

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

The fifth meeting of the Accountability Work Group began at 10:08 a.m. on September 14, 2016, at the Capitol Visitor's Center, 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: Linda Foos, Wagner Community School District; Kelly Glodt, Pierre School District; Bonnie Haines, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate; Thomas Holmes, State Legislator; Cindy Lindskov, Dupree School District; Rob Monson, School Administrators of South Dakota; Wade Pogany, Associated School Boards of South Dakota; Charles Sykora, Wall School District; Paul Turman, Board of Regents; Karen Whitney, Todd County School District; and Steve Obrien, Vice President of the South Dakota Education Association attended as substitute representative for their organizations. Several SD Department of Education staff persons were also in attendance.

Review of School Improvement Work Group Recommendations

Shannon Malone, Title I Administrator, reviewed the recommendations of the School Improvement Work Group from their last two meetings. The recommendations may be found at <http://doe.sd.gov/secretary/essa-SI.aspx> Members asked a few questions about the recommendations.

Academic Growth Overview

Laura Scheibe, Accountability Administrator, reviewed some personally unidentifiable data from the current state report card with the work group. Scheibe explained to the group that the data will show, based on the modeling produced by Student Growth Percentiles, which students are proficient and projected to stay proficient, not proficient but projected to reach proficiency in three years, or showing very high growth (growing at a rate of better than 70 percent of their peers). The growth model compares South Dakota students with a score this year to South Dakota students with a score last year to which the Department has access – which may even include BIE, tribal, private, and public school students. Some schools will be high proficient schools and yet their growth is losing ground; other schools find that their proficiency is low but that they are making great gains, as played out by higher growth scores. Currently, we are comparing this year to last year's data as we are just in our second year. We will know more when we have one more year of data.

The work group recommended maintaining the current growth model with the caveat that the model be revisited by the SD DOE in two years (at that time three years of data will be available.)

Weights When Calculating School Performance Index (SPI)

Academic growth calculation is applicable to elementary and middle schools only. The current calculation for School Performance Index (SPI) in elementary and middle school is 40 points for academic growth in Math and English Language Arts, 40 points for proficiency in Math and English Language Arts, and 20 points for Attendance.

The work group recommended that academic growth be equally weighted with proficiency as is the current calculation.

The group expressed concern and a strong recommendation that the growth model not be used as a teacher effectiveness or evaluation component.

All Students vs. Gap/Non-Gap

One of the main components of the South Dakota accountability system is the use of a Gap Group, which consists of subgroups of students that have historically contributed to the achievement gap. This is calculated from state assessment data is reevaluated every six years. The Gap Group contains students who are part of one or more of the following subgroups: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black, Hispanic, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Economically Disadvantaged Students. Students who do not belong to any of these subgroups are part of the Non-Gap group. The Non-Gap group currently consists of the following subgroups: White, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. Because of the Gap Group, almost every school in the state has a focus on those groups of students who traditionally have experienced the largest achievement gaps. The question for the work group was whether to continue using the Gap and Non-Gap concept when calculating achievement points or make the calculations based on “all” students.

The work group recommended that South Dakota maintain the Gap and Non-Gap Groups in the achievement calculations.

Single Year vs. Multi-Year Proficiency in Accountability Calculation

South Dakota is a small population state with many small schools and districts. Currently, student achievement points are awarded based on a school’s performance on Smarter Balanced over the course of up to three years. This helps even out some of the highs and lows that smaller schools may experience and gives a more robust picture of student achievement. The question before the work group was whether to retain the multi-year calculation in the accountability system or return to a single year calculation.

The work group recommended that a multi-year calculation of data (three years) be used in the accountability system.

Value Points of Multi-Level Achievement System

The work group recommended that the SD DOE use a structure to assign a value to each level of achievement: .25 points for Level 1 scores, .5 points for Level 2 scores, 1.0 point for Level 3 (proficiency), and 1.25, or a bonus, for Level 4 scores.

Student Achievement

A minimum of 95% participation on the state’s assessment is required for a school to receive points for the student achievement indicator in the School Performance Index (SPI). Under ESSA, student achievement must be calculated using as the denominator either the number of students tested or 95%

of students, whichever is higher. This calculation is applied to the state, district, school, and all subgroups. Even if a school met the participation rate for all students, if the school did not meet for a particular subgroup, additional “nonparticipant” students would need to be added into the student achievement denominator in order to reach the 95% participation threshold *for that subgroup*. The work group was asked how to account for the non-participating students.

The work group recommended creating a level zero category for each non-participating student below the 5 percent as allowed in ESSA. The work group further recommended that each school district make the decision on the selection of the nonparticipant student(s) needed to be counted in student achievement with a value of 0 points to get to the 95 percent participation bar. (Note: which students are counted for 0 points has implications on a school's score because of the Gap/Nongap method of determining points and the need to meet participation at each subgroup).

Additional Indicator (5th Indicator)

Under NCLB and ESSA, we must have an additional indicator, commonly called the 5th indicator. Our current attendance (chronic absenteeism) indicator would satisfy this requirement, but the workgroup has shown interest in expanding beyond attendance. ESSA allows us to have multiple indicators. We must report attendance, but we do not have to include attendance as the 5th indicator for School Performance Index (SPI).

The work group recommended that South Dakota create a Safe and Healthy indicator to replace the attendance 5th indicator.

The work group did not determine what components would go into that indicator yet. It also decided not to determine the weight given to this indicator at this time. During the conversation, a list of possible items was created as possible appropriate activities.

Goal Setting

Currently, South Dakota sets school-level, district-level, and state-level goals called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). AMOs are based on the larger goal of reducing by half over six years the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup, including the Gap and Non-Gap groups, who are not proficient.

ESSA simply requires that we set goals; it does not prescribe what those goals are. The work group discussed whether to retain the current goal of reducing by half the non-proficient students over a six year period.

The work group recommended that South Dakota edit the goal to reduce by 25% non-proficiency over six years and to revisit this goal in two years when more data is available.

The work group asked for more information and will revisit this recommendation at the October meeting.

Four-Year Cohort

The Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for that

graduating class. (Adjusted cohort – number of first-time ninth graders plus students who transfer into - minus students who are removed from the cohort during the four years) The graduation rate methodology is defined by Federal Regulations.

The work group recommended to edit the goal to reduce by 25% the number of non-graduates in the four-year cohort over six years and to revisit this process in two years when more data is available.

Next Meeting

The work group will meet at least one more time in October to complete the work and to hear recommendations from the English Language Learners Work Group. A survey will be sent out to select the date.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.