

2020 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee Summary of Meeting on January 21, 2020

The objective for the second 2020 Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) meeting was to recommend improvements for the 2020 accountability system and beyond. 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 and members were introduced.
- Committee goals were outlined.
- Committee members discussed potential Closing the Gaps domain graduation rate methodology. This would require an Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan amendment.
 - Questions
 - Would this be implemented for 2020 accountability ratings? **TEA is hopeful this will begin in 2020.**
- The committee discussed the potential change to escalate additional targeted support to comprehensive support and improvement after three years.
 - Questions
 - Does this align with the intent of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)? **Yes. ESSA describes additional targeted support as a subset of comprehensive support and improvement—the same methodology (bottom 5 percent), applied to each student group. ESSA requires that additional targeted support schools that do not exit within a state-determined number of years, then be identified for comprehensive support.**
 - Has this been shared with the public? **Yes. On December 19, 2019, TEA released a To the Administrator Addressed (TAA) letter announcing the potential ESSA amendments and public comment period which ended on January 18, 2020.**
 - Would this be implemented for 2020 accountability ratings? **If the amendment is submitted and approved as written in the TAA, implementation would begin with the 2021-22 school year.**
- Committee members reviewed the changes for accelerated testers in 2021 accountability.
 - Questions
 - Are other states challenging the USDE requirement for double testing in math? **Several states have received waivers that Texas has not received for accelerated testers. However, Texas does not have additional high school level mathematics assessments. The states granted waivers have two or more high school level mathematics assessments in addition to the use of SAT/ACT.**
 - Has TEA requested a waiver from the USDE for accelerated testers? **We have explored this and provided the USDE with sound**

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- evidence of these student's outcomes and high performance and have not received favorable feedback.
 - Can the SAT/ACT be used to meet requirements? Or the Texas Success Initiative assessment (TSIA)? Can the SAT be used in subsequent years? An SAT/ACT result can be used; however, it can only be used once to meet federal requirements, so a 7th grader who takes the Algebra I EOC in grade 7 and the SAT/ACT in grade 8 would not have a higher-level mathematics assessment for high school. The TSIA cannot be used because it is not a nationally recognized test nor has it gone through peer review.
 - Is there a specific person the agency contacts at USDE? Yes. We correspond with USDE personnel assigned to Texas.
 - Is the highest SAT/ACT score used for all domains? Yes.
 - Comments
 - The committee will aid TEA by continuing to show support for a waiver from the USDE.
- The committee discussed School Progress, Part A: Academic Growth for campuses serving up to grade 3.
 - Comments
 - This may create an artificial growth measure.
 - This could have a negative impact for some campuses.
 - Consider individual assessments that the districts could propose to measure growth, such as MAP testing.
 - If this is implemented, the agency should wait to align with the reset.
- The commissioner solicited feedback on the accountability reset timeline.
 - Comments
 - The reset should occur on even years when there is no legislative session. This would allow for time to incorporate new legislation.
 - The TEKS just changed for reading/language arts (RLA). Extending the reset timeline would allow the public additional time to adjust to these changes.
 - Be mindful of the effect of the reading academies during the reset. If cut points are moved, the gains that are anticipated to be made in reading would not be felt.
 - Communication with the public is key so that terminology and accountability changes are not confusing. A longer time frame under the same system limits this confusion.
 - Keep in mind how this relates to the teacher allotment.
 - This coincides with STAAR being administered online only. The agency should be mindful of rolling out so many changes in one year.

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- The commissioner solicited feedback on the cessation of half point CTE Coherent Sequence Coursework Aligned with Industry-Based Certifications College, Career, or Military ready (CCMR) credit in 2021.
 - Comments
 - This should align with the reset.
 - Examine current industry trends.
 - Look at special education students and others who may be less likely to pass the certification exam, look for other ways to give credit to these students.
- The commissioner solicited feedback on adding extra and co-curricular components to the accountability system.
 - Comments
 - Campus climate survey results should be included in accountability.
 - Physical Education (PE) should be included in accountability. FitnessGram data could be used.
 - Encourage schools to invest in mental health by giving credit for those relationship inputs, such as a counselor to student ratio.
 - School safety, climate, and discipline should be considered.
- The committee discussed awarding partial points for the English Language Proficiency (ELP) component in the Closing the Gaps domain.
 - Questions
 - Did more districts with a higher percentage of English learners (ELs) miss the 36% target than districts with a lower percentage of ELs? **We don't have a count at this time, but we can generate data in time for the next APAC meeting.**
 - Are districts appealing their rating based on the ELP component in the Closing the Gaps domain? **Yes.**
 - Comments
 - This would take into account changes to the TELPAS assessment and allow campuses time to adjust to these changes.
- TEA discussed the feasibility of calculating School Progress, Part B: Relative Performance for alternative education accountability (AEA) campuses.
 - Questions
 - Could TEA create a more rigorous identification process for AEA? **We are currently exploring this.**
 - Could TEA create a separate AEA accountability system or indicators specifically for AEA campuses that serve their unique population? **We are currently exploring this suggestion.**
 - Comments
 - AEA campuses are unique. Currently, districts are incentivized to close AEAs to positively impact their accountability ratings, so this is promising news for AEAs.

