NOTES
Joint Meeting of the Commissioner's Task Force to Develop a Performance-Based School Accountability System and the NH DOE Accountability Task Force

November 29, 2010, 9:00 am– 12:00 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 16, 9 am – 12 pm

ATTENDING:

X	Virginia Barry, Ph.D.	Commissioner of Education
X	Brian Cochrane	Director of Assessment and Accountability Nashua School District
X	Paul Couture	Principal, Stevens High School, Claremont
X	Jerome Frew	Superintendent, Kearsarge Regional School District
	Molly Kelly	Chair, Education Committee, NH Senate
	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
X	Judith Fillion	Director, Division of Program Support, NH Department of Education
X	Edward Murdough	Bureau of School Approval
X	Kathleen Murphy	Director, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education
X	Emma Rous	Chair, Education Committee, NH House of Representatives
X	Vincent Spiotti	Bethlehem School Board, Bethlehem, NH
X	Franklin Gould	NH House of Representatives, Lebanon, NH
X	Deborah Wiswell	Bureau of Accountability, Curriculum and School Improvement, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education

Guests:
Dean Michener, Executive Director, NH School Boards Association
Irv Richardson, NEA NH

Accountability (AYP) Task Force (in addition to those on the Commissioner's Task Force)

District Representatives: Hélène Bickford (SAU 53); Patrick Connors (SAU 53 Epsom); Heather Cummings (Gov. Wentworth); Donna Crook (MSD); Kathy Stavenger (SNHU), Steve Zadravec (Portsmouth); Chris Demers (Concord)
NH DOE: Sally Fellows, Susan Randall, Steve Bos, Merry Fortier, Tim Kurtz, Ginny Clifford
NH DOE Consultants: Keith Burke, Karen Laba
Center for Assessment: Scott Marion, Damian Betebenner
Measured Progress: Shannan Douglas

Meeting Objectives:
- Provide feedback on draft report templates for performance indicators
- Examine rank ordered data and offer recommendations for "adequacy" score
- Present suggestions for Dec. 10 meeting with Superintendents
- Continue discussion of the role of Level II (locally defined) performance indicators

NOTES

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Deb invited members to introduce themselves and share thoughts about their thanksgiving experience.

2. **Sample performance reports:**
Gray Lake ES sample report: Deb described the sample report as one way to display all the elements that are included in the performance system. She corrected the weighting for reading and math to TIMES 3 (currently times 1). An additional correction was noted on the Participation score, which will be changed to 4 points if the school met the 95% target, 1 point if it did not meet that target for whole school or any of the subgroups.

Discussion
-- request to explain the weighting decision for reading and math; Scott suggested a technical manual be developed to provide in-depth description of calculations of each indicator
-- other requests to explain how the subgroups are selected – ELLs are selected first, then students with disabilities (SWD), followed by low socioeconomic status students. The remaining students become the "all others" subgroup.
-- important to explain the student growth percentile target
-- (back side) explain that AMAO is only for ELL students
-- audience will be important for the way information is presented
e.g., school is the audience for this type of report; the legislature will be first audience to report to since they have to approve the plan before implementation
-- consider including minimum "n" for each calculation in the description on the back

Green River Middle School report is similar to the elementary school, since elementary and middle schools are identified as one group in state regulations. As with the elementary sample, correct the weighting for reading and math averages to 3X replacing 1X.

Discussion

-- concern that there are only 2 tests for some middle schools because of the testing years; with a weight of 3X that 'penalizes' middle schools more; there may be an unintended outcome that schools will tend to minimize science and writing because they aren't weighted as highly;

-- concern about defining different formulas for different school configurations, such as 5-8 schools, 7-8 schools; the system will become quite difficult to explain and unwieldy to manage

-- if the basic purpose is to demonstrate the "opportunity for an *adequate* education" then every subject should be equal in value;

-- whatever the weight, we have to articulate and justify the decision; perhaps a reasonable approach is to justify the weighting because we value growth and we don't have growth data for science and writing; by weighting reading and math X3, schools earn higher credit for the growth their students demonstrate;

-- concern that equal values will result in a system that more closely correlates with socioeconomic status than does growth values.

Green River High School: Deb showed the sample performance report for a high school. Since there is only one grade tested in high school, there are different indicators included, as decided in previous task force meetings. High school indicators use index scores for reading, math, science and writing. The ELLs Task Force is recommending to not include ACCESS as a score for writing because it doesn't provide sufficient data to use it for that purpose. The excessive absence indicator will have data for all subgroups but they are not shown in the sample. For this example, graduation rate and dropouts are whole school rates. (As we review Scott's data for the state, recognize that it doesn't have the absence information included since it was not available.)

