



Report on the New Hampshire Accountability System Chapter 198 (SB 180) Session Laws of 2009

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**New Hampshire Accountability System
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Introduction

In 2009, the legislature of the State of New Hampshire passed SB180, a bill establishing an accountability system to ensure students receive the opportunity for an adequate education.

193-E:3-b Accountability for the Opportunity for an Adequate Education. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, a school shall demonstrate by the end of the school year that it provides the opportunity for an adequate education under RSA 193-E:2-a by meeting the requirements of paragraph I of this section. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, a school shall demonstrate by the end of the school year that it provides the opportunity for an adequate education by meeting the requirements of either paragraph I or II of this section. Following the adoption of the performance-based accountability system as provided in RSA 193-E:3-c and RSA 193-E:3-d, the department shall evaluate all schools using both the input based school accountability system under paragraph I of this section and the performance based accountability system under RSA 193-E:3-c and RSA 193-E:3-d. A school that satisfies the requirements of either system shall be providing the opportunity for an adequate education. [Chapter 198 (SB 180) Session Laws of 2009]

The legislation defines a two-part accountability system: an input-based system and a performance-based system. The input based system assesses whether a school provides the necessary curriculum for an adequate education and sets appropriate expectations for completion of the academic program. The performance-based system assesses adequacy based on the school's demonstration of student achievement, engagement and persistence to graduation.

In August 2009, the Department of Education (DOE) with the guidance of the NH DOE AYP/Accountability Task Force developed the process and format of the input-based system to meet the specifications of the legislation. The input-based system was piloted in spring 2010 and schools were required to submit evidence they meet the requirements of the specified school approval standards by September 2010. Review of the submissions by teams of Department staff to determine adequacy is underway.

In October 2009, the Commissioner of Education, Virginia A. Barry, convened The Commissioner's Task Force of representatives as defined in SB180 to begin development of the performance-based system. The Commissioner's Task Force met approximately monthly since then, meeting jointly with the AYP Task Force starting in October 2010. Task Force members reviewed existing data and selected indicators for inclusion in the performance-based system that best represent the student outcomes when offered an adequate education.

In December, 2011, the Commissioner's Task Force reviewed results for schools in the state for the full performance-based system and reached agreement on the performance standard that demonstrates that the school has provided its students the opportunity for an adequate education.

This report provides a summary of the information considered and the decisions that were made to establish the accountability system to assess whether schools are providing the opportunity for an adequate education.

The Input Based System

While the purpose of this report is to document the performance-based system, we briefly describe the input system to provide context for the rest of this report. As defined in SB180 (RSA 193 E), schools can demonstrate they provide an opportunity for an adequate education by meeting twelve of the existing school approval standards.

(<http://www.education.nh.gov/legislation/documents/ed306.pdf>). Ten of the twelve are standards related to curriculum and instruction: English language arts and reading; mathematics; science; social studies; arts; world language; health education; physical education; information and communication technologies; and technology education. Two additional input standards are included in the twelve: school year and minimum graduation credits.

The input based system requires that:

- school officials submit a narrative explanation of compliance with each of 12 specified “adequacy” standards
- the commissioner review each school’s responses
- schools meeting the standards resubmit every 2 years
- schools not meeting the standards resubmit annually until the standard is met.

Department staff advised by the Accountability Task Force devised an online submission process through which school principals or their designees submit evidence that they have met each of the input-based standards. Selecting “YES” for the standard affirms that the school meets the specifications of the standard as defined in Ed306 (Minimum Standards for School Approval). Selecting “NO” indicates that the school does not meet the specifications defined by the state, and the school must explain why it does not comply with the specifications. As a third option, schools may select “OTHER” and submit evidence to demonstrate that it meets the standard by alternate means.

RSA 193:E requires all schools to demonstrate that they provide the opportunity for an adequate education using the input-based system by the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Submissions were due September 1, 2010. Submissions are being evaluated by teams of Department staff on a continuing basis and schools are notified if their evidence does not meet state requirements.

