



**Joint Meeting of the
Commissioner's Task Force to Develop a Performance-Based School
Accountability System
and the NH DOE Accountability Task Force
September 29, 2011, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm, Room 15
NOTES**

Next Meeting: Friday, October 28, 2011, 9:00 – 12:00 pm, Londergan Hall, Room 15

ATTENDING:

X	Virginia Barry, Ph.D.	Commissioner of Education
X	Brian Cochrane	Director of Assessment and Accountability Nashua School District
X	Patrick Connors	Principal, Epsom Elementary School
X	Paul Couture	Principal, Stevens High School, Claremont
X	Judith Fillion	Director, Division of Program Support, NH Department of Education
X	Jerome Frew	Superintendent, Kearsarge Regional School District
	Franklin Gould	NH House of Representatives, Lebanon, NH
	Molly Kelly	Education Committee, NH Senate
	Daphne Kenyon	NH State Board of Education
X	Robert Kingsbury	NH House of Representatives
	Paul Leather	Deputy Commissioner, NH Department of Education
X	Scott Marion	National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Dover
	Joseph Miller	Director, Division of Instruction, NH Department of Education
X	Edward Murdough	Bureau of School Approval, NH Department of Education
	TBD	NH School Board

Accountability (AYP) Task Force (in addition to those on the Commissioner's Task Force)
District Representatives: Donna Crook (MSD); Helene Bickford (SAU 53); Steve Zdravec (Portsmouth); Heather Cummings (Gov Wentworth); Chris Demers (Concord); Stephanie Smith(SAU 88)

Guests: Sen. Nancy Stiles, NH State Senate; Dean Michener, NH School Boards Association; Dan Barrick, NH Center for Public Policy Studies

NH DOE: Merry Fortier, Mary Lane, Susan Randall, Marcia McCaffery, Steve Bos, Ken Relihan, Cindy Rosborough; Stan Freeda; Irene Koffink, Ginny Clifford

NH DOE Consultant: Keith Burke

Center for Assessment: Scott Marion, Karen Laba

Meeting Objectives:

- ◆ Review current status of the performance system
- ◆ Confirm decisions on performance system standards for adequacy
- ◆ Continue discussion of "Level 2" – locally defined indicators of adequacy
- ◆ Initial discussion of AYP waivers

NOTES

1. Welcome, Updates, Review of the Agenda:

Ed Murdough invited attendees to introduce themselves and their roles with the task forces.

Karen Laba reviewed the agenda and the documents distributed.

The Commissioner thanked members for their contribution to the work of the two task forces. She noted that, while the Task Force has not met since June, work continued through the summer on the accountability system. The products of that work will be demonstrated later in the meeting.

2. Current Status of the Performance System

Scott Marion began a review of previous conversations and decisions around the performance component of the NH Accountability System.

Review of previous discussions/ decisions:

The two "levels" of the performance component will be the focus of attention today. (slide 3) Level 1 is legislatively mandated and consists of data already collected by the state and adds no additional burden on schools or districts. Level 2, the locally defined performance indicators, emerged as a recommendation from members of the task force to encourage local initiative in providing evidence of meeting the constitutional standard – providing the opportunity for students to receive an adequate education.

Scott reviewed the Level 1 performance indicator categories for elementary/ middle schools and the set for high schools. (slide 4) A major difference is that growth measures (student growth percentiles) aren't available for high schools because of the gap in time between the 8th grade and 10th grade tests – many factors come into play that influence student outcomes between eighth and tenth grade, making it difficult to assign accountability to schools based on the state tests.

Scott reviewed the decision to define 'targets' for individual students as a component of the calculation of growth. (slide 5) The targets are based on reaching proficiency by 8th grade or within 3 years whichever comes first. This ensures that students who are "growing" in achievement yet who still fall far below proficient are evaluated differently from those who are growing and "on target" to meet proficiency standards. A school's average growth percentile is based on both meeting proficiency targets as well as the actual ('status') average percentile rank of each student group.

At previous meetings, the Task Force determined that subgroups were deemed important to judging school's adequacy. (Slide 13) Scott reminded how the Task Force defined the

different subgroups who are included in the measures of adequacy, including Whole School, English learners (EL), Students With Disabilities (SWD); Low socioeconomic status (Low SES); and All Others. Points are assigned to a school for each of the 5 subgroups for each of the performance indicators.

