

Accountability Working Committee
Meeting Summary 1/18/17

Overview and Introductions

The Committee Chairs welcomed members and reviewed the agenda, which focused on reviewing impact analyses and having discussions around several topics: long-term goals and measurements of interim progress, closing gaps, N size, participation rate, Lexile indicator, attendance rate indicator, graduation rate regulations, and the CCRPI working draft.

Before continuing with the agenda, a committee member asked the group whether or not their school systems were choosing to administer the Georgia Milestones retest to students this school year. Committee members voiced a concern that retesting should be done if it is in the best interest of students, and not because of CCRPI. They noted, however, that since CCRPI utilizes the retests, some systems feel obligated to continue to retest for the purposes of CCRPI since other systems will retest. Some members noted that the retest has only added about 1 or 1.5 points to their district's CCRPI score, with even fewer points for individual schools. The committee then expressed interest in eliminating the use of retests from CCRPI. They also noted that retests are not utilized in student growth calculations and that the CCRPI timeline could be improved by approximately one month if the retests and summer EOC scores were not included.

Long term goals and measurements of interim progress

The Accountability Team presented the results of an impact analysis comparing the current target structure and the proposed target structure under ESSA. The current target structure is based on state averages where all schools are expected to meet the same target. Schools that fail to meet the target in one year must still meet the increased target the next year. The proposed target structure would create individual school targets, where each school is expected to make an annual improvement equivalent to 3% of the difference between their baseline performance and 100%. The annual target would be an improvement target. Each year, schools would be expected to meet the improvement target relative to their performance the previous year.

The committee felt that this is the right track for setting targets. The targets are ambitious, yet attainable. All schools would have an improvement target and continuous improvement would be expected of all schools. The committee also recommended including a reset every 5 years, where the annual target would be reset using a new baseline.

The committee wants to include a maintenance threshold, where a school's target will be to maintain, rather than improve, once a certain threshold of performance has been obtained. There was an interest in setting that threshold at the top quartile, similar to the performance contracts. However, there was concern that such a threshold would communicate low expectations, particularly for subgroups that have lower performance. It was also noted that the contracts are based on the overall CCRPI score, while targets are for proficiency and graduation rates for all students and for subgroups. The committee requested additional analyses to help inform a decision.

Closing Gaps

The Accountability Team presented the results of an impact analysis comparing the current achievement gap calculation (gap size and gap progress) with three proposed new calculations. The committee had previously identified the achievement gap metric as an area of concern. They noted that it was complex and difficult for educators to understand and use to inform improvements. The impact analyses compared five options: 1) the current achievement gap calculation, 2) the current achievement gap calculation restricted to ELA and mathematics (as will be calculated in 2017), 3) the percent of targets met, 4) a weighted percent of targets met, and 5) a new z score method comparing the prior average z scores of the lowest 25% of students to their current average z score.

The committee liked the approaches that utilized the new targets and corresponding performance flags. This method would bring the targets into scoring so it is not separate. They also liked that it would be an opportunity to show where subgroups are doing well and making improvements. They like providing partial credit when a subgroup makes improvements but the improvements are not enough to meet the target.

The committee wants to further explore the scoring structure to make sure it accurately reflects school performance and does not have unintended consequences. The committee also expressed the concern that this may have an AYP-feel to it, but also noted that new targets are based on improvement. They liked the more straightforward way of looking at how subgroups are doing.

N Size

The Accountability Team presented an initial impact analysis on minimum N size. It was noted that the purpose of setting a minimum N size is to ensure it is 1) high enough to protect student confidentiality and maximize reliability and 2) low enough to maximize the number of students and student subgroups included in accountability.

The committee requested information on minimum N sizes in other states. The minimum N ranges from 5 to 50, with the majority of states at 30 and 10. The committee would like more information on the reliability of different indicators as the minimum N size changes.

Participation Rate

The Accountability Team presented an impact analysis on participation rates and adjusting proficiency rates when the participation rate is less than the required 95%. The analysis included two options, based on feedback from the committee at a previous meeting: 1) multiply the proficiency rate by the participation rate and 2) use the denominator of the participation rate instead of the denominator of the proficiency rate. Both methods take a proportional approach where the extent to which the proficiency rate is modified is proportional to how low the participation rate is.

