

## 2021 Accountability Advisory Committees Summary of Meeting on April 26, 2021

The objective of the April 26, 2021 Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) meeting was to solicit feedback on solutions to address the unique challenges due to COVID-19 and discuss ideas for the 2023 accountability system reset. TEA responses to questions and concerns are provided in red. Some questions require staff research and are yet to be answered. The following is a summary of the discussion at the meeting.

- TEA welcomed the committee members to the virtual meeting.
- The committee reviewed the accountability reset timeline and the impact of COVID-19.
  - Timeline
    - The accountability system reset framework will be released in May 2022 for implementation in the 2022–23 school year.
    - Targets will likely be released fall 2022 after processing 2022 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) data.
  - COVID-19 Impact
    - Missing STAAR data may limit modeling to 2021 and 2022 results.
    - Low 2021 participation rates may limit the ability to model small student groups.
    - TEA will only have one year (2021 to 2022) of data to use for growth modeling, which may be impacted by low 2021 participation rates.
    - Class of 2020 and 2021 College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) and graduation data may be impacted by COVID-19.
  - Questions
    - If accountability ratings are resumed in 2022, how will progress be measured fairly? **This has yet to be determined. While TEA will have a STAAR progress measure for students who test in 2021 and 2022, we cannot predict what those results will look like and how campus and district growth will be measured at this time.**
    - What percentage of students does TEA expect to test? Can participation rates disaggregated by demographics be provided? **Participation rates for 2021 are unknown at this time. We will provide extensive participation rate reporting when we have 2021 results.**
    - How do federal plans and deadlines for the United States Department of Education (USDE) correspond to the three-year timeline? **To implement in 2023, we need to submit an amendment in fall of 2022. We will have the amendment ready by summer of 2022.**
    - How will new STAAR item types in 2023 impact targets? **We will attempt to account for this with field testing data prior to the item type change.**
    - Will APAC and ATAC have an opportunity to provide their opinion on the agency’s response to COVID-19? **Yes. The Commissioner has requested**

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- APAC and ATAC feedback on how districts have been impacted by COVID-19. The Commissioner has also requested APAC and ATAC feedback on the accountability reset.
- Will August 2022 ratings be the same as pre-COVID? Will ratings based on the accountability reset begin August 2023? **Yes. We will continue discussing 2022 accountability after we receive 2021 testing data.**
  - Concerns
    - A decision on 2022 Academic Growth will be made without APAC and ATAC feedback. **The agency will consult with APAC and ATAC prior to making a decision about how to determine Academic Growth in 2022.**
    - The process for identifying schools for improvement based on multi-year unacceptable ratings may be unfair due to the pandemic. **The legislature determines what constitutes multi-year unacceptable.**
  - The committee reviewed potential Closing the Gaps reset ideas.
    - Using gradated outcomes for student group targets. This could allow districts to demonstrate growth to the target.
    - Developing new baselines for student group targets, due to COVID-19.
    - Developing unique student group targets for dropout prevention and recovery schools (DPRS).
    - Questions
      - Which states are you looking at for your Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) research? **We have looked at every state's ESSA plan. When considering a gradated point system for Closing the Gaps, we specifically referenced Oregon and Washington.**
      - Can technical information on how a 0–4-point gradated system would work within Closing the Gaps be provided? **Yes, TEA can provide this at a future meeting.**
      - What happened to the 10-point partial credit system for English Language Proficiency (ELP)? **We are considering using the 0–4-point system for all Closing the Gaps indicators, including ELP.**
    - Concerns
      - All changes need to be understandable by the public. Some of these more complex methodologies may be difficult to explain. **We'll have to provide thorough explanatory materials for whatever route we take.**
      - Subdividing student groups by their economically disadvantaged status is preferred. Economically disadvantaged status is more important than student group or race.
      - Not all groups participated in the census.
      - We should be focusing on improvement strategies and what to do with the data.

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- Using a forced distribution is a concern. A distribution may be necessary to determine initial targets; however, the idea would be to maintain the targets like we have done for the current system.
- Poor performing, low economically disadvantaged schools escape the bottom 5 percent. This system does not put pressure on those schools to improve or assign any consequences.
- The committee reviewed Closing the Gaps reset ideas for elementary and middle schools.
  - Incorporating a non-STAAR School Quality/Student Success indicator
  - Questions
    - Would a chronic absenteeism component impact at-risk schools more than other schools? This depends on how we include it in the system, including whether to evaluate it at the student level, the component's weighting within the entire system, and how the chronic absenteeism rate is calculated.
    - Has TEA researched the drivers of chronic absenteeism? Yes.
    - What are we measuring? Chronic absenteeism or attendance? We are considering chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is typically defined as the percentage of students missing 10% or more of enrolled days over a period. We are not considering average daily attendance, which is an aggregate percentage representing the number of students present on any given day, often averaged, or aggregated over a period.
    - How would mobility work? This is up for discussion. Other states require students to be consecutively enrolled for a number of days to be included in accountability. TEA welcomes feedback from ATAC and APAC on which students they feel campuses and districts should be held accountable for.
    - How many states measure at the student level and how many at the campus level? Chronic absenteeism counts the number of eligible students missing more than 10% of enrolled school days and divides this by the total number of enrolled students, creating a campus level percentage. States using chronic absenteeism in their accountability systems count the number of students missing more than 10% of enrolled days, and then create an aggregate measure.