Performance Based Accountability System

SB 180/ RSA 193 E establishes a second component of the New Hampshire Accountability System that allows schools to demonstrate they have provided the opportunity for an adequate education by having their students meet meaningful academic goals. The legislature described the membership of a Task Force to be convened by the Commissioner to design the performance-based system. The legislature assigned the following duties to the Task Force:

II. The task force shall have the following duties:

- (a) Define the performance-based accountability system to be used by schools that will ensure that the opportunity for an adequate education is maintained.*
- (b) Identify performance criteria and measurements.*
- (c) Establish performance goals and the relative weights assigned to those goals.*
- (d) Establish the basis, taking into account the totality of the performance measurements, for determining whether the opportunity for an adequate education exists, which may include the assignment of a value for performance on each measurement.*
- (e) Ensure the integrity, accuracy, and validity of the performance methodology as a means of establishing that a school provided the opportunity for an adequate education as defined in RSA 193-E:2-a. [Chapter 198 (SB 180) Session Laws of 2009]*

In addition to defining the measures and criteria, the legislators stipulated that the Task Force use “only the best available data and indicators which are already provided to the department and/or performance measures that schools are already required to provide the department under other state or federal law.” (RSA 193 – E:3-c III) This stipulation ensures that schools and districts will not be burdened to provide additional information to satisfy the requirements of the performance based system. Importantly, these data requirements constrained the work of the Task Force and limited options for potential indicators.

The process used and the decisions reached by the Commissioner’s Task Force are described below.

Identify performance criteria and measurements

In light of the requirement to use only data currently provided, the Task Force examined an array of indicators that demonstrate that students have experienced the opportunity to receive an adequate education. The indicators selected for inclusion into the performance based system are grouped in the following categories:

- Achievement
- Inclusion
- Persistence/readiness

Indicators of academic achievement included state assessments in reading/ English language arts, mathematics, science and writing (NECAP), and ACCESS for ELLs, a test that measures whether students who are learning English have reached proficiency in English sufficient to enable them to achieve academically. Indicators that reflect a school's success at engaging students and encouraging them to persist included participation (in assessments) rates, attendance, graduation and dropout rates.

In addition to the discussion of which data are available and represent valuable school outcomes, the Task Force considered how to assess whether a school is serving *all* students adequately. To that end, the Task Force chose to differentiate among student groups that are common in NH schools in addition to examining whole school results: English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and "all others." The "all others" subgroup includes any student who is not a member of the three groups with special conditions that influence achievement. These groups were defined as follows:

- Students identified for English language learner services were classified as the ELL group,
- Students identified for special education services, but NOT ELL services, were classified as the students with disabilities (SWD) group,
- Students eligible for free or reduced lunch services who are not ELL or SWD are classified as the economically disadvantaged group, and
- Students not classified into either of these three groups were classified as the "all other" group.

Unlike the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) approach where certain students may count in multiple student groups (e.g., ELL, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged), this approach ensures that students are counted only in a single group. All four student groups, in addition to the "whole school" is evaluated on each of the indicators in the system.

Achievement Indicators

State assessments (NECAP) are the primary achievement measure included in the NH Performance Based Accountability System.

Elementary and middle school indicators include:

- ✓ growth in student academic achievement in reading and mathematics
- ✓ school level index values for student achievement in science and writing

High school indicators include:

- ✓ school level index values for reading, mathematics, science and writing

Student growth percentile. One major difference between the elementary/ middle school achievement indicators and the high school indicators is the use of growth as a measure of achievement in reading and mathematics for K-8 students. State assessments are administered in those two subjects each year for grades 3 through 8 affording the state the opportunity to calculate a growth measure that follows each student from year to year. However, high school students are assessed only once, at 11th grade and there are insufficient data from which to calculate a growth score for accountability purposes.

A student growth percentile (SGP) indicates how much a student's performance has improved from one year to the next relative to his or her academic peers: other students statewide with a similar test score history. The model, developed by Dr. Damian Betebenner from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA), describes whether a student demonstrated academic performance greater than, the same as, or less than the students' academic peers. New Hampshire is one of approximately fifteen (15) states implementing the student growth percentile model.

An example can help clarify what information the student growth percentile includes. When you take a toddler for a yearly checkup, your pediatrician might mention that your daughter's measured height puts her in the 75th percentile. That tells you your daughter is taller than 75% of other toddlers her age. The percentile gives a better understanding of whether the toddlers' height is "typical" for children your daughter's age. For students, the SGP tells the parent and the school whether a child is progressing at the same rate as those who performed similarly in previous state tests.

For elementary and middle schools, a student growth percentile (SGP) is calculated for each student in mathematics and reading using state assessment (NECAP) scores. In each school, the median (or middle) growth percentile of all tested students in the school is calculated for the whole school and each subgroup. This value is used as an indicator of the school's performance. A school earns credits towards the adequacy determination based on whether the median growth percentile of its students indicate they are on track to meet proficiency targets in three years or by eighth grade, whichever comes first.

