, many of these students were not enrolled in Algebra I. Districts reported there are many factors that affect this, and accountability is one of those factors.**
 - What's the relationship between this methodology and Duke TIP students? **TEA has not explored this.**
 - Is there a desire to begin to acknowledge growth in mathematics recognitions? **TEA can explore this in the future.**

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- Concerns
 - Algebra I enrollment will not increase if the Algebra I mathematics distinction designation participation indicator is replaced with an Algebra I performance indicator.
 - Both performance and participation should be included as indicators in the mathematics distinction designation methodology.
- Committee members reviewed the potential changes to the ratings release timeline.
 - Questions
 - Can we receive the ratings earlier instead of later? **TEA can explore this option. We will also explore the feasibility of providing districts with their ratings preview earlier to allow for district planning.**
 - Would the TSDS PEIMS October snapshot change if the ratings were released later? **No. However, certain data elements related to leaver records would have to be reported earlier.**
 - Can ETS include an additional summary report for districts and campuses with the percentage of students who were Approaches, Meets, and Masters Grade Level before ratings are released? **TEA will explore this option.**
 - Can the estimator tool be updated sooner? **TEA will explore this option.**
 - Can we review APAC meeting notes? **Yes. They will be posted to the 2020 accountability development page as soon as they are finalized.**
 - Concerns
 - Districts begin planning many factors, including staffing and hiring decisions and campus improvement plans, in the summer. If we receive ratings later in the fall, the school year will have already begun, and the critical planning time period when this data is crucial will have passed.
 - Work on campuses in need of improvement begins at the start of the new school year. If we do not get this data from TEA until late fall, districts may not be able to make effective improvement plans and instructional decisions for their campuses.

November 20, 2019

- TEA welcomed committee members and reviewed day one notes.
- The committee revisited using the four-year versus the six-year graduation rate in Closing the Gaps for AECs.
 - Concern
 - Some members want the six-year graduation rate used for all AECs, not just for DRSS.

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- Members revisited discussions of the five-year reset.
 - Concern
 - This is not a true five-year plan, and that's an issue. The committee unanimously agreed that having the reset go into effect in 2022 is not truly a five-year plan, noting that if it does change, there must be a justification and that must be shared.
- The committee discussed CCMR board goal setting.
 - Concerns
 - We should not set goals for a percentage enlisting in the military. The goal should not be increasing the percentage of enlisted graduates. There is a misunderstanding with districts that they are supposed to be setting a goal.
 - For accountability purposes, "readiness" is misleading if we are looking at military enlistment. It's not aligned with college/career readiness, which are true readiness measures.
- The committee discussed School Progress: Part A: Academic Growth for campuses serving up to grade 3.
 - Concerns
 - The proposed methodology does not evaluate the same group of students.
 - A cumulative effect could occur, and the expectations could continue to increase from year to year.
 - We need to see these same models for 4th grade as well in order to see whether the distributions and cut scores are the same—this will validate if this model works.
 - We need an aspect to this that gives campuses full credit for growth if they are already very high performing (e.g., Masters Grade Level assessment results receive 1 point, regardless of growth).
 - We do not want campuses changing grade spans based on accountability rules.
 - There are twice as many AECs as there are campuses that end at grade 3, and AECs are not afforded one part of School Progress. TEA should also consider running data to allow AECs to have a Relative Performance rating.
 - We fear that the USDE will want to pull this into Closing the Gaps, and then this will be by student group. **This would be incorporated into Closing the Gaps if it's used in School Progress.**
 - It would make sense to use the proxy for grade 3 across the state (regardless of whether the campus has the upper grades). **We will bring more models/ scenarios in February. Please forward any suggestions in the meantime.**

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- Ryan Merritt and Steve Smith from the College, Career, and Military Preparation (CCMP) Division presented to the committee regarding the CTE coherent sequence auto calculation.
 - Questions
 - Will there be a comment period to share concerns? **There was already a comment period.**
 - Can we do something about certain courses that are considered advanced? **Curriculum is evaluating all coursework to ensure courses are classified in the appropriate subject area. If you forward specific courses of concern, we can pass those along.**
 - Concerns
 - We would like to have a preview of the data. **We are using 2018 data so we will have the opportunity to compare.**
 - It would be helpful to color code these handouts to show what's applicable for state and federal.
- The committee discussed a Spanish to English proxy for students transitioning from the Spanish STAAR to the English STAAR.
 - Concerns
 - Students will be instructed in the language they are tested in. That could have a long-term negative impact.
 - Some members want the proxy regardless of whether it hurts the campuses. It acknowledges the work of the schools and sets the expectation that when the kids are ready to switch languages, noting that they have high expectations.
 - All committee members are in favor of putting a tentative recommendation to add the proxy measure. **We'll do the modeling, send the documentation around, and the committee can provide additional input.**
- Lizette Ridgeway from School Improvement presented to the committee on School Improvement Division updates.
 - Concerns
 - There needs to be a feeling of legitimacy—that the planning work matters and is helpful, not just going through the motions because it is required.
 - The Effective Schools Framework is geared towards traditional schools.
 - It appears that AEA representatives were underrepresented in school improvement identification methodology discussions.
 - The timing of identification is a critical issue.
 - We need more flexibility on certain aspects—get input from the field to make the public acceptance of this better.
 - We need direction until the rule regarding consecutive *Ds* is adopted. Districts do not know how to interpret existing guidance.

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- Closing Remarks