



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

December 16, 2010, 9:00 am– 12:00 pm

Next Meeting: Friday, January 21, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm Board Room

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
X	Molly Kelly	Chair, Education Committee, NH Senate
X	Daphne Kenyon	NH State Board of Education
	Paul Leather	Deputy Commissioner, NH Department of Education
X	Scott Marion	National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Dover
	Judith Fillion	Director, Division of Program Support, NH Department of Education
X	Edward Murdough	Bureau of School Approval, NH Department of Education
X	Kathleen Murphy	Director, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education
X	Emma Rous	Former 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: Patrick Connors (SAU 53 Epsom); Donna Crook (MSD);
Chris Demers (Concord)

NH DOE: Sally Fellows, Susan Randall, Steve Bos, Merry Fortier, Mary Lane, Marcia
McCaffery, Ginny Clifford,

NH DOE Consultant: Karen Laba

Center for Assessment: Scott Marion

Measured Progress: Shannan Douglas

Meeting Objectives:

- ◆ Review and revise report shells & performance system overview
- ◆ Examine new data and offer recommendations for weighting & setting standards
- ◆ Continue discussion of the role of Level II (locally defined) performance indicators

NOTES

1. Welcome and Introductions: Deb Wiswell opened the meeting thanking members for continuing to attend to contribute to the discussions and decisions of the task force. The topics are complex and the final determinations difficult. The participation of all members is appreciated.

2. Update on meetings with Governor, Superintendents:

Deb and Scott Marion met with the Superintendents last Friday, Dec. 10. While the presentation was lengthy, there was substantial information to be introduced. At the meeting, Deb reminded the superintendents of the past-due date for the input submissions from all the schools. There was good questioning and overall positive response to the performance based system information. Commissioner Barry reminded that "timing is everything," and that last week's meeting came at a time when Superintendents were preoccupied with budgets so they likely found it difficult to attend to the complexity of the new system being introduced.

Deb asked the members of these task forces to offer suggestions for simplifying / shortening the presentation for other audiences who will need to be informed about the system.

Discussion:

- begin each presentation by reiterating the assumptions underlying the system, the purposes of the system, how the state will benefit from the implementation of this system, and any associated costs that will result
- it will be important to reinforce the message that this system is a way to express the state's belief that "every child deserves an adequate education"
- since everyone responds well to the "bubble graphs" consider starting with an explanation of the graphs and continuing by explaining the background details as we go through the information

- at the Superintendent's meeting, there was some perception that the performance-based system moves away from the criterion-referenced system that is represented by our state assessment; it will be important to remind the audience that this system is built on the state assessments, perhaps by reinforcing the "target to proficiency" aspect of the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) measure
- the demonstration of student growth percentile presented by Tim Kurtz at an earlier meeting of this committee was clear and could be incorporated into presentations to different audiences
- the presentation for parents, community, and school boards should be carefully scripted to explain clearly without jargon or unnecessary technical detail
- still concern about where art, physical education fit in the system; included in the input component but where is it (and other subject areas) in the performance based system? If the only criteria are math, reading, writing, and science in NECAP for the performance based system, there will be a tendency to teach to the test
- the expectation is that there will be a correlation between the input system and the performance based system; for instance, schools demonstrating low growth and low achievement may demonstrate gaps in the input/ school approval standards; the two systems will serve as a check on each other
- effort should be taken to minimize confusion in the public perception about which "system" to believe, for example, a school can be identified as a SINI (school in need of improvement) and receive an Eddie award
- enlist the local school boards to understand and explain the system to their communities
- leading a presentation with the reports of real schools will help make the information understandable; start with the high school which is simpler than the elementary/ middle schools which include student growth percentiles which are a bit more technically difficult
- include the historical legislative origins of the system

Deb described the meeting with the Governor's office which included a simpler presentation. Questions about the performance based system as it moves toward final definition will need to be vetted by the Attorney General's office.

Members of the committee discussed the potential impact of legislative actions proposed for the upcoming session related to education. At this point it is difficult to determine which of the many proposals will be consolidated or withdrawn, and which will be finally presented for legislative action.

3. Performance Indicators Reports -- Revised Drafts

Deb distributed and began a discussion of the Blue Hills sample report. She asked advice on a couple of items on the sample report.

Questions and Discussion –

- Q: Is it helpful to include state average and range in the indicator title box?
- include state average because that's what school boards want to know;

- could averages for subgroups be included not just whole school? One option might be to insert a live link to source data on the web; another is to add a column for the state average for each subgroup inside the indicator section

Q: Should the definition of 'excessive absence' be placed on the front of the report?

- also on back, but helpful to have on front
- include average across the state and for subgroups if using them
- include a statement that the value includes both excused and unexcused absences

Deb pointed out that super subgroups will be calculated for graduation and dropout rates, a decision to be finalized at a meeting in early January with the Department data team.

Back of the page:

- the explanation of how subgroups are defined can be confusing; recommend adding a graphic (Tim's venn diagram).
- should we write out "AMAO"?
- not that the terminology will change to EL (English learners) per recent federal documents (vs. ELLs – English language learners)
- Scott affirmed the need for more visual representations of this data.

Q: Should we include the cell size for each indicator? And an explanation for why it varies from indicator to indicator?

