



## NH Accountability Task Force Meeting Notes

**April 1, 2010**

**Room 15 NH DOE**

**9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 11, 2010, 1 pm – 4 pm**

### **Attending:**

**District Reps:** Brian Cochrane (Nashua); Steve Zdravec (Portsmouth); Cathy Stavanger (SNHU); Donna Crook (MSD); Patrick Connors (Epsom); Chris Demers (Concord); Nicole Heimarck (Amherst); Irv Richardson (NEA – NH)

**NH DOE:** Deb Wiswell, Sallie Fellows, Susan Randall, Ginny Clifford, Marcia McCaffrey, Mary Lane, Keith Burke, Bob McLaughlin, Paul Leather

**Center for Assessment:** Scott Marion, Damian Betebenner

**New England Comprehensive Center (NECC):** Karen Laba

### **NOTES**

1. Deb opened the meeting at 9:15 inviting participants to introduce themselves. She reiterated the Dept. thanks for district representation on the task force.
2. Deb reminded task force members that confidential release of AYP is planned for Monday morning, April 5; Public release scheduled for Wednesday, April 7. Deb invited applicants from districts with knowledge and interest to apply to become members of the appeals teams. Training will be held May 3 at the DOE, and May 5 will be dedicated to reading appeals.
3. Feedback from review of Colorado and MA growth model information materials: NH will need to plan ahead to communicate the growth percentiles information to all stakeholders. In addition, the Dept. will need to plan for training for all district users to enable them to make best use of the data. Some questions that will need to be answered:
  - Will the Dept do a full release or a limited beta test?
  - Damian noted the critical decision – what to discuss for which audience? All will need the conceptual understanding though not all will need to know the procedures for calculating the percentiles.
  - Pilot or not pilot (MA did pilot with growth %ile data with 8 school districts)
    - If pilot, use combination of experienced with AYP / assessment data and those with less experience
  - What do parents need to know?
  - What do experienced assessment folks need to know?
  - What do staff with little assessment experience need to know?

What do district users need to know to be able to explain SGP to their constituents?  
What does SGP (student growth percentile) tell us that we didn't know from other sources

Materials needed –

Good examples of many scenarios

Glossary

A "FAQs" document (frequently asked questions)

Parent guide

Teacher guide

Interpretive guide (see MA example)

Brian Cochrane praised the quality of writing and clarity of the MA materials. Others agreed with the insightfulness of the specific student examples.

Sally asked for the best available definition of “academic peer” in growth percentile discussions. This concept is central to an understanding of SGP.

Deb highlighted several points to consider using in NH dissemination –

FAQs for general audiences (teachers, administrators)

FAQs for technical questions

Powerpoint slides for general or focus group presentations

Sallie encouraged having the documentation explain the level of significance of the data (For example, the MA State Report page 8, "10 percentile points not likely to be meaningful").

Deb added that spending time to explain what the data can be used to say and what it can't be used to say will be essential.

Ginny asked whether the growth percentiles will be/ can be used as a component of a teacher evaluation system. Concern is raised in the field because of mention of SGP in the Race to the Top application from NH (and other states) as a tool for assessing educator effectiveness.

Deb will invite members of the task force to review materials as the process proceeds.

4. Criteria and targets for growth percentiles (SGP): Scott began discussion of the central questions for today's meeting, establishing criteria and targets for SGP.

SM: suppose we set a target that students reach the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile?

Issue= can all students be "above average"? (i.e., the “lake woebegone” effect); a student could reach the 55<sup>th</sup> SGP but could still be achieving well below proficiency

SM: suppose we establish a target to be “on track” to be proficient by the end of high school or within three years

Issues = a Student who is substantially below proficient may need to grow beyond 70<sup>th</sup> SGP to achieve proficiency by the end of hs; another S who is partially proficient might have to grow only at the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile to be likely to reach proficient by end of high school; is it fair to have different growth expectations for different students?

Deb reminded the task force of previous conversations considering the challenge of different students for teachers, that students with significant challenges require more instruction from teachers to reach the target of proficiency.

Scott summarized the central decision: should the target be (a) to achieve proficiency by the last test in high school; or (b) within three (or four) years? He also reminded that the charge to the Commissioner's Task Force is to identify the "opportunity for an adequate education." Decisions about a reasonable SGP targets will be factored into the 'adequacy' definition.