Using a measure of whether a student is "on track" to achieve proficiency on state assessments allows the growth indicator to incorporate both criterion and normative information. For instance, it is likely that some students, perhaps newcomers to this country, could exhibit high growth in achievement, yet still remain below proficiency because they started well behind their grade level. Similarly, there will be some students who exceed the state proficiency score yet who advance at a rate less than their peers, who would earn a low growth percentile.

The Task Force considered several ways to incorporate student growth into the NH Performance Based Accountability system and concluded that schools should earn credits for both high growth and high achievement. Student growth percentiles accomplish that goal.

Achievement Index Scores: The index score is a method of converting performance levels on the NECAP tests for these subjects such that performance of proficient or greater is equal to full credit (100 points) and scores below proficient are awarded partial credit depending on how close to proficient they score. The index system has been used to report NECAP scores in New Hampshire since 2006.

Inclusion Indicators

The Task Force considered the ability of a school to motivate students to participate in the academic program as another measure of the school's provision of the opportunity to receive an adequate education.

Participation in state assessments. For both elementary/ middle schools and high schools, the participation rate of students on state assessments was chosen as a performance indicator to demonstrate that the school is accountable for all of its students. Participation is reported for the whole school and for each of the subgroups: English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and the remaining group referred to as ‘all others.’

Excessive absence. A second measure of the school’s ability to motivate students to engage in the educational program is attendance. The Task Force examined attendance data in a variety of ways, and defined an indicator labeled “excessive absence” – the percentage of students in a school absent more than 10% of their enrolled days (typically 18 days out of a 180 day school year). The Task Force relied on the existing educational research literature in selecting this indicator instead of the more common “average daily attendance,” because students absent more than 10 or 15% of the school year are found to be at risk of school failure. The Task Force chose to use the more conservative/lower threshold of 10%.

Persistence/readiness

Persistence or readiness indicators are applied at the high school level and are designed to evaluate the extent to which schools help prepare students for the next level of schooling. Ideally, the system would employ credible postsecondary readiness measures, but those are not available at this time within the constraints of the data requirements. Therefore, the Task Force agreed that graduation and dropout rate are two critical indicators that signify a school’s ability to provide high school students with an opportunity to move beyond high school.

Graduation rate. A major indicator of the school’s ability to provide an adequate education is the graduation rate. The Task Force included the “four year cohort graduation rate” as an indicator. This is the percentage of students who began as 9th graders four years ago who graduate with a standard diploma.

Given evidence that some students may take longer than the typical four years to graduate due to many circumstances, the Task Force proposes to include the “five year cohort rate” when those data become available. Students who take five years to complete their graduation requirements will be included in this calculation. State department data specialists have begun to compile that information and anticipate it will be available in 2012.

Dropout rate. In addition to graduation rate, the dropout rate was selected by the Task Force as an indicator that describes whether a school has provided the opportunity for an adequate education. The assumption is that schools with low dropout rates engaged their students and provided essential supports to students at risk. Dropout rate is the average percentage of students in a 9th, 10th, or 11th grade cohorts who do return to school the following year. Those who graduate early or earn a GED are not counted as dropouts.

Establish performance goals and the relative weights assigned to those goals

The Commissioner's Task Force reviewed each indicator to examine the range of actual performance across the state. Point values were allocated according to a designated range appropriate to each indicator. (See Table 1 and Table 2, below)

The Task Force chose to emphasize the importance of the reading and mathematics indicators for elementary and middle schools by "weighting" (multiplying) the points by 3. Schools have three times as many data points between grades 3 and 8 for these two subjects compared with writing and science and in addition to achievement measures, student growth as calculated by the Student Growth Percentile method, is available for reading and mathematics, which also justifies its higher weight relative to science and writing.

