ESSA Accountability Work Group
Pierre School District Administration Building, Pierre, South Dakota
June 14, 2016

The third meeting of the Accountability Work Group began at 10:00 a.m. on June 14, 2016, at the Pierre School District Administration Building, Pierre, South Dakota. The ESSA Accountability Work Group was formed to make recommendations to the South Dakota Department of Education pertaining to changes in school accountability in the new reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA).

Work Group Membership
Members of the work group who were present were: Joan Dunmire, Douglas School District; Kelly Glodt, Pierre School District; Bonnie Haines, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate; Cindy Lindskov, Dupree School District; Sara Lutz, Stanley County School District; Mary McCorkle, South Dakota Education Association; Rob Monson, School Administrators of South Dakota; Charles Sykora, Wall School District; Karen Whitney, Todd County School District; and Jeremy Wollman, South Central School District. Kerri Whipple, ESL Consultant, along with several SD Department of Education staff persons were also in attendance.

Welcome
Terri Bissonette, consultant for McRel International North Central Comprehensive Center, acted as the facilitator. Bissonette asked for comments or corrections to the notes posted from the last meeting. She also reviewed the process the committee will use to arrive at consensus on items needed for accountability decisions.

Review of US Education Proposed Rules and Implications
Laura Scheibe, SD Department of Education Director of Accountability, reviewed some of the highlights of the proposed federal regulations for the ESSA. The regulations have been posted until August 1 for public comments. Scheibe reported that the department will make some written comments for submission. The slides will be distributed to the members via email.

Report from the ESSA English Language Learners (ELL) Work Group
Kerri Whipple informed the work group of the discussions/decisions of the ELL work Group. Notes from the other work group meetings may be found at http://doe.sd.gov/secretary/essa.aspx . The English Language Learners Work Group made the following decisions.

- The work group decided that long-term English language learner students need to be identified in Infinite Campus. SD DOE will develop a system.

- The work group recommended an "N" Size of 10 students. This is current practice.

- The work group decided not to do ELA testing for new to country students and continue with the current practice of assessing only math participation. Under ESSA English language learners must take the math state assessment during the first year in the country and it counts as participation rate with states having the option of testing ELA during the first year also. During the second year, ELL students must take both ELA and math and the scores count for

participation and proficiency. During the third year, the students must take both assessments and both are counted for participation, proficiency, and school/district/state accountability.

The English Language Learners Work Group will continue to look at key questions for ESSA implementation.

Report of Accountability Sub Groups

Several small groups were formed at the last meeting. These groups reported information they collected followed by the work group making decisions about some topics and asking for more information on other topics listed below. Decisions were made pending the review of the other group members.

Recommendations

- Full Academic Year (FAY) must be "at least" half the school year. How do we set that time frame? The work group recommended continuing with the Full Academic Year as October 1 through May 1. The work group discussed several items prior to making this decision. ESSA requires FAY to be at least 50% of the school year. Some districts reported that they do not want the FAY to be shorter than it is now. The group asked if the end of the testing window could be the end of the FAY. SD DOE had to request the current FAY through the waiver process and had difficulty with getting the window closed on May 1. DOE would not want to shorten it now.

- Should Gap and Non-Gap groups be retained? The work group recommended that the Gap and Non-Gap groups be retained per current practice. The group discussed how new subgroups of military children, foster, and homeless children may impact the system. At this time, there are too many unknowns about the size of these subgroups and the children that meet the requirements of these subgroups. In South Dakota having Gap and Non-Gap students helped our state to identify groups of students whose achievement were previously not easily identified. The question was asked whether this would change the bottom 5% of schools. The answer was "no" as the individual subgroups must be reviewed to determine the school rankings. The 5% is a summative calculation of all students. Currently, the Gap groups are compared from school to school to determine the schools in focus status. Also, the group was reminded that our state plan must be revised every four years; however, the plan can be revised more often should the need occur. The state would have the option to revise the plan in the next couple of years should the need arise.

- Should the testing in high school remain in the 11th grade or be moved to another grade? The work group recommended continuing with the high school testing in the 11th grade. The group discussed several areas such as moving the tested grade to the 9th grade not working well with the blueprint for math. Scores may go down with moving the testing to 9th or 10th grade. The work group discussed using a different assessment such as ACT for the high school grade. The ACT test could be taken more than once with the highest scores used for accountability and college entrance purposes. The cost would be greater by switching to ACT or SAT. Taking the test during the 11th grade would be best for college entrance.

- Should South Dakota continue with the Smarter Balanced assessment for high school grade testing? The work group recommended that the state continue with the Smarter Balanced assessment for the 11th grade. After discussing the pros and cons of switching to the ACT or SAT, the committee did not wish to recommend a change at this time. Smarter Balanced is

aligned to the state standards. How would the cost of a new assessment be covered? A request for proposal would need to be issued in order to find a new assessment. Could we use Smarter Balanced in the lower grades and something else in high school? Yes, that is an option. We do need to be cognizant though of the new state law restricting testing to 1% of classroom time. We currently meet that requirement.