Discussion:

-- explain dropout rate more clearly; e.g., "not including GED. . ."

Paul Leather described the options for different cohort rates. The plan is to collect four, five and six year cohort data and to report to the feds the rate they require. That will offer the option of giving credit to NH schools for graduating students prepared for college and career regardless how long it took.

-- a suggestion is to include the fact that this is the "current" state rate with an explanation that the state is moving toward a different calculation;

-- description of participation rate: explain that it looks back at 3 years' data, not just one year; sense of the group to use the three year rate versus one year data, since there are frequent instances of unexpected and unusual events that can influence a one year rate (i.e., illness, weather).

Deb invited general comments on the report format and contents.

Comments:

-- concern that these performance indicators do not address the full scope and breadth of what the school approval standards require (the 12 standards referenced in the "input" system);

-- will need to keep in mind and provide reminders about restriction of the legislation that there be no additional burden for the collection of additional data;

-- question on why dropout and graduation weighted X2; results in graduation, dropout, absence and participation totals outweighing the subject area totals;
Deb described one rationale that, since the test is only given once in high schools, it was important to balance the limited academic information with other indicators.

-- the fundamental problem is the paucity of existing performance measures at the high school level; discussions are underway about additional measures such as SAT, ACT which may be added at a later date. For now, this system has to use the data we have on hand.

3. Statewide Results, Determining Adequacy:

Scott began his presentation with a review of prior decisions around the indicators for Elementary and Middle schools, high schools and the process for translating data in various forms into a 1-4 scale.

LEP: For LEP students, this data run uses AMAO 1 (further detail available in the LEP assessment workbook on the department website. (Members recommended including excerpts from the LEP workbook in descriptions of this accountability system.) Scott's run of state level data for LEP students, using an "n" of 5, shows this distribution across rubric points:
less than 55% target = 1 point; 55-59 = 2 points; 60-79 = 3 points; 80-100 = 4 points

Allocating performance points using this rubric resulted in the following distribution:
Frequency (number of schools earning . . for all LEP students across all levels
1 point = 20.9% 2 points = 6.6% 3 points = 31.9%; 4 points = 40.7%

Scott reminded that the 55% mark is a federal requirements and over 78% of the schools meet that requirement .

Comments

-- is this a suitable measure of improvement for ELLs for the purposes of this accountability system? Based on other discussions about ELL accountability, the Department recognizes that, while other state level options for monitoring ELL progress are possible, nothing presents a more compelling case to have different calculations for the state system versus the federal system.

High Schools: Scott showed histograms for the distribution of performance rubric averages for all high schools in the state. The state mean = 2.55 on the 1 to 4 rubric for 86 high schools. (slide 10)

Elementary/ Middle Schools: Scott showed similar histograms for elementary/ middle schools. The state mean for 380 schools is 2.83 (on a 1-4 scale). (slide 12)

Deb distributed confidential listings of (a) all high schools ranked based on their rubric average across all indicators (except excessive absence); and (b) all elementary/ middle schools, including absence.

Deb posed the central question: *what "score" counts as meeting the requirement for providing the "opportunity to receive an adequate education"*? She invited members of the task forces to examine the actual scores and judge whether the results are consistent with their expectations, especially those who work directly with schools. She

asked those who have a question about a school's score or ranking to indicate their question on a post-it and she'll check the data. Scott reiterated that all data needs to be verified and corrected according to the newest corrections/ decisions today and corrections on school grade spans.

Comments/ discussion:

-- high school index scores correlate highly with socioeconomic status; examining the raw numbers on the reports will be critical to judge whether data looks/ "smells" trustworthy

-- there appears to be a "break" in clusters at the 1.70 spot on both elementary and high schools; perhaps that could be the "adequacy" cut point

-- what appeal is available should a school not meet adequacy? Deb replied that the "level 2" component of the performance based system would allow schools to define local indicators or include level 2 in an appeals process. Ed Murdough mentioned that schools/ districts currently have options to appeal any department action to the state board.

4. Recommendations for presentation to the legislature and superintendents:

Deb asked for advice on what to prepare for a presentation to the legislature and also to the Superintendents on December 10. Task Force members suggested

-- demonstrating local support and buy-in from the field (i.e., principals, superintendents, parents) to the legislature will be very helpful

-- overview page helpful

-- suggest "dry runs' with other groups than just the superintendents' meeting; not just educators

5. Next Steps

1. On 'rank order' chart, include columns for (a) number of indicators used in the calculation (especially if there is missing data); (b) "n" (number) of tested students; (c) "n" (number of) graduates
2. Run full reports for actual schools from the ranking list.
3. Agenda for next meeting (Dec 16)
   -- report from superintendent's meeting; legislature
   -- sample reports for real schools

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