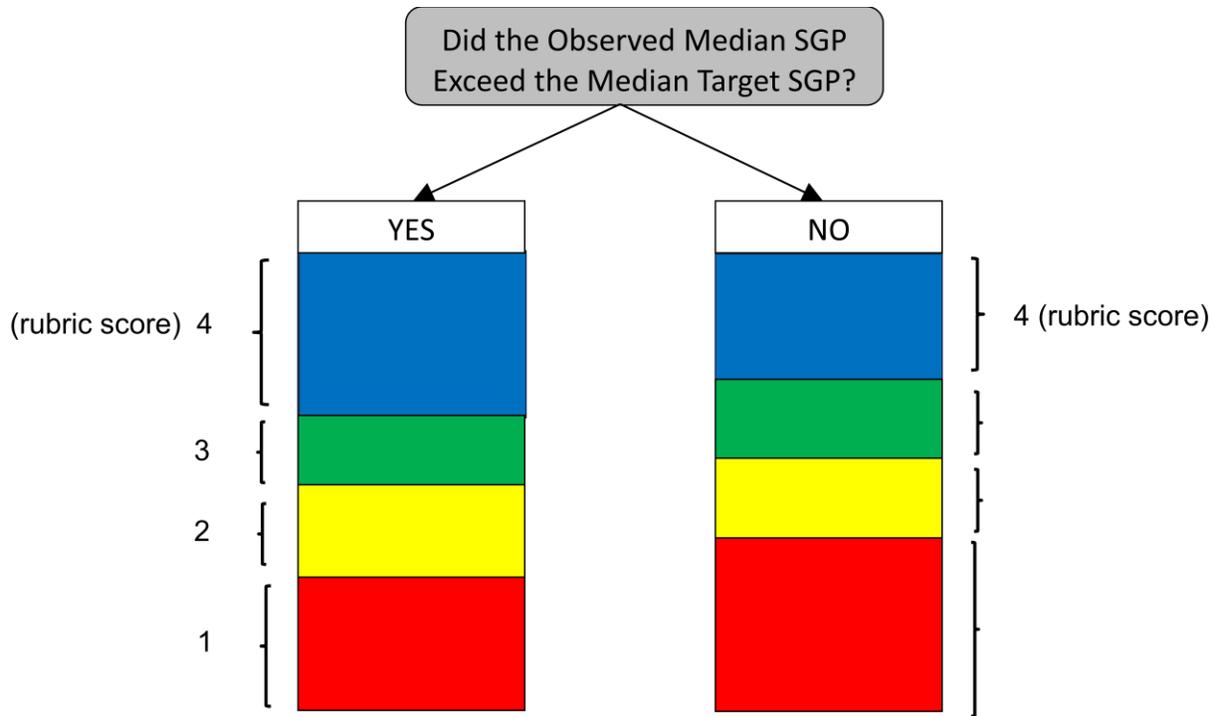
For each indicator, points are allocated for the whole school population and for each of four subgroups: ELL, SWD, economically disadvantaged, and all others.

Additional discussion of the indicator definitions and point allocations as well as detailed discussion of the student growth percentile is available in the NH Accountability System Handbook available from the NH DOE.

Table 1: Performance Indicators, Elementary and Middle Schools

Elementary/ Middle School Points Allocation for Performance Indicators						
Academic Indicators (“n” = minimum of 5 students per group for a value to be counted)						
Indicator	Measure	Points Allocated (for each of 5 groups)				
Reading	Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) (NECAP)	Met Target SGP *see discussion below Rubric 1 – 4 pts				
Mathematics	Median Student Growth Percentile (NECAP)	Met Target SGP Rubric 1 – 4 pts				
Science	NECAP Index	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt				
Writing	Writing score converted to Index, allotted adequacy points using Index ranges	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt				
	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">7 + ~ 100</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4 ~ 40</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6 ~ 80</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3 ~ 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5 ~ 60</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1 or 2 ~ 0</td> </tr> </table>		7 + ~ 100	4 ~ 40	6 ~ 80	3 ~ 20
7 + ~ 100	4 ~ 40					
6 ~ 80	3 ~ 20					
5 ~ 60	1 or 2 ~ 0					
Non Academic (“n” = minimum of 20 students per group for a value to be included)						
Indicator	Measure	Performance Pts Allocated (for each of 5 groups)				
Excessive Absence	Percent of students absent more than 10% enrolled time	5% or less = 4 pts 6 – 10% = 3 pts 11 – 20% = 2 pts Greater than 21 % = 1 pt				
Participation in NECAP	Percent of eligible students who were tested	Met 95% federal target = 4 pts Did not meet target = 1 pt				