Discussion –

- individual SGP targets are important, but some S are so far below proficiency to require unreasonable amounts of growth; this is particularly vexing when comparing schools serving S with steeper trajectories with schools serving S with less steep paths to reach proficiency; this is a concern
- in MA, **the state reported both the status (achievement level) as well as the aggregate school growth measure together, to allow readers to see that growth and achievement levels are complementary but not identical**
- how should school SGP be aggregated? (a) By actual/ observed SGP? or (b) by percent of students meeting SGP targets?

5. Scott restated the proposed target for individual students and invited discussion:

\*\* Students are on track to achieve proficiency within three years \*\*

Discussion:

- the trajectory to proficiency is dramatically different depending on the student's starting point, so maybe a realistic target might have to be either three, four or five years
- if too long a span (end of hs), it will always be "someone else's problem" to get the S to proficiency, until the year before final judgment
- Scott pointed out that sample runs of NH data show that most S would be on target to reach proficiency within 3 years
- more questions to consider -- is a tough target fair to students? Are we concerned about being fair to schools who serve students starting well below targets?
- current growth model tracks students' "path to proficiency by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade"

Scott proposed some options for school-level SGP targets:

(1) "A school is doing a "good job" if the median student growth percentile is greater than 50."

Count the # S (or %age) meeting targets

Criterion target for a school: count the number of students meeting their individual SGP targets; specify an adequacy criterion based on how many S are meeting their individual targets (this is how the current growth model works in NH)

(2) Aggregate the observed SGP and aggregate the target SGP and compare the median observed with the median target SGP

For example, if the observed (actual) median SGP for a school is 65 and target is 55 one can say that, on average, students in this school grew at a faster pace than their target to proficiency rate.

Issues: a school with many high achieving students will have a low target SGP because their students don't need to grow as much to attain proficiency. Many will already score at proficient. Target SGP for high achieving schools might be 25/ 20. Example: In CO, state decided to establish an "adequate" median target SGP from all schools, then declare "yes" or "no" whether school met that median target – see below for classification chart.

## Colorado’s Growth Rubric with Cut Scores for Median SGPs

Was median SGP adequate?		
Yes	No	
60-99	70-99	} Exceeds
45-59	55-69	
30-44	40-54	} Approaching
1-29	1-39	

Scott presented the run of data for NH showing (a) achieving SGP target (green bar); (b) school level *target* for median SGP (pink T dot); and (c) *observed* median SGP aggregated (white M dot). The normative component of the report is the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile line; the criterion component is the target, which is individualized according to each student's assessment history and academic peer group. Lower T (target) values indicate schools where most students are at or near proficiency already. Observe median SGP (M value) above 50<sup>th</sup> percentile says most students demonstrated growth rates higher than their academic peers.

SM: "Best accountability system will incentivize good behaviors and dis-incentivize bad behavior, mis-interpretation or mis-judgments."

**Discussion:**

-- How can this information be presented in a way that is useful and that leads to a low incidence of misinterpretation/ mis-use?

- Clarification needed -- when does the three years' start? In this example, the "on track to reach proficiency within three years" line moves along the timeline from the point of calculation; in other words, the trajectory is re-drawn each year as new data is available;
- if three year window each year will generate a new SGP value and trajectory that will indicate whether the student is still "on track" and what the new target SGP needs to be
- at S level, SGP is provided for informational purposes *only* just as the current NH growth data is intended to be used;

SM proposed an additional way to use growth as an indicator of the need for intervention or further examination, perhaps via a site visit as defined in SB 180 "adequacy" system. He referred attention to the "bubble" graphs showing status measures on the Y axis and growth measures on the X axis. The group could simply define those above a certain status point and to the right of a certain growth point as providing "opportunity for an adequate education" and those in the remaining lower left quadrant as unsatisfactory/ not providing the opportunity for an adequate education.

5. **Next Meetings:** Tuesday, May 11, 2010, 1 pm – 4 pm and Friday, June 4, 9 am – 12 noon.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Deb, Scott and Karen will summarize the growth model criterion and target options to the group, requesting response and return closer to the time of the next meeting.