- How will the state handle indicators around high school graduation/completion? The work group recommended retaining our current process for calculating both a "completer" rate and the federally-required 4-year cohort. ESSA requires states use the Four-Year Cohort graduation rate in their systems with the option to include an extended-year graduation rate of up to seven years. The extended year graduation rate has the same requirements as the Four-Year rate (i.e., it disallows inclusion of GED completers), it just allows for extra time. We are not certain that we will gain approval to continue using our High School Completer rate, which does positively count GED completers. The group opted to not use the extended year graduation rate envisioned in ESSA and to instead fight to keep the High School Completers indicator. Allowing GED and extra flexibility is very popular with the school administrators, students, and families and it is important that we keep this process in our state.

- What "N" size should the state use for assessment and accountability purposes? The work group agreed with the English Language Learners work group that the "N" size should be 10 for both assessment reporting and for accountability calculations. After a discussion of various "N" sizes and how the size translates into the report card, calculation of bottom 5%, or personally identifiable information, retaining the "N" size is reasonable. South Dakota had tried a larger "N" for a short period in past years and had returned to the "N" size of 10.

- Should a school's science performance translate into points under the accountability system? The work group decided not to recommend attaching points to science. They decided that this topic should be revisited in a couple years. Currently, science is tested in grades 5, 8, and 11. The results are used in the "All Assessed" report on the report card, but it is not included in the calculations for school improvement purposes. Science standards are not on the same level as math and English/Language Arts (ELA) and are also on implementation cycle different from math and ELA. Concern was also expressed about attaching points to another assessment.

Needs More Information and Discussion

Should South Dakota retain the attendance indicator? The work group determined that they need more information on this topic. Would another indicator be more beneficial for accountability purposes? How does absenteeism affect achievement? How many absences constitute chronic absenteeism? How are different ages impacted by absenteeism? Are there other indicators for elementary school, if yes, what are they? Do schools have any control over attendance even after implementing all their established procedures and legal procedures? The districts would implement all of the procedures whether attendance is part of the accountability system or not. Each district calculates attendance differently as there is no statewide required system. The work group briefly talked about other indicators and age groups. Splitting schools by grade groups is rather impossible because of the different grade spans for the different schools; k-8, k-5, k-6, etc. The group decided to revisit this question after they have decided whether to incorporate something as an indicator of student success/school climate.

How should students earn points for college and career readiness and how is readiness an indicator? The work group determined that this topic would be tabled for the day. Questions on the topic included; are these two indicators – college readiness, career readiness; are there other considerations like work ethic, high morals, willingness to show up and work, and communication? Some students take the career readiness tests and find it difficult to apply the skills to practical living.

To which school/district should students who have dropped out of school and who were in their last school for less than half the school year be counted? The work group asked for additional information on the number of students who fit in this category. The work group discussed where students should be placed in the accountability system when they are highly mobile or drop out during the school year. Currently, in our state a student, whose last enrollment is less than fifteen days, is counted in that district. A student who drops after having been enrolled at a school for fifteen days or more is counted at his or her last school of enrollment. The work group discussed changing this to the district where the majority of attendance occurred. SD DOE asked about enrolled days vs. attendance days, percentage enrolled, 4 day vs. 5 day school districts, and how this would impact the calculation. Questions were asked about the increased workload and expense for DOE to add additional factors to the accountability system. The SD DOE will gather more data and report back.

Under ESSA, states are expected to use an alternate assessment for only 1% of the tested population. Last school year, South Dakota tested approximately 1,050 students or 1½% of the tested student population with an alternate assessment. How does South Dakota account for this large number of students and what can be done to bring the number of students down to an acceptable range? Ben Morrison, Special Education SD DOE, presented information to the committee on this. Smarter Balanced is more rigorous. South Dakota changed our state definition of "significant disability". Our hypothesis is as the definition was less clear more students were placed in this category. One nearby state has a much lesser number of alt tested students and that leads to questioning whether SD is out of the proper range. We need to look at whether this is a coding or a criteria issue and compare with other states. We also need to look at the definition of significant cognitive disability and check whether any rules will be coming from US ED on this definition.

How should academic growth be calculated? After a presentation on how the state will calculate academic growth, being rolled out with the 15-16 report cards, the work group decided to table this discussion until the results of the first iteration of growth are available, later this summer/early fall.

Next Step

The following topics will need to be discussed during the July meeting. 1) college and career ready indicator; 2) additional indicator for elementary/middle school and high school; 3) attendance; 4) maintain a normative-based accountability system or switch to a criterion based system; 5) 1% special education participation; and 6) graduation rate. In August the work group will discuss 1) participation consequences; 2) bonus points; 3) ratification of English Language Proficiency recommendations; 4) weights of indicators; 5) calculation of each indicator; 6) targeted support designation; and 7) academic growth. The group will also need to consider setting targets, i.e., the replacement for AMOs under the waiver and AYP under NCLB.

Resources will be collected on other indicators and other state models plus college and career ready information and criterion and norm referenced information. Information will be provided to the work group prior and during the next meeting.

Next Meeting
A meeting date survey to be completed by the members will be emailed out soon.

Adjournment
The work group adjourned at 3:10 p.m.