It was noted that the second method has a greater negative impact on high mobility schools due to the impact of Full Academic Year (FAY). The committee preferred the first approach as it

makes the required adjustment but does not label students who did not test as “not proficient.” The committee recommended that, instead of multiplying by the participation rate, proficiency rates should be multiplied by the participation rate divided by 95%. The committee noted that this would be more complicated to display and explain, but it would ensure the adjustment is proportional to the extent to which a school fell below 95% as opposed to 100%.

Lexile Indicator

Previously, the committee recommended retaining the Lexile indicator as improving literacy is an important state goal. However, the committee wanted to explore expanding the indicator to include all tested grades instead of only grades 3, 5, 8, and high school American Literature, as is done under the current CCRPI. The Accountability Team presented an impact analysis on the Lexile indicator. The analysis compared the current calculation (4 separate indicators) with a new method utilizing all grade levels and high school ELA tests as well as the College and Career “Stretch” Bands established by MetaMetrics.

The committee liked the new approach as it distributes the weight of the indicator to all tested grade levels. They also liked aligning the “cut scores” to the College and Career “Stretch” Bands.

Attendance Indicator

The Accountability Team presented an impact analysis comparing three different methods of calculating attendance: 1) the current method based on the percent of students absent fewer than 6 days; 2) the percent of students absent fewer than 15 days; and 3) the percent of students absent less than 10% of their enrollment.

The committee preferred options 2 and 3 over the current calculation. However, several committee members expressed reservations about including attendance in the accountability system. Some members expressed a preference to keep attendance in the school climate star rating but not include it in CCRPI. There was consensus that the current attendance indicator should not continue to be included in CCRPI but some members expressed concerns about removing the indicator altogether.

Opportunity to Explore Indicator

A consistent theme heard across the state during ESSA stakeholder feedback sessions was the desire to include student participation in non-academic courses, fine arts in particular, in the state’s accountability system. In order to address this theme, the Accountability Team presented an impact analysis looking at one possible calculation of such an indicator at the elementary and middle school levels. The elementary school indicator looked at the percent of students earning a passing score in fine arts or world language courses. The middle school indicator looked at the percent of students earning a passing score in fine arts, world language, or career exploratory courses.

The committee liked these indicators because they are not derived from test scores, focus on exposing students to other content areas, and help get them ready for more serious study in high school. They considered this the career part of “college and career ready.” The committee noted that this exposure is important and good for students.

The committee wants to further explore which courses should be included in this indicator at each grade span. They also want to examine the definition of “content completer” and if there should be a minimum requirement for the amount of exposure students should have to count towards this indicator. One member suggested tying the definition to the standards as defined by the state for each course. At the middle school level, the committee liked that it included all grade levels as it encourages continuous exposure. They also liked that it was not a concentration as students should have an opportunity to explore different content areas.

Graduation Rate

The committee reviewed a new option for flexibility in the final regulations pertaining to the adjusted cohort graduation rate. The regulations state that when a student exits a high school without receiving a regular high school diploma and without transferring to another high school that grants a regular diploma during the school year, the LEA can assign such a student to either (A) the high school in which such student was enrolled for the greatest proportion of school days while enrolled in grades 9 through 12 or (B) the high school in which the student was most recently enrolled.

Committee members discussed both options. Option A would help a school who had a student enroll for a short period of time and quickly withdrew. However, it was also noted that the first school would have no control over such a student’s experiences at the second school and it would not be fair to assign that student back. The committee also expressed concern about unintended consequences if a change was made. In particular, a school would have no incentive to obtain documentation to support a student’s withdrawal if they had been enrolled less than the majority of his or her grade 9-12 enrollment. A committee member also noted that it would not be fair to penalize the earlier school for a student’s eventual withdrawal when that school would not get credit for students who did graduate.

The committee recommended that no change be made to the current graduation rate calculation in this regard. They did, however, express an interest in providing more information on non-graduates in reporting. One possibility would be to report the four-year cohort adjusted graduation rate based on students who spent all four years in the same high school.

Review of the CCRPI Working Draft

The committee reviewed the current draft of the revised CCRPI framework. There was some discussion about the indicator on students with disabilities being served in a general education environment. It was noted that, as a state, despite previous progress in this area, disproportionality is becoming an issue. There was also conversation around the options to be college or career ready in the high school college and career ready indicator. The committee also requested that the Accountability Team explore if a middle school indicator could be calculated

that measured high school readiness in terms of students being successful the next year in the ninth grade. The committee also expressed a concern over how CCRPI could emphasize the importance of science and social studies given the reduced weight in testing and elimination in growth.