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- The committee discussed a Spanish to English proxy for students transitioning from the Spanish STAAR to the English STAAR.
 - Questions
 - Since this is a significant change, could it be implemented with the accountability reset? **We can explore this suggestion.**
 - Could the agency limit the proxy to grades 6–8 when students are not offered any assessments in Spanish? **We can explore this suggestion.**
 - Could TEA report this data to stakeholders on the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) but not include it in accountability? **We can explore this suggestion.**
 - Could TEA include this in the Results Driven Accountability (RDA) system? **We can explore this suggestion.**
 - Comments
 - If used, the Spanish to English transition proxy implementation should align with the accountability system reset.
- The committee discussed establishing unique long-term four and six-year graduation rate targets using baseline data for the accountability reset.
 - Questions
 - Would this change include all student groups? **No. We would explore differentiated targets for certain student groups.**
 - Comments
 - This could be perceived as lowering expectations for those student groups.
 - Adjust the cohort for special education students based off the students' IEP.
- The committee discussed potential changes to district rating methodology for the accountability reset.
 - Questions
 - When would this be implemented? **This would begin with the accountability reset.**
 - Would TEA provide districts with an estimator tool allowing them to gauge their specific rating proportions. **We can explore providing an estimator.**
 - Could TEA post both ratings with this methodology and without it? **We can explore this suggestion.**
 - Is a district considered a collection of students or of campuses by TEA? **TEA aligns with federal guidelines that local education agencies (LEAs) are comprised of campuses, and campuses are comprised of students.**
 - Does statute allow for this change? **Yes.**
 - How many districts would this affect? **We are currently in the process of gathering this data.**

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- Instead of this change, could TEA add extra and co-curricular components to district rating methodology? **We can explore this suggestion.**
- Could we post two ratings for parents to see, one with CCMR and one without? **We can explore this suggestion.**
- Concerns
 - This shift could cause confusion.
 - We want to continue to use other components besides just STAAR to measure a district's success.
 - This will add complexity to an already complex accountability system.
 - If TEA implements this change, there would need to be clear communication to the public about TEA changing their focus to STAAR and away from CCMR and graduation rate.
 - Our main goal should be graduation rates. At some schools, students are farther behind at the lower grade levels, but they catch up over the course of their school career. The current system rewards that progress by placing more weight in CCMR and graduation rates.
 - Are there factors that influence a district's grade such as size or setting (e.g., rural)? A grouping like UIL sizes might be a better way to evaluate districts. **We want to avoid creating a system with exceptional rules (e.g., you are a B except if you are a large high school, etc.).**
- The committee discussed alternatives to the STAAR component in the Closing the Gaps domain for the accountability reset.
 - Questions
 - If chronic absenteeism is used, how will the cut points be determined? **We would determine cut points based on research and stakeholder feedback. We would want districts and campuses to have something to grow towards and ensure that the indicator differentiates among higher and lower performing campuses/districts.**
 - Comments
 - While attendance rates across the state are generally high, ESSA requires the state to differentiate a relatively low attendance rate from a relatively high attendance rate.
 - Let's look to other districts and states to see what they are using to measure school quality.
 - We have an outcomes-based system. Consider adding input-based indicators which could incentivize districts to put new programs and resources towards low socio-economic schools.
 - Concerns

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- If extra and co-curricular components are used, rural and high poverty areas could be limited due to finances or lack of resources.
- There is an economic component to attendance.
- If climate surveys are used, a low response rate could falsely skew the data.
- The committee discussed establishing a unique campus type with different components, weights, and targets in the Closing the Gaps domain for AEAs for the accountability reset.
 - Questions
 - Could TEA create a more rigorous identification process for AEAs? **We are currently exploring this suggestion.**
 - Would TEA create a more rigorous definition of a dropout recovery school (DRS)? **TEA is not currently exploring this, as DRS is defined in statute.**
- The committee discussed Closing the Gaps domain weight increase for campuses identified for school improvement.
 - Questions
 - Why would TEA make this change? **Stakeholders have communicated concerns regarding the alignment between state accountability ratings and school improvement identification.**
 - Comments
 - We could put an asterisk with ratings to indicate that they are in Results Driven Accountability (RDA).