Met/ Not Met Target. The Target SGP is the growth percentile a student needs to achieve (for those below proficiency to reach or maintain proficiency within three years or by 8th grade. This statistic is calculated for each student and will vary depending on the student’s current achievement, the standard for proficiency, and the number of years before eighth grade. The points allocated to a school in the performance based accountability system will depend on whether the school’s students, on average, met or did not meet their target. A school with its actual median growth percentile greater than its median growth target is considered to have “met” its target. For example, a school that met its target and achieved a median SGP of 68 will earn 4 points. A school that DID NOT meet its target and achieved a median SGP of 68 will be awarded 3 points. The rubrics below indicate how points are awarded. As can be seen from the rubric, schools are first evaluated on whether or not they met their targets. If the school’s observed median student growth percentile is greater than the target, the school’s growth is evaluated via the rubric on the left. On the other hand, if the school’s observed median student growth percentile is lower than the target, that school is evaluated using the rubric on the right. The reason for the two different rubrics is to recognize that schools that are meeting their targets are providing meaningful opportunities for their students. However, the Task Force wanted to recognize exemplary growth even if schools had students starting so far behind that it was difficult for them to meet their targets.



Meeting a growth target establishes the expectation that all students must continue to advance at least on a pace with their academic peers. Schools that succeed in helping students surpass their target growth are rewarded with more points, all other things equal, toward their adequacy score.

Table 2: Performance Indicators, High School

High School Indicators – Measures and Points			
Academic (“n” = minimum of 5 students per group for a value to be included)			
Indicator	Measure	Points Allocated (each of 5 groups)	
Reading	NECAP Index	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt	
Mathematics	NECAP Index	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt	
Science	NECAP Index	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt	
Writing	Writing score converted to Index, allotted adequacy points using Index ranges	Writing Index 7 + ~ 100 6 ~ 80 5 ~ 60 4 ~ 40 3 ~ 20 1 or 2 ~ 0	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt
Non - Academic Indicators (“n” = minimum of 20 students per group for a value to be included)			
Indicator	Measure	Points Allocated (for each of 5 groups)	
Excessive Absence	Percent of students absent more than 10% of enrolled time	5% or less = 4 pts 6 – 10% = 3 pts 11 – 20% = 2 pts Greater than 21 % = 1 pt	
Participation in NECAP	Percent of eligible students who were tested	Met 95% federal target = 4 pts Did not meet target = 1 pt	
Graduation Rate (4 yr cohort)	Percent of students who were 9 th graders four (4) years ago and earned a standard diploma	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt	
Graduation Rate (5 yr cohort)	Percent of students who were 9 th graders five (5) years ago and earned a standard diploma	90-100 = 4 pts 80-89 = 3 pts 70-79 = 2 pts Below 70 = 1 pt	
Dropout Rate	Percent of students from the 4 year cohort who leave without a diploma*	0 – 5% = 4 pts 6 – 10% = 3 pts 11 – 20% = 2 pts Greater than 20% = 1 pt	

Establish the basis for determining whether the opportunity for an adequate education exists

The indicators chosen by the members of the Commissioner’s Task Force will be compiled into a report to be prepared by the Department and published yearly. As noted previously, points are allocated for each of five student groups (whole school, English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and ‘all others’) for each performance indicator. A sample report for fictitious “Gray Lake Elementary School” is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Example Report for Performance Based Accountability System – Elementary Schools and Middle Schools

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REPORT – ELEMENTARY/ MIDDLE SCHOOLS REVISED 12.10.10					
		Median Target SGP	Median Observed SGP	Points Earned	TOTAL
READING: NECAP SGP 2009 state median =	Whole school	28.00	61.00	4	
	ELLs ACCESS AMAO	NA-	-NA	NA	
	Students w/Disabilities	41.50	58.00	4	
	Low SES	65.00	40.00	2	
	All Others	19.00	64.00	4	
	READING AVERAGE POINTS			3.50	
	WEIGHTING = TIMES 3				10.5
		Median Target SGP	Median Observed SGP	Points Earned	TOTAL
MATHEMATICS NECAP SGP state median =	Whole school	30.50	66.00	4	
	ELLs	-	-		
	Students /Disabilities	64.00	61.50	3	
	Low SES	40.00	64.00	4	
	All Others	25.00	69.00	4	
	MATHEMATICS AVERAGE POINTS			3.75	
	WEIGHTING = TIMES 3				11.25
			Index Score	Points Earned	TOTAL
SCIENCE: NECAP index	Whole school		84.20	3	
	ELLs		-	-	
	Students w/Disabilities		77.80	2	
	Low SES		82.40	3	
	All Others		89.70	3	
	SCIENCE AVERAGE POINTS			2.75	
	WEIGHTING = TIMES 1				2.75
			Index Score	Points Earned	TOTAL
WRITING NECAP scoring	Whole school		94.40	4	
	ELLs		-	-	
	Students w/Disabilities		72.30	2	
	Low SES		90.90	4	
	All Others		94.10	4	
	WRITING AVERAGE POINTS			3.5	
	WEIGHTING = TIMES 1				3.5
			Met Threshold	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Reading Whole school		Yes	4.00	

