The Washington State Board of Education
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Achievement & Accountability Workgroup (AAW)
Recommendations to the State Board of Education
Feedback Report from the February 13, 2013 Meeting

Overview

Upon completion of each AAW meeting, SBE staff generates a report of the members' discussions. Each member had the opportunity to review and contribute to this report prior to publication.

Executive Summary

AAW members, as well as a guest panel of parents and teachers, provided input on the following Index questions:

Discussion Topics	Feedback
Weighting performance indicators (growth, proficiency, gaps) for K-8 and high schools.	Mixed. The majority gave the most or equal weight to closing gaps as they gave to growth and proficiency. Many weighted proficiency or Career and College Readiness (CCR) indicators – and associated gaps – more heavily than growth for high schools, and weighted growth and associated gaps more heavily for K-8.
Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs).	Mixed. The majority preferred replacing the existing AMOs with a set of goals based on performance in the Index.
Recognizing schools.	The majority did not want to recognize schools as being "Highest Performing" if they had widening or unaddressed gaps in subgroup student achievement.

Question 1: What relative weight should be assigned to each performance indicator for elementary, middle, and high school calculations?

K-8	High School
Growth	Growth
Proficiency	Proficiency
Gaps	Gaps
	CCR (**graduation rates**, dual credit/industry certification, 11th grade Common Core assessment)

Guidance:

There was no group consensus on weighting performance indicators. Most participants were adamant that gaps in subgroup student achievement should be weighted equally, if not more heavily, than growth and proficiency. This conviction was also held by almost the entire parent and teacher panel. Many participants advocated for equal weighting of all performance indicators. Several valued proficiency more than growth in both K-8 and high school, while others valued growth more in K-8 and proficiency/CCR subindicators

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more in high school. Several participants had concerns about including dual credit/industry certification and the 11th grade Common Core assessment as subindicators of CCR.

Additional Considerations & Questions:

- Use multiple measures – there are many more indicators that can be used. One parent and one teacher chose not to rank these performance indicators because they believed that other indicators such as parent partnership, communication, fluency in two languages, and 21st century skills should be included.
- Need to address continuous enrollment issue. What does a school accomplish with enrolled and attending students?
- How can a school be accurately judged? Those who have been traditionally judged as high performing aren't necessarily deserving.
- What about interventions, school climate, and internal needs assessments?
- Fairness and impact of testing is a concern. Testing materials can be inappropriate for some of our students. Testing can result in reduced instructional time and curriculum restricted to reading and math with a focus on low performers and strategic kids in these testing areas.
- Closing achievement gaps is a moral and civil rights issue. We have ignored gaps too long – we should focus on where the needs are.
- One teacher noted that all of this is unconstitutionally unfunded and cautioned assumptions about schools based on test scores, as current achievement is a byproduct of poor state funding.
- All kids will benefit from tools and strategies to support subgroup students and close achievement gaps.
- Students receiving special education services should be considered in these conversations.
- Kids in subgroups such as ELL, low income, and special education *are* capable and should be viewed as capable with appropriate supports, services, accommodations, and modifications.
- Not measuring subgroups and further disaggregating (Ex: African American, non-native, non-English speaking) does a disservice to these kids. This is needed to identify problems and discrepancies so we can work on solutions.[1]
- Create a holistic profile of a school by balancing other indicators against these three components. The underlying issue is the poverty rate and question of how to address resource allocation.
- Concern about how you measure subgroups like ELL and Special Education. What is a valuable/valid measure when students have an IEP or they've been in the U.S. for one year?
- Concern that growth, as defined, will place 50% of the schools on the lower end. As such, we guarantee not all schools will be labeled successful.
- Use cohort data.[2]
- Weighting should be based on which factors "trigger" resource allocation targeted toward improvement.
- Conern about how student growth percentiles are calculated.
- Focus on improving growth for "under-performing" students (gaps in subgroup students' growth).

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[1] Subgroup disaggregation was discussed at the December 2012 AAW Meeting, and although feedback was mixed, the majority of participants supported using the federal subgroups in the Index for accountability, while advocating for further disaggregation for reporting purposes only.
[2] We believe that student growth data and student growth percentiles function in a similar to but more precise way than cohort data.

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- If significant additional K-12 resources are not provided for *all* schools, then the gaps measure should not be weighted as heavily.
- Please don't use the label, "failing schools." Focus and priority schools are schools that need additional targeted resources.
- "Adequate growth" is most important.
- College completion and remediation rates should be included as sub-indicators of CCR.[3]
- Shouldn't high school success be attributed to the K-8 schools as well? For example, ELL students need time and a cohesive system to get them to graduation.
- Graduation rates should be a high priority. We do not want to create an incentive for pushing low performing students to drop out.
- The state has the capability to track students across school districts. The system should find a way to count students who move, maybe pro-rate to schools they attended. Ex: Count as .7 FTE to School A and .3 FTE to School B.