Technical rules defining what an absence is and which students are included in the denominator differ by state. APAC and ATAC have an opportunity to provide their feedback on these technical rules.

- States using chronic absenteeism reward schools for improving their campus-level percentage, which comes from student-level improvements. Unlike average daily attendance, where a school can

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improve their rate by increasing the attendance rates of students who already have a high attendance percentage (98% to 99%), campuses improving chronic absenteeism rates can only improve their score by improving the attendance rates of students who have fallen below an attendance rate of 90% (or missed 10% or more of days).

- How would excused and unexcused absences work? Most states using chronic absenteeism believe it is important that students do not miss too many school days, regardless of the reason. Thus, most states using chronic absenteeism include both excused and unexcused absences. Currently, we would not be able to differentiate between unexcused versus excused.
  - What is Texas's situation? Texas is not exempt from the problem of chronic absenteeism. There is significant research demonstrating that chronic absenteeism precedes negative academic and career outcomes, behavior problems, disrupts teacher lesson planning and student's social networks, increases the risk of dropping out of high school, and more.
  - Do we calculate and monitor chronic absenteeism right now? Yes. Texas annually collects and reports chronic absenteeism counts to the USDE in its EdFacts data submission.
  - What are we trying to accomplish with chronic absenteeism? Students cannot control their attendance. Performance Reporting is often asked to consider adding data into the accountability system for elementary and middle schools that is not based on standardized testing. Adding chronic absenteeism to elementary and middle school accountability systems would accomplish this. Chronic absenteeism data is already valid and reliable and would not require districts to collect new data. Including this data in the accountability system is also an opportunity to reward campuses and districts for the work they are already doing to improve attendance and engagement among their students, their families, and communities.
  - Can we utilize stratified random sampling? The USDE is not against a representative sample, but we would have to discuss when it would occur (e.g., 3rd and 5th grade) and it would have to go through a peer review process.
- Concerns
    - Texas is so big; a school climate survey would be difficult.
    - Chronic absenteeism in lower grades may be more about parent behavior than students.
    - Reading fluency should be considered as an alternative measure.

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- If the goal is to change adult behavior, TEA could consider a school's fine arts and foreign language offerings. These both help students learn.
- We could consider chronic absenteeism improvement instead of using it as a punitive measure.
- Funding follows what the accountability system measures.
- Chronic absenteeism could drive schools to withdraw students instead of trying to get them back to school.
- The committee reviewed School Progress reset ideas.
  - Academic Growth
  - Relative Performance
  - Questions
    - Why can we not use Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) reading to for a Spanish to English transition measure to see if students are improving? **We would need data to show that improvement on TELPAS correlates to an equivalent advancement on STAAR reading. We have concerns about convincing the USDE to approve this idea, such as our ability to tie the TELPAS to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and not duplicate the ELP component.**
  - Concerns
    - We shouldn't be dissuaded if the data is not favorable to school and district outcomes right away.
- The committee reviewed Student Achievement reset ideas.
  - STAAR
  - CCMR
  - Graduation Rate
  - Questions
    - Can we substitute AP courses for SAT or ACT if the demand for these tests decreases? **We can propose this idea to the USDE and confirm whether TEA would be required to pay for the AP assessment. The state currently pays for SAT and ACT tests, but not AP tests. This plan also must be federally peer reviewed.**
  - Concerns
    - The demand for SAT and ACT testing may be decreasing.
    - Smaller schools do not offer AP classes and exams.
- The committee reviewed legislative updates from the 87<sup>th</sup> legislative session.
  - Academic accountability is not a large focus.
  - No significant changes to the system.
  - Noteworthy bills regard the following:
    - Alternative education accountability
    - Additional CCMR indicators

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- *Not Rated* labels for declared disasters
- Remote learning programs
- Removing various assessments
- Questions
  - What bills are you following that relate to using consecutive years for school identifications? **SB 1365, SB 1645, HB 3270, and HB 3731.**  
**Performance Reporting is monitoring all bills related to accountability.**
- The committee reviewed the timeline for a follow up meeting this summer.