**Mississippi Accountability Task Force Meeting**

**December 15, 2021**

**Meeting Summary**

**Meeting Participants**

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| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Organization** |
| Richard | Baliko | Noxubee County School District |
| Crystal | Bates | Wayne County School District |
| Alan | Burrow | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Tracy | Cameron | West Bolivar Consolidated School District |
| Chris | Domaleski | The Center for Assessment |
| Deborah | Donovan | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Jacob | Dykes | Ocean Springs School District |
| Amanda | Garcia | Petal School District |
| Anthony | Goins | Clinton Public School District |
| Fina | Hence | Perry County School District |
| Fredrick | Hickmon | Kemper County School District |
| Christy | Hovanetz | Foundation for Excellence in Education |
| Karen | Howard | Aberdeen School District |
| Ryan | Kuykendall | DeSoto County School District |
| Greg | Paczak | Madison County School District |
| Kenneth | Pulley | Greenwood Leflore Consolidated School District |
| Jay | Smith | North Pike School District |
| Kemi | Strain | Amory School District |
| Matt | Thompson | Union County School District |
| Paula | Vanderford | Mississippi Department of Education |
| Shalondia | Washington | Canton Public Schools |

**Welcome and Introductions**

Following welcome and introductions, Dr. Chris Domaleski reviewed the purpose of the Accountability Task Force (ATC), indicating their role was to help the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) make good decisions about the design and implementation of the state, school accountability system. He emphasized that the ATF focuses on policy priorities and decisions to support those priorities that are technically defensible and operationally feasible. Feedback from the ATF is received as a recommendation to the MDE.

Next, Dr. Domaleski reviewed the ground rules and group norms for the meeting, highlighting the importance of making sure everyone has an opportunity to share their perspectives in an environment characterized by courteous, respectful discourse. In the best case, the ATF will build on one another’s comments and work toward shared understanding and consensus. However, from time to time, it may be necessary to take a vote to identify the group’s recommendations. When that occurs, any dissenting views will be noted in the meeting summary.

**Background: Accountability in Mississippi**

Next, Mr. Alan Burrow provided a review of the school accountability system. He started by discussing the purpose and rationale for the system then provided an overview of performance trends over the years.

Mr. Burrow explained each component in the system for elementary and middle schools and high schools including the procedures to calculate the indicators. Finally, he reviewed how the components are aggregated to produce an overall score and grade.

**Proposed Rule Changes**

Mr. Burrow reviewed two proposed rule changes that were based on prior recommendations from the ATF.

Rule 7.4 operationalizes the recommendations for low-25 growth, putting all scores on the same standardized scale to minimize any impact on growth scores associated with a particular course sequence.

Proposed rule 7.4:

*Any baseline assessment scores used in the identification of the Lowest Performing Twenty-Five Percent Student subgroup for grades 10 through 12 that are from assessments below 8th grade will be standardized to the 8th grade grade-level assessment.*

Rule 9.8 addresses which students are included in acceleration in order to include December graduates.

Proposed rule 9.8:

*Students enrolled in a block schedule must meet FAY either in the fall or spring to be included in the acceleration component. Students enrolled in a traditional schedule must meet FAY for the traditional schedule to be included in the acceleration component.*

Rule 9.11 addresses assignment of acceleration credit, clarifying it goes to the last district/ school of enrollment.

Proposed Rule 7.4

*In the event that an accelerated credential, as defined in Section 9.2, is reported for a student that is not associated with a course, the credential will be included in the calculation for the final school in which the student meets FAY.*

The ATF asked some clarifying questions about the background and specifics of the proposed rule changes, but there were no suggestions to change the draft language of the proposed rules.

**Growth in Grades 10-12**

Dr. Chris Domaleski reviewed the challenges associated with calculating growth in 2021-2022 due to assessment disruptions related to the pandemic. For high schools, growth requires a score in Algebra I and English II in addition to a prior score, which is typically 8th grade math and 8th grade ELA, respectively. Students may take these courses in different grades; tests taken are ‘banked’ and applied to the growth score in grade 10. Because of the pandemic, banked test scores are missing altogether in 2020 and missing for some students in 2021.

Dr. Domaleski reviewed some options for the ATF to help promote discussion of alternatives. Those options were as follows:

Option 1:

* When growth priors are missing calculate school scores using skip-year growth.
* When the outcome test (i.e., Algebra I or English II) is missing, no score is assigned (remove from the numerator and denominator).
* Compare final school/ district score with legacy growth score and assign the higher of the two.

Option 2:

* When growth priors are missing calculate growth scores using skip year growth.
* When the outcome test (i.e., Algebra I or English II) is missing, use student’s legacy score if available.
* Compare final school/ district score with legacy growth score and assign the higher of the two.

Option 3:

* Don’t calculate new growth scores in 2022. Use legacy scores only for all schools and districts.

After some initial discussion about these options, other perspectives about calculating growth for high schools in 2022 were suggested. That perspective was informed by the view that scores in 2021 should not be used for proficiency or prior-year growth measures, because 2021 was regarded as a ‘hold harmless’ year for state tests.

These alternative proposals are summarized below.

Option 4:

* For proficiency use Algebra I and English II scores in 2022 in addition to banked Algebra I and English II taken in 2019 and fall 2020 not previously used for accountability.
* For growth use Algebra I and English II from 2019 and 2020 (fall) combined with 2022 examinees with priors available in 2019 and fall 2020.
* Students whose growth or proficiency scores are drawn from 2019 or fall 2020 (who may be 11th or 12th graders in 2022), should meet FAY each year in the same district to be included.

Option 5:

* Remove growth calculations from high school accountability scores in 2022.
* High school accountability scores would comprise the remaining indicators and weights would be redistributed proportionately.

The ATF noted that option 4 would represent a departure from the current 10th grade cohort approach for high school accountability. Option 5 would substantially change the meaning and interpretation of high school accountability scores. Both issues represent important threats to comparability.

The ATF also discussed whether it was appropriate to use results from 2021 as a prior score or an outcome score. There was not a consensus view on this topic.

Ultimately, the ATF suggested that more information about each of these options is required to help make a decision. In particular, it would be helpful to review data about the impact of various alternatives on growth and accountability ratings overall.

**Closing Comments and Topics for Future Meetings**

At the close of the meeting, Dr. Domaleski invited ATF members to provide final thoughts including any recommendations for future topics. Feedback from the ATF included the following:

* Moving forward, it’s important to include growth.
* Some members expressed support for options that include scores from 2019 and fall 2020, while others did not. Similarly, some members supported using 2021 data to inform 2022 accountability and others did not.
* The accountability system should be broadened to include measures such as social/ emotional learning.
* Keep in mind the impact of accountability systems on teachers and leaders as they continue to navigate the impact of the pandemic.
* Schools with smaller n-sizes will be impacted to a greater degree for some of the issues discussed. Include a review of small schools in data analyses.
* Avoid any ‘cliff effect’ with accountability decisions. In other words, don’t make decisions for 2022 that will artificially inflate scores only to set-up a drop in later years. Many stakeholders understand that performance has declined, and accountability should serve as a baseline to track progress moving forward.
* Many ATF members thanked the MDE for the opportunity to participate and share their perspective.