For each subgroup, the committee has previously determined to use a low minimum 'n' of 5 students to calculate a value for a school, helping assure that all students are included in the school's determination.

Scott explained that the EL subgroup (English learners) are not required to take NECAP during their first year in the education system, but in order to include them in the state's accountability system, the Task Force chose to use another measure, ACCESS for ELLs, to track progress for those students in calculating a school's adequacy measure. (Slide 15)

Decisions to be confirmed, finalized:

The remaining decision is to determine what average point value counts as meeting the standard for adequacy. Scott proposed two issues that play into the decision --

- Will both the state and federal systems be the same? Will there be different "cut" scores for each? (*see later discussion of the NCLB flexibility waiver*)
- What meets the committees' best judgment about what a reasonable value for the standard ought to be? There is no "right" answer since this is being defined by the committee based on its examination of all the information to date. But the value ('cut score') should represent a substantive difference in quality among schools significantly above and below the standard. For example, if 2.0 is the standard, there may be little observable difference between a school scoring 1.9 and one scoring 2.1, but there should be recognizable distinction between a school with a 1.9 and another scoring 2.9.

TO DO: The Task Force will need to review actual scores for specific schools on a trial run of the current performance data to make the final judgment. (An earlier review at the March meeting led to the tentative designation of 2.0 as a possible standard.)

Input System Update:

Scott reported that the first run of the Input System has been completed. (See the description of the Input system on the *Overview* handout.) Ed Murdough is coordinating the review of the input submissions by members of the Department. Ed reported that the form of the communication from the Department to the field about determinations has not been finalized as yet. Keith Burke indicated that approximately 25 schools have yet to report but that most other technical issues have been straightened out.

Timeline Review:

Scott reviewed the timeline (Slide 25). He reminded the Task Force of the issues encountered because of NECAP fall testing. Score reports are not completed until January and additional data review and growth calculations will not be completed until the end of the school year (June).

Comment: Rep Kingsbury asked why it takes so long to get test results back. Scott explained that the test scoring process is extremely complex. Coupled with the rigorous data checking procedures, and scoring of constructed response items adds to the required time for the results to be available. Brian Cochrane spoke of the value of

having constructed response items in NECAP, which adds a level of quality to the tests that are absent if only multiple choice items are used. ,

3. The NH Growth Model "App"

Scott launched a preview of the Universal Mind "app" for the NH Growth Model. He explained that NH has been able to contract at a very reasonable rate with the developers to create a visually appealing, user friendly representation of the growth data calculated for the performance component of the NH Accountability System for elementary and middle school students. *(See previous explanation why growth measures are not available for high schools.)*

Scott launched the application which shows the median growth percentile for selected schools as bubbles on a grid. Scott demonstrated some of the various ways to examine the data – by school, by student subgroup, by grade or subject area, or by district. Scott showed several sample schools over time to demonstrate the changes in time, which are often dramatic for small schools in particular. One major advantage is that as an "app" there is no need for an internet connection or extensive knowledge of Excel or other technical computer tools.

Discussion:

Q: What is the data source for these reports?

SM: As with the growth percentiles in the performance reports, this uses the teaching year file for NECAP

Merry Fortier asked if this could present AYP data and Scott proposed that the system could likely present AYP as an additional or optional view.

KB: These bubbles are not raw NECAP data. It is NECAP data that has been put through the calculations to show student growth percentile

Q: Could you see the data behind the bubbles if using Performance Plus?

KB: The data is not actually in any one database because of the student growth percentile calculations. There are no easy ways to "look behind the curtain" to see the raw data.

Q: When will this be available?

SM: Originally the app was supposed to be done today. It will be released as soon as possible

Q: Will we be able to explore the 'bubbles' to get to student level data? Will we be able to link student data to teachers?

SM: Not yet in this version. Data is beginning to be collected to link teachers to the student data. Commissioner Barry reported that the intention will be able to do that at some time in the future

Q: If students have high achievement isn't it hard to show high growth?

SM: Not in this system, because comparisons are between students who are like each other (academic peers), not with every other student. So, a high achieving student will receive a growth percentile based on how well they improve compared to other students who are similarly high achieving. The system does not have an upper limit; in addition, while

the test may exert some upper limit, NECAP still has the capability to allow high achieving students to demonstrate growth.