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REPORT – HIGH SCHOOLS REVISED 06.22.11					
WEIGHTING = TIMES 1					1.00
		Number Tested	Index Score	Points Earned	TOTAL
SCIENCE	Whole school	124	64.4	1	
NECAP INDEX 2010	ELLs	0	--	--	
	SWD	28	47.9	1	
	Low SES	28	61.4	1	
	All Others	68	72.4	2	
	SCIENCE AVERAGE POINTS				
WEIGHTING = TIMES 1					1.25
		Number Tested	Index Score	Points Earned	TOTAL
WRITING	Whole school	135	71.3	2	
NECAP INDEX 2010	ELLs	0	--	-	
	SWD	22	47.3	1	
	Low SES	27	72.6	2	
	All Others	86	77.0	2	
	SCIENCE AVERAGE POINTS				
WEIGHTING = TIMES 1					1.75
		Number Tested	Excessive Absence Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
EXCESSIVE ABSENCE Percent of students absent more than 10% of enrolled time	Whole school		19.13	2	
	ELLs		-	-	
	SWD		30.28	1	
	Low SES		31.86	1	
	All Others		9.73	3	
	EXCESSIVE ABSENCE AVE. POINTS				
WEIGHTING = TIMES 1					1.75
PARTICIPATION (IN NECAP AND ACCESS FOR ELLS) met rate = 95%		Number	Met Threshold	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Reading Whole school	128	Y	4	
	Reading ELLs (ACCESS)	-0	--	--	
	Reading SWD	30	N	1	
	Reading Low SES	27	Y	4	
	Reading: All others	71	Y	4	
	Math Whole school	128	Y	4	
	Math ELLs	0	<40	--	
	Math SWD	30	N	1	
	Math Low SES	27	Y	4	
Math: All others	71	Y	4		
PARTICIPATION AVERAGE POINTS				3.25	
WEIGHTING = TIMES 1					3.25
GRADUATION RATE (4yr cohort) Class of 2010		Number	Graduation Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole school	136	75.41	2	
	ELLs	0	--	--	
	SWD	21	71.43	1	
	Low SES	30	63.33	1	
	All Others	71	81.69	3	
GRADUATION AVERAGE POINTS				1.75	
WEIGHTING = TIMES 1					1.75

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REPORT – HIGH SCHOOLS REVISED 06.22.11					
GRADUATION RATE (5yr cohort)		Number	Graduation Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole school	122	14.75	2	
	ELLs	0	--	--	
	SWD	21	19.05	2	
	Low SES	30	23.33	1	
	All Others	71	9.86	3	
	GRADUATION AVERAGE POINTS			2.0	
	WEIGHTING = TIMES 1				2.00
DROPOUT RATE (TBD) *		Number	Dropout Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole school				
	ELLs				
	SWD				
	Low SES				
	All Others				
	DROPOUT RATE AVERAGE POINTS				
	WEIGHTING = TIMES 1				TBD
BRADLEY HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TOTAL					16.25
Score for Adequacy Decision:			16.25 points /8 indicators = 2.03		

* Data for the calculation of dropout rate was not available for this sample but will available when the system is launched.

Determining Adequacy

Performance descriptors and establishing cutscores

Once the indicators have been identified, rubric points selected, and weights assigned, the final step is to determine the overall “cutscores” that denotes a school as “providing an opportunity for an adequate education.” The first step in establishing any cutscore, whether it be proficiency on a test or as an adequacy determination, is to draft performance level descriptors. These statements serve as guides to help panelists develop a shared understanding of the meaning of the adequacy cutscore. At the Dec. 9, 2011 meeting of the Commissioner’s Task Force, the consultant brought draft performance level descriptors to the Task Force, one each for high school and elementary/middle school. The Task Force members reviewed and edited the draft descriptors. The final descriptors follow:

Elementary/Middle School:

- Elementary/middle schools providing the “opportunity for an adequate education” enable a majority of students to achieve at high levels on the state assessments in reading, mathematics, science and writing. Students in such schools grow at an acceptable level on the state assessments in reading and mathematics. Achievement and growth differences among student groups are within a reasonable range. Most students attend school regularly and essentially all students participate in the assessment system.

