

**Mississippi Accountability Task Force Meeting
April 30, 2024**

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Meeting Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organization	Role
Lisa Renee	LaMastus	Cleveland School District	Principal
Ryan	Kuykendall	DeSoto County	Chief Accountability Officer
Christy	Hovanetz	Foundation for Excellence in Education	External Expert
Tarrinasha	Jones	Greenville Public School District	Principal
Jermaine	Brown	Hattiesburg	Director of College & Career Readiness
Robert	Sanders	Hinds County School District	Superintendent
Raina	Holmes	Jackson County School District	High School Principal
LaToya	Blackshear	Jackson Public Schools	Director of Planning and Evaluations
Steven	Hampton	Lamar County	Superintendent
Alicia	Conerly	Lawrence County	District Instructional Specialist
Lindsay	Brett	Lee County Schools	Principal
Greg	Paczak	Madison County Schools	Director of Research & Development
Alan	Burrow	Mississippi Department of Education	Director of District and School Performance
Deborah	Donovan	Mississippi Department of Education	Data Analytics and Reporting
Paula	Vanderford	Mississippi Department of Education	Chief Accountability Officer
Tim	Scott	Mississippi Department of Education	Director of Accountability Services
William	Roberson	Oxford School District	Superintendent
Angela	Burch	Pascagoula-Gautier School District	Principal
LaVonda	White	Rankin County School District	Director of Accreditation, Accountability, and Assessment
Glen	East	State Board of Education	Board Member
Chris	Domaleski	The Center for Assessment	External Facilitator
Crystal	Bates	Wayne County High School	Assistant Principal
Lawrence	Hudson	Western Line School District	Superintendent

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 and the agenda.

Implications of Potential Changes to High School Assessment

SB2689 proposed to replace existing end of course tests with a nationally recognized college readiness test, which would likely be the ACT. While the bill did not move forward, the ATF discussed the potential implications of such changes should the policy be considered in the future. This discussion was informed by feedback from Mississippi's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which Chris Domaleski shared with the task force.

First, the ATF discussed the importance of establishing an appropriate performance standard for the ACT for both diploma eligibility and school accountability. If the passing standard was set at the current ACT benchmark for readiness, the impact to student and school accountability would be substantial. If the policy moves forward in the future, it's important to set one or more standards that are appropriate given the accountability implications.

Another concern discussed is whether the ACT reflects the breadth and depth of the Mississippi academic content standards. It is important to make sure the test is aligned with instruction in the classroom. Additionally, alignment is a requirement to pass federal peer review. If the test has to be modified to be aligned, which is what was required by other states that adopted the ACT or SAT for ESSA, it could hinder the use of the ACT for college admissions. Such modifications obviate one of the major advantages of using a national college readiness assessment.

The Task Force also discussed whether the ACT is accessible to all students, including students who need accommodations and language learners. It's important make sure that students can receive approved accessibility features and accommodations without invalidating the score.

Some Task Force members worried that adopting the ACT would lead to a proliferation in testing as districts adopted new assessments ostensibly to predict performance on the ACT which may add to the testing burden and may not be well aligned with Mississippi academic content standards. Tests that provide instructional utility – not prediction – should be a priority.

In short, the ATF expressed substantial concerns about adopting the ACT or another national college readiness assessment to replace the current end of course tests. Should the issue surface in the future, the issues raised by the ATF and the TAC should be carefully considered.

Review of Progress in English Language Proficiency

Dr. Pete Goldschmidt shared his research regarding student progress in English Language Proficiency in Mississippi and other states. The analyses he conducted surfaced the following considerations:

- It may be appropriate to establish different growth expectations for students depending on the initial level of the student.

- Consider extending time to exit from 5 to 6 years for some learners, which is consistent with the literature.
- Explore targets based on a non-linear growth trajectory. While a growth to target approach is appropriate, the growth 'steps' to the target should not be in equal intervals which is more consistent with empirical findings about how students progress in language proficiency.
- Consider setting the growth targets once when the students enter the program and don't adjust during the time the student is in the program.

The ATF appreciated reviewing this research and expressed interest in learning more about how these changes could be implemented and what their impact would be, especially in high school.

Reconceptualizing College and Career Readiness

Dr. Domaleski shared a revised illustration for how college and career readiness could be addressed in the accountability model. The illustration was intended to address ATF feedback calling for approaches that:

- Prioritize a broad range of measures
- Do not increase the weight of test based measures
- Offer some flexibility/ choice
- Differentiate performance to the extent practicable (not 'all or nothing')
- Include diploma endorsements

The ATF discussed the illustration and offered the following questions and comments to continue to development and improve the approach:

- Determine when and how the data will be collected and incorporated in the model. For example, should some elements be based on senior snapshot? However, acceleration (advanced coursework) should be measured annually.
- Consider adjusting the value of a GED so it is differentiated from graduate. Perhaps add an additional points category.
- Ensure diploma endorsements are incorporated in the model. Academic and career technical endorsements should be at the same level.
- Are there other work based learning or career accomplishments that should be included?
- The group was undecided about the role of ASVAB in the model. Some worried it could proliferate testing others suggested it could be incorporated if combined with an accomplishment, such as ROTC pathway, to avoid proliferating testing beyond the students pursuing the military post-secondary.
- Consider increasing the overall weight of the readiness indicator. It could be drawn from history, science, or low-growth.

Accountability Performance Standards - Update

Chris provided draft performance standards to the ATF to review. The performance standards were based on a review of patterns of performance. ATF members were asked to review and provide feedback on these drafts. The feedback included:

- It's important to make sure the descriptors are coherent across school type; conduct a cross-check or articulation at the end of the process
- Remove 'deficit language'; ensure the descriptors describe what is accomplished, not what is deficient
- The ATF will need continued reviews of the performance standards as decisions about potentially changing indicators are made
- Put together an overall timeline for the ATF to review and approve the accountability standards

Future Topics

In the last session, Dr. Domaleski invited members to provide closing comments, especially to identify their priorities for topics the ATF should address at future meetings. Suggestions included the following:

- Continue to place a strong emphasis on career readiness in the model.
- It's important to make sure that any changes to the model are made before new standards are set. These activities should be complete before schools and districts are held accountable for these new expectations. Establish a timeline soon.
- We should discuss potential changes to the progress in English language proficiency indicators particularly given the research Pete shared
- Many participants expressed gratitude for engaging the group with challenging but important topics.
- Consider ways to promote the amazing results from MS over the years