**Mississippi Accountability Task Force Meeting**

**February 1, 2022**

**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 |
| Jay | Smith | North Pike 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 (ATF), indicating their role is 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, dissenting views will be noted in the meeting summary.

Dr. Domaleski reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked if there was any feedback about the meeting notes from December, 2021. There was no feedback during the meeting. However, ATF members were advised that the notes would remain in draft form for another 2 weeks to allow more time to review and send any written feedback.

**High School Growth**

Dr. Domaleski provided a brief review of 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.

Shortly after the December ATF meeting the United States Department of Education (ED) distributed guidance to states regarding restarting accountability in school year 2021-2022 (SY22). That guidance, and subsequent discussions with ED, makes it clear that some of the options the ATF discussed at the December meeting do not meet federal requirements. In particular, the state cannot provide a choice between using growth estimates calculated in SY22 or legacy results, whichever is more favorable. Also, any option that draws on prior year data in lieu of data from SY22, where available, is not permissible.

Accordingly, there are two primary options MDE recommends:

* 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).
* 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.

One ATF member suggested an additional alternative which could be regarded as Option 2B, as it builds on some aspects of Option 2.

* Option 2B:
  + 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.
  + Instead of using the 10th grade cohort which draws scores from the ‘bank’ in prior years, only use tests administered in 2022 regardless of grade.

The key difference in Option 2B is that all results from 2022 would be used for English II and Algebra regardless of what grade the test was administered in. This proposal was seen as beneficial because it does not use data from 2021 for accountability purposes. Many ATF members voiced concerns about using test scores from 2021 in accountability, explaining that this was not consistent with expectations.

However, some disagreed with using scores from SY22 only in lieu of banking, citing concerns about federal approval (i.e., drawing on data outside of high school grades) and further disruption to comparability of results for the current year and future years. For example, would the state return to banking in SY23 or use the current year approach hereafter? Regardless, would these results be comparable to accountability results in prior years?

The ATF discussed what to do with 8th grade scores if this option is implemented. While the proportion of Algebra I scores from 8th graders is not high statewide, it varies by district with some districts administering as many as 20-25% of Algebra I tests to 8th graders. If these scores are omitted that is undesirable. The ATF asked if MDE would seek clarity about the feasibility of this option with respect to federal requirements.

Ultimately, the ATF voted on 2 propositions to inform next steps.

1. For any missing scores, which primarily applies to 8th grade Algebra I, should MDE omit those scores or use legacy scores (the student’s last available score) when available?

***By a margin of 11 to 2, the ATF supporting using legacy scores instead of omitting missing data in SY22.***

1. If the approach can be approved, should the state use traditional banking in SY22 or switch to using all current year scores in SY22?

***By a margin of 11 to 3, the ATF supporting an approach of using current year scores in lieu of traditional banking in SY22.*** Many ATF members acknowledged the complexity of this issue and suggested that this vote should be seen as support for further exploring the option.

Lastly, the ATF discussed how these decisions impacted proficiency. The committee agreed that whatever approach is used for growth should also be adopted for proficiency to be consistent.

**ESSA Classification Plan**

Next, the ATF discussed options for how the state should proceed with respect to the classification criteria and timeline for ESSA classifications of CSI and ATSI.

The conversation began by acknowledging some non-negotiables:

* MDE must classify schools as CSI, ATSI, and TSI
* Classification decisions must be based on data in 2021-2022
* Any school that exits classification, must satisfy approved exit criteria
* MDE remains committed to long term goal of 70% proficiency

Dr. Domaleski outlined a plan to address the timeline for classifications and reviewed the criteria for exit and identification. Furthermore, he discussed an option to modify the exit criteria by removing the criterion requiring an increase in letter grade or progress over midpoint. Among other potential benefits, this would align the identification and exit standards. The ATF approved the following plan without objection.

* ‘Transitional’ CSI classifications will based on SY22 as required by law
* CSI classification criteria should remove the progress component for SY22 only
* The schools classified as CSI in fall would be re-examined in the next year based on SY23 data
* Defer cumulative ATSI classification to CSI to fall 2023 based on SY23 data. This will sync the cumulative ATSI and CSI identification cycles
* The ‘traditional’ 3-year cycle would restart in fall 2023 based on SY23 data

The ATF expressed appreciation to the MDE for developing a commendable, responsive plan for the ATF’s consideration.

**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:

* Several ATF members affirmed the need to include scores from 8th grade Algebra in accountability in SY22.
* Many ATF members expressed in interest in exploring more novel ‘out of the box’ ideas for accountability, such as moving beyond letter grades and including social, emotional indicators.
* Keep in mind the impact of accountability systems on teachers and leaders as they continue to navigate the impact of the pandemic.
* Many ATF members thanked the MDE for the opportunity to participate and share their perspective.