Scott invited members to offer their wish lists for this tool to him.

BREAK

4. Performance Component Level 2– Locally Defined Indicators Keith Burke

Keith reviewed the concerns expressed by members of the Task Force in previous meetings that the performance-based system using only the state-defined indicators (level 1) relied too much on one test (NECAP) given at one point in time. The wish expressed in many meetings of the Task Force was to include a way to give schools a chance to demonstrate adequacy using indicators of value to them.

While the Task Force has discussed a "level 2" option for the performance-based system over many meetings, no firm plan has emerged to date. Keith indicated that his goal is to bring back to the group a proposal at the October meeting based on the comments made at this meeting in addition to decisions and discussions from previous meetings.

Previously, the Task Force has developed a list of some possible locally defined indicators: (see handout, *NH Performance Based Accountability System: Level 1 and Level 2*)

- Indicators from the Center for Secondary School Reform
- Assessments in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium,
- Indicators developed by Great Schools Partnership for the New England Secondary Schools Consortium (NESSC)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation criteria
- Others on handout list from recently submitted school improvement plans

The principle of a locally defined (level 2) system is that a school district identifies the key performance indicators for their own students. The district identifies the threshold values for those components. These three questions would frame the District's discussions --

- what is important to us?
- what is important for our students?
- what are we willing to stand behind?

Keith mentioned some of the open questions to be decided by this Task Force about a "level 2" system include --

- What is the role of the school, teacher in defining local performance indicators?
- What is the role of the district?
- What is the role of THIS Committee in defining which indicators ?
- Are the indicators academic only?
- Are they social, emotional, as well as academic?
- Do we need legislation to establish a 'level 2'?
- How does level 2 contribute to the adequacy decision –
- Does it compensate for gaps in level 1 of the performance system?
- Does it compensate for gaps in the input component of the accountability system?

- Is level 2 OPTIONAL or required? For ALL or for some?

Commissioner Barry commented that it would be hard to defend goals that are not tied to student achievement, including school culture, teacher effectiveness, leadership. Also, indicators must be research based and represent evidence based strategies.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Barry: Previously we have discussed this as part of a continuous improvement model, as an option for a district to demonstrate that it has put together the right variables to make gains in student achievement.
- Paul Couture: I see level 2 was a means to demonstrate growth in high schools because of the existing limitations of the growth model system. I would want to demonstrate growth around academic standards that can't be shown via the SGP model available to elementary schools/ middle schools. I would not require level 2 for all districts, but I would like the option for personal reasons, to demonstrate our progress to our community.
- what about the timeline? I a school won't know if "met" the standard on level 1 of the performance system until June, when would they initiate a level 2 submission?
SM: A decision would need to be made at the earliest time in the school year, in fact if level 2 is part of a coherent continuous improvement system, the locally defined indicators of performance become an ongoing effort, not a one time, one shot endeavor.
- as a school it would be nice to be acknowledged for what we're already doing; I would not be waiting for level 1 decisions, but would want to have our current initiatives credited by presenting our evidence via a level 2 presentation
- clarification -- level 2 would not allow a school to define a whole different set of values different from core educational values, but it would allow another way to demonstrate performance already in place;
- the "input" system allows schools to provide evidence of "other" means of meeting state standards, so Level 2 follows that pattern by allowing schools to demonstrate they meet the standard (provide an opportunity to receive an adequate education)
- would a level 2 system be more of an *obligation* or an *opportunity*? Now, schools in need of improvement (SINI) are obligated to create a plan for change; that plan can provide them an opportunity to design and implement valued practices.
- Commissioner Barry: We should use this as an *opportunity* to support a school to get clear on its values, to define how it gives the opportunity to every child to succeed. Many schools are not making progress because they're not strategic. It will be important to avoid the danger of designing a level 2 that to measures people's 'goodness' versus their effectiveness in getting students to achieve.

Keith posed several other questions to be answered:

What is the role of the local school board

In relation to the locally defined goals?

In the process for setting/ approving the local goals?

What is the role of the DOE

Does it approve the locally defined goals?

Does it approve the process of setting the goals?

