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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 101 Pleasant Street
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**Task Force to Develop a Performance-Based School Accountability System
 April 2, 2010 9:00 am, Department of Education Board Room**

NEXT MEETINGS: Friday, May 14, 9 am – 12 noon; Friday, June 11, 9 am – 12 noon

Attending:

X	Virginia Barry, Ph.D.	Commissioner of Education
X	Brian Cochrane	Director of Assessment and Accountability Nashua School District
	Paul Couture	Principal, Stevens High School, Claremont
X	Jerome Frew	Superintendent, Kearsarge Regional School District
	Molly Kelly	Chair, Education Committee, NH Senate
X	Daphne Kenyon	NH State Board of Education
X	Paul Leather	Director, Division of Adult Learning, NH Department of Education
X	Scott Marion	National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Dover
	Deborah McNeish	Principal, Conant/Rumford School, Concord, NH
	Judith Fillion	Director, Division of Program Support, NH Department of Education
	Edward Murdough	Bureau of School Approval
	Kathleen Murphy	Director, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education
X	Emma Rous	Chair, Education Committee, NH House of Representatives
	Vincent Spiotti	Bethlehem School Board, Bethlehem, NH
X	Deborah Wiswell	Bureau of Accountability, Curriculum and School Improvement, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education

Guests

Representative Franklin Gould, NH House, Lebanon, NH
 Dean Michener, Executive Director, NH School Boards Association
 Karen Laba, New England Comprehensive Center (NECC), RMC Research, Portsmouth, NH

NOTES:

1. Deb invited members to introduce themselves and offer any reflections since last meeting.
 - this is a major effort; pre-casting future federal work; the work is very important but really hard; thanks to Deb, Scott and Damian for their continued input
 - what comes after April 20? How do we access the input of practitioners on the design of the system? how do we introduce it to the state's educators before it's formulated more concretely?
 - trying to understand its potential use in teacher evaluation; can it inform educator quality questions? want to learn more about the growth percentile process
 - really like the progress the task force has made; this is a big task but making small steps toward the ultimate goal
 - look forward to coming to these meetings; the membership of the task force, including a cross section of contributors, is valuable; one of the next steps to keep in mind might be what additional legislation to fully implement the system looks like
 - trying not to make the process too confining; as a teacher, want to encourage educators to take risks to learn more about how best to teach so students can learn; can use this process with schools to encourage them to be willing to take the risks to do new things; disappointed none of union representatives are involved;
 - echo concerns about the short timeline for this design and the new *Blueprint* (the administration's proposal for reauthorization of ESEA); there remain lots of implementation details to be considered, for the site visits, e.g.; encourage this committee to ensure to work through all the professional associations to take advantage of regional meetings to share what's in development as part of this system.

2. Members briefly discussed plans for presentations at the NHSAA conference in June and NH Principals Association meetings later in the year. The agenda may already be set for some meetings but inquiries can be made.

3. Deb reported that the "input" system is in development by OIT. First school pilot of the 'input' component received positive feedback. Schools described the system as "not as 'onerous' as feared."

4. Scott began a review of previous decisions on the performance based system from last meeting.

Level 1 – K-8: inclusion, attendance rate; weighted average of NECAP index status scores; growth percentiles; gap analyses; for high schools, the same inclusion factors, status/index, but not growth -- there is insufficient data to make a valid attribution of cause to a particular school when using data from the beginning of 8th grade to the beginning of 11th grade.

-- Paul Leather requested that a "placeholder" for high school growth be included when conceptualizing and discussing the performance system; this would allow for changes in testing patterns in the future (i.e., move from fall to spring testing) and new measures.

Scott began a discussion of open questions about the components of the performance system: (slide 7 +)

1. Should we continue to pursue a two level design for the performance-based system?
(e.g., level 1 consists of state-defined indicators and targets; level 2 allows locally defined goals and targets)

Consensus among members that yes, a two level system is desired.

2. All schools will be required to participate in Level 1. Should all schools be required to participate in Level 2?

(*note: level 1 indicators are measured using data already collected by the Dept; no additional effort is required from schools to 'participate' in level 1)

Discussion highlights —

- there should be an opportunity available to participate in Level 2, if a school feels it will not/ may not meet all the conditions of level 1, but has other performance measures on hand to demonstrate in its view that it offers an adequate education
- many successful schools already meet level 1 and would also have in place carefully defined and monitored level 2 goals and targets; they may use level 2 as an optional opportunity to demonstrate their success; struggling schools who may not meet level 1 are beginning to recognize the need to communicate their intention and purposeful action to succeed at level 1, which could be a level 2 goal
- perhaps leave optional, but require level 2 the following year from those who don't meet level 1, or use it as an appeal if a school 'misses' level 1 by modest margin
- well functioning schools will meet level 1 targets without problem; asking them to do more (level2) takes time away from ground level work that is critical, like RTI, local assessment systems
- improvement plans might be the source of level 2 goals
- remember: those who meet the requirements of the 'input' component are then deemed 'adequate';
- caution again about going beyond what the law is saying about requirements to demonstrate adequacy;
- should we think of level 2 as a factor in the intervention support side and take it out of the accountability side?
- the system could have more than one purpose for including level 2;
- should level 2 be required only for those who 'fail' the input and level 1? Or is it still optional for them?
- state guidance could be used to encourage submission of level 2 data/ documentation; state could implement stricter oversight/ monitoring of those who miss both input and level 1
- consider establishing rules that are parallel to 'conditional approval' under the existing system of school approval standards; in that process, schools have opportunity to demonstrate they have 'alternatively met' any of the school approval standards;
- don't lose sight of the goal of level 2 as a way to allow schools to demonstrate exceptional performance, this could be part of a new way to assess schools

Consensus: level 2 is not required for the yearly accountability system; those who don't meet input or level 1 indicators would be required to engage in level 2 activities as part of the state's intervention/ remediation.