Question 2: How should the revised Index be used to establish Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for schools, and would this be preferable to the current AMOs?

Options
Keep AMOs the same.
Change to a set of goals based on performance in the Index.
Other

Guidance:

The majority of participants want a unified accountability system and believe that the AMOs should be clear goals that align with the revised Index. There was one suggestion that AMOs be the proficiency standard in the Index. Several participants want to keep the AMOs the same, because they want to see how schools perform in the revised Index – especially with the addition of student growth data – before changing the AMOs. They believe slowly phasing in changes to AMOs will result in fewer overall changes as we transition to the new system.

Additional Considerations & Questions:
- We need one measure that is simple and streamlined and is aligned to the Index's proficiency and growth model.
- The accountability system should promote authentic engagement of school communities.
- How about using the BERC score?
- The AMOs should be growth based.
- Keep in mind that these are about children. What makes the most sense for ELL/Special Education students who are highly impacted by taking these inappropriate tests?
- Nervous about how much change this is/would be for districts already facing evaluation, Common Core, Smarter Balance, without additional resources.

> **Comment [EP1]:** We have contacted the participant who offered this suggestion for further clarification.

> **Comment [EP2]:** This suggestion came from a small group – could the person who suggested this please respond and provide more context?

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[3] At the last AAW meeting in December 2012, there was broad agreement that college persistence and remediation rates were indicators of system alignment but not necessarily indicators we should use to hold high schools accountable.

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- Please use some sense in regard to the ELL subgroup. By definition, the group is not proficient in English and will/can never close the gap. When kids are proficient, they are no longer in the subgroup. This is inherently unfair to schools with a large percentage of ELLs. This is a major injustice to the ELL kids and the schools that serve them. If anything, the subgroup should be exited ELLs.
- A realistic view of closing gaps needs to be taken into consideration. What does research say regarding closing the gap for ELL students and getting them to mainstream? Seven to ten years.
- The AMOs should be set to reach 100% in five to six years.
- For special education and ELL students, the AMOs should be based on growth out of the need for services. It's also fluid as new students come into the system with gaps and needs.
- The AMOs need to be easily understood and achievable – it is unlikely that the current AMOs can be achieved by many.

Question 3: Given that the ESEA flexibility waiver requires us to identify schools for recognition (Reward) as well as schools in need of improvement (Priority, Focus, and Emerging), what are the implications for the structure and function of the revised Index in order to establish a coherent system?

Type of recognition	Identified using:
Priority	Lowest overall Index rating
Focus	Lowest subgroup ratings in Index
Highest performing	Highest overall Index rating
Closing gaps	Highest subgroup ratings in Index
Other	Math, science, growth, improvement, etc.

Guidance:

Discussion focused on the framing of this question and on how "Highest performing" schools would be identified. Participants found it helpful to think of this question in the context of recognizing schools to allocate resources that meet school/district needs, and there appeared to be two different schools of thought on allocating resources. Some participants advocated for providing additional support to Priority and Focus schools without stipulations or "strings." Others believed that additional resources should be provided to Priority and Focus schools, but that those resources should be used to replicate best practices.

There was general agreement that schools with unaddressed or widening achievement gaps should not be eligible for the "highest performing" designation, and strong support that schools closing gaps be recognized for their work. Most participants also supported awarding schools for math and science achievement.

Additional Considerations & Questions:
- "Focus" is an okay term, but resources need to be attached.
- Higher growth for subgroups is more valuable than average growth and high proficiency.
- Schools should submit improvement plans, and those plans should be funded without strings.
- The bottom 5% or 10% is problematic. At some point, the bottom 10% might all be high quality.

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- What about summer drop off?
- Often ELL and Special Education are the categories used to identify Focus schools – why? Are we using the wrong metrics? What would be a better metric to appropriately measure these students?
- How do we disseminate successes?
- Do not predetermine that a certain percent will fail.
- Priority and Focus designations must come with significant resources.
- Identify best practices and share state-wide as a resource.
- Labels should be about the funding level.
- If the A-F bill passes, how would you square this?
- Use "Other" for specific identified challenges in Washington state.
- Use "Other" to award high growth – celebrate improvement.
- "Other" should include awards for language proficiency.
- Please consider flexibility with funding. Students most at risk need more resources, help, and support.
- Schools can get sub-category awards (i.e. math, reading) but should not get a high performing school award if a gap exists in any category.
- The data should identify best practices. If a school scores low, shouldn't it be expected to adopt these best practices and be recognized/rewarded for changing its practices?