- suggest using language such as "reports on" versus "uses" for the minimum "n" in each case

Discussion:

- be sure to define the abbreviations used, for instance SWD may not be commonly understood
- put the target for dropout and graduation also on the back
- on the rubrics, decide the rounding rule for e.g., 75- to 79 – what if you're a 74.89 or similar?
- in the Profile (at the top of the report), list the subgroups in same order as listed in each indicator in the report

Deb directed attention to the Grey Lake sample report (elementary school). She pointed out that the definition of SGP (student growth percentile) is listed only on the back

- splitting the "yes" and "no" columns on the point allocation rubric is helpful
- in general, graphics are helpful
- consider bullets to show the sequence of steps to decide how points are assigned; for example,
 - Step 1 – did the school meet its median SGP target? Then,
 - Step 2 – what was its observed median SGP and how many points are credited for that level of performance?
- the SGP measure will need more graphics; the text is also essential, but it must not mislead, but must inform
- perhaps a "dichotomous" key format – example: if "yes" then use the column on the left; if 'no' use the column on the right
- the phrase "depends on" isn't helpful; be more precise

- need to clearly define what "target SGP" is and what "observed SGP" means
- color on the YES, NO row of cells doesn't stand out clearly especially in contrast to the colors on the boxes; consider appearance when printed black and white
- suggestion to add an example using the data from the front; i.e., select one subject and subgroup from the front and walk the reader through the steps to show how the points are credited
- consider splitting the back into two sections

Deb presented the Performance Based System Overview document and discussed the edits/ revisions that were made. One correction still to be fixed: the two segments of the performance based system should be identified as Level 1 / Level 2, versus part 1 and part 2, using the language in the legislation/ regulation.

Discussion of the "Determination of Adequacy" section (top of page 2 of Overview):

- clarify how to read the chart to explain how a school can be determined to have met adequacy; in addition to the table, add a narrative/ text description of what it means
- at the December 10 meeting, the Superintendents found the table helpful, reassuring in showing that there are multiple ways to be deemed "adequate"
- formatting suggestion – consider switching the labels on the columns and rows, so that "Input based system" is on the left, 'Performance based system' on the top;

4. Judging adequacy:

Scott launched a discussion of deciding how to use the output of the system under development to make determinations of "adequate." (slides)

Scott reminded the group that this committee has been consistent in wanting to avoid the mistakes of NCLB where "failure" in one category results in overall "failure" (a 'conjunctive' system). It was the decision earlier in the process to average points earned for each indicator to achieve an overall score rather than making an adequacy determination at the level of each separate indicator and subgroup.

Scott offered a proposal to assign a subgroup of this committee to write a narrative description of a school that would meet minimal expectations for adequacy. The data group meeting in January will prepare 'clean' data reports showing average results for all schools in the state or a selected representative sampling. From that description of minimal expectations of adequacy and the examination of data from all schools across the state, the task force could make a determination of the cut point separating "met adequacy" and "not met adequacy."

To help decide what value should be the "cut score," likely somewhere between 1.5 and 2.5, ask a representative group to examine a sample of reports and classify them as "adequate" or "not adequate" and examine the calculated average for the ones in the "not adequate" as the preliminary cut score.

Then, using the preliminary cut score, run the data and examine the results for actual schools across the state. The group would have to decide if the results for actual schools "makes sense." If not, the group can adjust the cut score to be consistent with other evidence.

Discussion:

- if we said 1 is "not adequate" throughout our discussions of each of the indicators, then haven't we essentially decided that 2 is the cut point?

- need to have a clear description of "adequacy" (or the *opportunity* for an adequate education) as the starting point; isn't the collection of indicators and targets we've defined in these reports the description of what this group considers "adequate"?
- remember that the legislation allows that the input system may result in a "not adequate" judgment but then support must be made available to get all schools to attain the "adequate" designation. For the performance based system, why would anything lower than a "4" be considered adequate?
- there must be a link between the adequacy definition in the law and this group's definition; a "4" says every child has *achieved* more than an adequate education, which is different from every child being given the "opportunity to receive" an adequate education.
- the performance based system must take into account that different students start at different points when arriving at a school; plus movement among schools during a school year or from year to year makes it difficult to assign accountability to a particular school for a student's performance; the "input" based system is much easier to assign responsibility for the 'opportunity'
- using the input system only would penalize a resource deprived community;
- poverty has a negative impact on outcomes/ performance; schools with high percentages of high poverty students are not credited with growth if using the status values only, as in the high school performance samples; how can this system credit high schools for taking the students who enter and move them to higher levels of learning?
- decisions about weighting different indicators will need to be clearly explained, and agreed to; the weighting allows schools to earn credit for performance on indicators of high value to the state, this task force.
- in judging "adequacy" in the input-based system, is the question about schools providing the opportunity, or is there an expectation that all students actually *access* that opportunity? Particularly relevant in the unified arts, where student schedules sometimes permit limited time to take an arts course because of other requirements
- the members of this task force have continually confronted the balance between "adequacy" and "excellence"; while most are inclined to strive for a definition of "excellence," the legislation only requires "adequacy"; perhaps at some point this system can be expanded to identify and recognize excellence

5. Locally defined indicators: "Level 2"

Time did not allow for discussion of the Level 2 indicators of performance option as expected. Deb offered a handout to members summarizing discussions of Level 2 from previous meetings and options for consideration at the next meeting.

Next Meetings:

Friday, January 21, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Board Room

Monday, February 14, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Room 15

Monday, March 14, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Walker Bldg., Room 100