Scott posed additional questions for discussion based on possible scenarios.

3. If a school fails 'input' and fails 'level 1' does level 2 need to address the performance/ output components(i.e., level 1) or can it address the 'inputs' such as completing missing curriculum guides?

Discussion highlights:

- make the decision about whether level 2 goals should be about input or performance a local choice; let the school select what they have the resources to address and what can be accomplished in the time and with the personnel available;
- at some point, the state may need to step in and direct the district/ school to address specific goals if there is insufficient progress;
- challenge= can the department provide the support needed to these struggling schools, and not just money but people and expert consultation?; the department capacity is the stumbling block for supporting the schools who struggle to meet strict standards;
- the discussion demonstrates some confusion about whether level 2 is intervention (upon failure) or supplemental/ complementary (way to demonstrate adequacy)

Scott refocused the discussion on the question: when do the locally defined goals, targets and measures (i.e., level 2) come into play? When do level 2 measures factor into the state's adequacy decision?

Discussion highlights:

- the state can choose to report level 2 findings even if it doesn't have an effect on level 1 judgments;
- a suggestion – a representative of this committee could have a conversation with the pilot schools for the input system asking what makes sense in terms of a performance based level 1 and level 2.
- by the end of next year, schools will have piloted the performance based system and the Department will have gathered input on the difficulties in both level 1 and level 2
- another suggestion – could the dept make a template for level 2 for struggling schools? Providing clear guidance/ guidelines can be very productive.

No consensus on the influence of level 2 goals on overall adequacy decisions.

4. Should DOE have responsibility for approving the level 2 goals or the process for setting goals?

Discussion highlights:

- currently the Department reviews and approves goals in DINI, SINI plans; the conversations about appropriate goals are particularly relevant during the roundtable process for districts; if the system were to allow only a local decision about goals, they may not be the goals that will address the core problems impacting low performance;
- DOE should approve goals only for those who fail input and level 1 or when level 2 used as a safety valve

5. How much influence should level 2 have in correcting gaps in level 1? (slides 9 & 10)

Discussion highlights:

- is the Department giving its approval to locally defined goals or do DOE staff get involved in collaborating in the development of the goals?

Consensus that goal setting is a collaborative role for the dept. Implementing 'level 2' requires defining clear guidance on the design of the system as well as on the role of the Department in developing credible/ acceptable goals.

Consensus: YES, the Department should engage in collaborative consultation with schools who have NOT met input or level 1 performance. For others, level 2 is vetted through the normal strategic planning process in each district. The Department need not play a role in level 2 goals for those who have met standards for the "input" components and level 1 of the performance component of the adequacy accountability system.

6. Should the DOE overturn a district's evaluation conclusions if it disagrees with the interpretation of the measures presented by the district/ school?

Discussion highlights:

- As the accountability system currently operates, the Department considers all data and consults with a district to persuade them to reframe/ redraft their goals or targets. This role of the Department could continue in the level 2 performance components for those schools who fail to meet input or level 1 performance.

7. Should level 2 findings overrule level 1 deficiencies?

Discussion highlights:

- general agreement that level 2 should be able to compensate for level 1 deficiencies , otherwise there would be no reason for a school to participate; how it compensates is a bigger question
- perhaps need some judgmental rules to be developed rather than a quantitative value (i.e., "if within 5% of meeting a level 1 target . . .")
- hypothetical example: suppose a school refuses to teach a certain topic or topics; in that example, a school would fail the input component (doesn't meet curriculum standards) but may meet level 1 performance indicators; in that case, the school would be rated as "adequate"

Scott turned the conversation to a discussion of how to define "gaps" and how to consider them in the performance accountability system.

Discussion highlights:

- will NH want to evaluate gaps in serving various groups of students?
- because of the limited diversity in the NH student population, it may make more sense to define two "super subgroups" ; in Utah, the state identified 2 large subgroups, one white only (not free reduced lunch, not SPED, not ELL or other ethnic); other group includes all other students (special education, ell, racial minorities, free reduced lunch); each student only appears in one of the two subgroups
- this is a complex issue; will require a full meeting to examine all the options
- one option is presented on slide 13 as a two-part decision
 - a) whole school meets either status OR growth indicators AND
 - b) subgroups meet either status or growth indicators,

7. Growth percentiles – sample NH data. Scott discussed one use of the growth percentiles data is to use it to select schools to be visited for the required site visit component. He showed the "bubble graph" for math. He suggested one way to select which schools to visit would be to mark off the average percent proficient (Y axis) and the average median growth percentile (X axis) and select those schools which score in the lower left quadrant as worth a closer look during a site visit.
8. Deb invited discussion of the upcoming presentation to the legislative committee, the Task Force "progress report" on April 20.

Discussion highlights:

- overview of input system
- decisions to date on performance system
 - Level 1, level 2
 - Indicators – inclusion, attendance, dropout/ graduation, achievement status, achievement growth (for k-8)
- suggestion to prepare an agenda, allow q & a interspersed within the presentation
- suggestion to use an "essential questions" format as used for the RTTT presentation
- suggestion to invite legislative committee to offer ideas how to best explain this to their constituents as the system is designed more clearly

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Notes compiled and submitted on 4/8/10 by Karen Laba, NECC