High school:

- High schools providing the “opportunity for an adequate education” enable a majority of students to achieve at an acceptable level on the state assessments in reading, mathematics, science and writing. Achievement differences among student groups are within a reasonable range. Most students attend school regularly, relatively few students drop out of school, and most graduate from high school in four years. Essentially all students participate in the assessment system.

Once the performance level descriptors were drafted, the Task Force members were divided into four groups to review school profiles—i.e., scores on each of the indicators in system—for high school and elementary/middle school separately to find the overall score and school profile that best matches the descriptor. The Task Force determined that an overall performance score of 2.3 represented “the opportunity for an adequate education” for Elementary and Middle Schools. For High Schools, the performance score standard was set at 2.1.

Using the preliminary data, 92% (333 of 361) Elementary and Middle schools met the performance standard for adequacy. Seventy (70) of 81 high schools with enough data or 86% met or exceeded a performance score of 2.1.

Overall determination

Following legislative adoption of the performance-based accountability system, the DOE shall, during the 2011-2012 school year, evaluate all schools using *both* the input-based and the performance-based systems. In accordance with RSA 193-E:3-b, a school that satisfies the requirements of *either* system shall be deemed to be providing the opportunity for an adequate education.

The following chart summarizes the determination of adequacy using both the input based and performance based systems.

Performance-Based System – State Defined Indicators			
Input- Based System		YES	NO
	YES	MET	MET
	NO	MET	NOT MET

Performance Based System: Locally Defined Indicators

Starting early in the design of the performance based accountability system, members of the Commissioner’s Task Force began discussing the option of allowing schools to demonstrate they provide the opportunity for an adequate education using indicators they select and define. Members discussed providing schools and districts with the flexibility to define rigorous goals that include measures other than NECAP or the participation, absences, graduation and dropout rates already collected.

Making locally defined indicators an option for schools and districts allows communities to pursue their valued goals for their students and to demonstrate that they have provided an adequate education unique to their culture, context, and resources.

As of the meeting of the Commissioner’s Task Force on December 9, 2011, a performance based system using locally defined indicators (referred to as “level 2”) was discussed in great detail. The DOE and the Task Force agreed to continue to meet early in 2012 to finalize the Level 2 system. Importantly, the Task Force has fulfilled its statutory obligations. Questions to be answered to incorporate a level 2 to the performance based system include:

- Who submits level 2 indicators – is it optional or required?
- How are the school’s indicators and measures evaluated? What criteria will be applied to judge the indicators and goals as acceptable?
- What types of evidence must a school submit?
- Who will evaluate the school’s demonstration of adequacy?
- How will the Commissioner use the level 2 – will it substitute for gaps in the state-defined performance indicators or in the input system?

Establishing a performance based system that incorporates locally defined indicators was beyond the original scope of the Task Force established under SB 180, but the discussion over the past 18 months suggests that it is an addition to the NH Accountability System that merits further consideration.

References and Resources

Detailed minutes of the discussions of the indicators selected for inclusion in the NH Performance Based Accountability System by members of the Commissioner’s Task Force are available for review on the Department website at:

http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/school_improve/comm_task_force.htm

The *NH Accountability System Handbook* details the components of the system in a series of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions). It has been revised as of December 2011 and is available by contacting Ed Murdough in the Division of Program Support:

Edward.Murdough@doe.nh.gov.

Members of the Commissioner’s Task Force are listed below:

Commissioner’s Task Force Members October 2009 through June 2011

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

Commissioner's Task Force Members June 2011 through December 2011

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Patrick Connors	Principal, Epsom Elementary School
Paul Couture	Principal, Stevens High School, Claremont
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Molly Kelly	Education Committee, NH Senate
Daphne Kenyon	NH State Board of Education
Robert Kingsbury	NH House of Representatives
Paul Leather	Deputy Commissioner, NH Department of Education
Scott Marion	National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Dover
Joseph Miller	Director, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education
Edward Murdough	Bureau of School Approval, NH Department of Education
TBD	NH School Board