



**NH Accountability Task Force
NH DOE Board Room**

**January 8, 2009
1:00 – 4:00 pm**

Present:

NHDOE: Deb Wiswell,; Tim Kurtz; Mary Lane; Ginny Clifford; Marcia McCaffrey; Tim Kurtz, Marie Morgan, Leslie Higgins, Steve Bos, Sallie Fellows; Lyonel Tracy; Mary Heath

Center for Assessment: Scott Marion

District Reps: Brian Cochrane; Charles Pugh; Gail Paludi; Keith Burke, Jerry Frew, Kathy McCabe, Patrick Connors, Michael Fournier, Nicole Heimarck

NOTES:

- 1 Deb reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda.
2. Deb presented the possibility of increasing the growth model targets, if the group chooses to follow the proposal submitted to USED. Discussion followed about the percent of students who should be expected to meet growth targets. Tim and Scott offered guidance on the meanings of the various growth targets. Proposal to USED said the targets would increase this year to 64% (reading) and 61% (mathematics). The group agreed that targets above 60% were reasonable.
3. Deb distributed notes and handouts from last meeting as needed. She reviewed the work of last meeting and the open questions for the legislative committee as a result of the review of the committee's report. Discussion followed in response to the question, what should be the purposes of a system of accountability for an adequate education.

What are the purposes? (*initial comments and questions*)

- compliance with legislative regulations
- Follow the Child purposes define the Department's intention, goals for education of each child
- this system should be aligned with the FTC domains
- At what grain size? What about special education, not in school approval standards
- Only whole group? subgroups? What size subgroups?
- "aspirations of excellence" would be the motivator
- use the optional pieces of the committee's ideas to broaden the measures beyond compliance
- some of these ideas are implementation statements, describing how the system might work;
purpose comes out of the intent of providing adequate education to every child;
- FTC is a conceptual framework that provides a mechanism through which schools can organize their vision, mission; if this accountability system is using the FTC framework then should be looking at the school level;

- in the domains of FTC, up to the district to determine how to operationalize those domains, how to decide what to measure, how to measure it and how to judge progress, results
- difficulty districts have with FTC is there is no good model out there; if there were, then districts could then tweak it to make it their own; would help those models emerge if state could give them good data systems;
- If minimum standards include a wide range of components, where do all those go if a district only needs to meet NECAP measure in reading and math ?
- schools could include PE or health as part of FTC criteria;
- can't yet require by law schools to do strategic planning or continuous improvement planning, yet these actions are important for excellence

These purposes emerged from the discussion:

Purposes of a NH Accountability System

Accountability for offering “the opportunity for an adequate education.”

Accountability for ensuring the Follow the Child vision.

A way to demonstrate excellence in the education of each child.

To support school improvement.

4. Each attendee was invited to offer thoughts *not to be forgotten* by the subcommittee working on the Adequacy Accountability System.

“Principles” to keep in mind:

- FTC is already in place
- respect local control
- “each” child (vs. every, all)
- requirement vs. recommendation (some districts will only aim for the required topics)
- (system should encourage schools to) aspire to excellence; including growth
- state performance plan (SPP) includes indicators for each child
- Department resources could be better utilized by integrating/ aligning tasks in relation to the Accountability System
- comprehensive system (all Teachers affect all students, ie UA teachers)
- minimum standards are only a checklist, do not measure quality
- beyond reading and math only
- accountability system should encourage vertical curricular coordination
- “whole” child, i.e., comprehensive curriculum
- Q: can state be accountable for ‘each’ child?
- consider a tiered model of accountability – accountability across the tiers
Child – school – district – state
- as much local flexibility in demonstrating adequacy as well as attaining excellence
- don't forget the ASSISTANCE part of the charge of the committee

- provide assistance for schools in need of improvement
- balance timeline – 1 year, 3 year, 5 year -- differentiated by urgency, need, past performance
- balance education function and accountability function
- one big challenge will be in developing a system that captures RELIABLE data;
- CTE accountability system already exists; not mentioned in committee report

5. Discussion of legislative committee report with Representative Emma Rous.

Highlights –

- Text of the bill is to be written; expect to have final text by next week; will provide to Dept.

- This is an opportunity to step away from accountability at a single point in time, to describe school success in a more comprehensive way

- Clarifying question regarding section “D: Demonstrating Adequacy, Summary:” on page 27 of the committee’s report –

Rep. Rous explained the committee intended to say that adequacy can be demonstrated by #1 (meets all standards of school approval that are part of the definition of adequacy)

OR #2 (point system based on data already required and collected by DOE)

OR #3 (point system which includes existing data plus indicators chosen from an optional set)

- Focus was on inputs because the school can’t guarantee what the child will acquire in the presence of an adequate (or above) education

- Committee included #2 because felt that it was possible for a school to fail to meet all the inputs but to have strong student achievement (outputs); if students are performing well, then that indicates that they are receiving an adequate education

- The motivation behind adding #3 was to broaden the range of indicators of adequacy to include additional outputs; offer a holistic way to demonstrate student success, by physical, emotional , civic engagement, parent involvement, etc.

- Q: will this result in a two tiered status system? A: In effect, yes; could meet adequacy standards but not meet other accountability standards (school approval, AYP etc.)

- Governor mentioned accountability in today’s inaugural address; he indicated it should not be an added burden on districts but provide feedback that can be useful to schools

- The system must include what will be required to pass muster with the Court, such as including the narrative evidence and site visits

- Would like to hear from district leaders if they think this will be a burden?

Jerry Frew, Superintendent of Kearsarge and President of the NH Superintendent’s Association responded: It will be more work – but it’s good work. Districts will appreciate a good accountability system, but there is concern whether the Dept. will have the resources to support schools that are struggling to meet the standards

Kathy McCabe agreed with the idea of this as an opportunity, because educators recognize that NCLB does not reward success or progress toward success

Keith Burke indicated he likes the idea of a point system; so far schools and districts have been operating in the dark with what to measure to demonstrate Follow the Child domains (academic, personal, physical, social)

Brian Cochran posed a question: would an ‘input’ only system miss schools which have excelled on inputs, but in which some students (or many) fail to perform adequately?

- Rep. Rous acknowledged this is a dilemma; if the school is providing all the inputs, then they would have to be considered as having provided an adequate education
- Commissioner Tracy thanked Rep. Rous for bringing the Department to the table during discussions of legislation
 - Q: what would Rep. Rous see as a realistic timeline for the work of the Task Force?
 - A: Makes sense to work on the 'input' side first (#1 on page 27), then look at and select which data (#2) would be helpful to include; then later work on #3 to work on the expanded indicators
 - Deputy Commissioner Mary Heath reported that the Focused Monitoring process currently in place indicates that there are ways to look at some pieces of data to identify schools that have a likelihood of problems; would it be acceptable to develop an accountability system which included a desk audit component, and examine that information for category of need, then focus on the schools where there is an urgency revealed by an initial review of standard data?
 - A: Rep. Rous thought that kind of system might be acceptable to the court
 - Scott Marion raised a concern that, if every school meets adequacy standards, will the Court accept that? Will that be seen as not meeting the expectations for distinguishing between meets and not meets?
 - Rep. Rous and Commissioner Tracy reported the discussions that occurred during the court hearings, suggesting that, if the accountability system is credible, the Court may not object to high percentages of 'meets' results

Charge to this Task Force: Focus on #1; dig into #2; set off #3 til later

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.