What criteria should be applied to locally defined indicators?

Are the school's targets ambitious enough?

- Are the measures appropriate for the purpose?
- What is the technical quality of the measures?
- How do we create a system that's practical – i.e., keeping in mind the limited resources available for the Dept to oversee and manage the system, and for the schools to prepare a meaningful level 2 demonstration.

Keith reported that CCSSO has developed 8 "elements" of accountability systems and noted that the NH accountability system has met several of these elements so far. He asked for any additional comments on the design of the proposal he will prepare for next meeting.

Discussion –

- Steve Bos mentioned that CTE monitors whether graduates get jobs or get into college using document checking methods. Perhaps these values could be used by a school or district as level 2 indicators
- Irene K noted that the Governor's P-16 Council and the NE Secondary School Consortium are working on these measures.
- Steve Z pointed out that the purpose for level 2 will need to be clear for us to move forward. First we talked about Level 2 as an option, now we're discussing it as part of an NCLB waiver, so the purpose is not clear. One view is to see 'input' as the baseline, performance level 1 is a next more rigorous measure of accountability, and then a few schools may opt to go into level 2 in more depth as much for their own benefit as for an accountability system, as Paul Couture describes.
- Jerry Frew agreed with Steve's comments that level 2 will be a lot of work and only suitable for select schools, because the accountability system applies to only the opportunity to provide an adequate education, which needs to be considered in light of the \$3500 level of support provided by the state. Jerry pointed out that most schools will have 'met' the standard by either the input or performance level 1 systems.
- Marcia McCaffery suggested that level 2 could be part of an on-site visit (the legislation requires that the Department visit 10% of schools per year);
- Stephanie wondered if level 2 could be submitted proposing future growth, describing how the school will make progress toward adequacy, versus reporting that they have demonstrated adequacy already
Keith commented that the system as current discussed should answer the question, "here's how we're doing using other measures than NECAP." The evidence should be substantive.
Scott added that the school would be required to show a goal and clear progress toward that goal.
- Paul C described his interest in level 2 as 'selfish' to give him an opportunity to earn a "yes" for both the input system and the performance system. While his school may meet the input standard and therefore "meet" the legislative definition of 'adequate' he would like to display to his community that his school meets the performance standard also, which he could do through a level 2 presentation using existing data he already has on hand, but perhaps no on NECAP data.
- Steve suggested that a level 2 system could encourage schools to dig deeper into the reasons they have not 'met' the level 1 standard
- Stan asked for a clarification – is level 2 to be used to add to level 1, or is level 2 an alternate way to demonstrate adequacy?

Keith pointed out that the current question on the table is how level 2 could be an alternate performance measure to level 1.

- Donna Crook wondered how many districts have a strategic plan that is followed by the school board? Are schools not meeting standards because of too many plans competing for attention? Commissioner Barry responded that her observation is that there is a relationship between academic success and a school board that follows a plan that include leadership plans, professional development plans tied to teach needs, etc.

Keith reiterated his commitment to bring a proposed level 2 plan to the group for their critique at the October meeting.

5. AYP Waivers

Scott gave a brief description of the offer of waivers from NCLB rules from the White House and Ed Dept. Lots of flexibility in many areas is being offered (slide 39), but the details are still being defined by the USED.

The expectations (slide 40) underlying the waiver requests include familiar statements about adopting college and career ready standards; state-developed differentiated recognitions, accountability and support; supporting effective instruction and leadership; reducing duplication and unnecessary burden.

Scott offered some elaboration of principle 2 – state developed differentiated recognition, accountability and support (slide 41/ 29/ 44) and principle 3 – supporting effective instruction and leadership (slide 42/ 30).

Two due dates have been announced so far: November and February 2012. Commissioner Barry indicated that NH DOE will do an analysis of the benefits and costs of pursuing the waiver. If it chooses to go forward, the state will aim for the February date at the earliest.

Next Steps

1. Keith's slides will be distributed to participants ASAP.
2. Members will consider the level 2 questions posed by Keith and send their responses to Ed Murdough (Edward.murdough@doe.nh.gov) to inform the model Keith will present at the October meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm

Next meeting: Friday, October 28, 2011 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

NOTE: Extended meeting December 9, 2011 9:00 am – 3:00 pm