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Technical Advisory Committee Nebraska Department of Education

May 6, 2014

Cornhusker Marriott Hotel Lincoln, NE 8:30 am-3:00 pm

8:30 AM Welcome and Introductions- Valorie

In attendance

TAC Committee: Brian Gong-Chairperson, Chad Buckendahl, Richard Sawyer, Linda Poole, Frank Harwood.

Molly O'Halloran, Matt Blomstedt, Scott Swisher, Valorie Foy, Jeremy Heneger, Freida Lange, Donlynn Rice, Diane Stuehmer, Dean Folkers, Edward Foy, John Moon, Marilyn Peterson, Sharon Heater, Kim Snyder, Tammi Peterman, Bill Auty, Dave Chayer, Patricia Johnson, Lucy Liu, Sherri Woolf

8:40 Approve Minutes of December 4, 2014– Motion by Chad Brian (Document 1)

Motion by Chad Buckendahl for approval as submitted. Seconded by Linda Poole

8:40-10:00 NeSA-Writing at Grades 8 and 11

Question: *What advice does the TAC give for release of the NeSA-Writing scores for 2013-2014 at Grades 8 and 11?*

- Two years in a row of problems with the NeSA-Writing test have had a strong negative effect. In the current year, fewer students were impacted than in previous year, but the impact on students was greater as work was actually lost. Student frustration and its effect are impossible to measure. Some districts want scores used and others do not.
- Much discussion ensued concerning release of scores, mostly around the
 - appropriateness of allowing districts to release scores as their own choice,
 - and the advisability not releasing the school district and state scores on the State of the Schools report 2013-2014 and for Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS) on SOSR.
- Most districts in the state did not have issues, but those that did experienced a widespread effect. It was determined that allowing districts to release their scores, based on their own experiences, while allowing others to not report theirs creates a couple of issues:
 - This methodology would suggest that any district that chose to not release its scores might be doing so because of the actual scores, rather than the technology issues. The public would view those scores that are released with distrust.
 - Districts that chose to not release theirs might be impugned, with the motives for not releasing in question.
 - Suggestion given for NDE to specify through a public statement which districts' scores are invalid, but NDE cannot determine that based on the information it has.
- TAC suggested:
 - Schools will have individual student scores available to guide writing instruction.

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- NDE will not release NeSA-Writing scores for 8th and 11th grade on the State of the Schools Report and would not use results for Federal accountability.
- As no issues occurred with the NeSA-Writing at 4th grade, results will be reported on the SOSR and used for Federal accountability.

- What is most important is the future: What are NDE and DRC doing in partnership to assure that the issues will not occur for a third year.
- A general discussion of use of technology for state testing ensued. Load seemed to be a major factor that affected the online testing.
- Nebraska is already testing almost all online. Fourth grade writing is paper/pencil. The rest of the NeSA assessments are delivered online and 96% of the NeSA-Writing tests are taken online and 98% of the NeSA-Reading, Math, and Science.
- Technology is important for the Common Core states that have signed onto SBAC and PARCC.
- Testing companies need to take a conservative approach—so the technology works every time, but at the same time school districts are asking for use of the latest technology.
- Richard Sawyer indicated that the next generation of ACT and the new Aspire tests are being piloted paper/pencil and online.

9:45-10:00 Break

10:00-11:30 **Nebraska Accountability - Valorie** (Document 4)

Question: *Looking at the indicators globally, does TAC see the indicators as a sufficient and effective collection for school/district accountability? Does the TAC have suggestions for indicators not included or see any inherent difficulties in suggested indicators and/or their measure? What guidance can TAC share on use of Median Student Growth Percentile [SGP] or Median Student Adequate Growth Percentile [AGP] or a combination of both? Can TAC share technical advantages of basing status and growth measures on scale scores versus percent proficient? What are the advantages or disadvantages of setting goals within an accountability system?*

- Valorie presented a report of the work of the NePAS 1.1 Task Force, including information from an extended conference call with Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) partners, information about requirements of LB # 438, the work so far of the Task Force in developing general knowledge about the indicators usually included in accountability models, and its work in developing the models being reviewed by TAC.
- The Task Force had indicated it did not want to be able to rank all schools in the state from the highest to the lowest.
- TAC reviewed the Task Force Work Groups' models as developed in April 2014 and also discussed methodology for determining the three "priority schools" as required by LB 438. TAC indicated that a school needs to know what criteria placed it in the category of priority school and how to get off the list.
- Brian Gong suggested the following general principles:
 - Determine what the characteristics of a school at each level are.
 - Check the reliability of the indicators
 - Check for coherence across grade levels.

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- Frank indicated that the more schools in the lowest level, the more necessary would be multiple passes to determine the final three as priority schools.
- Molly indicated that she would like to see a component of sustainability as a district responsibility in the framework.
- Brian Gong also suggested perhaps using more than two passes to determine the priority schools. First narrow the field of schools potential for being labeled as priority, and then make final determination.
- Dr. Blomstedt indicated that NDE is considering developing the exit criteria so that the expectations can be used universally in school improvement plans.
- The criteria will also aid NDE in defining interventions.
- NDE wants the accountability system to communicate broadly to all districts.
- AdvancEd model is helpful in developing complexities of a model.

11:30-12:30 Working Lunch—Small Group Discussion Assessment Transition (Document 5)

12:30-1:00 Input from TAC on transition

Question: *What guidance can TAC offer to NDE that may contribute to smooth transition should the accountability model and/or state tests change?*

- **To be considered in time of transition:**
 - **how growth is measured and**
 - **how the model is articulated.**
- **Disaggregated data should be visible on state reports, even if not used in the traditional groups for accountability.**

1:00-2:45 Update: Nebraska Performance Accountability System [NePAS] - Valorie (Document 6)
NePAS- A-Minimum Number

NePAS-Question A: *Given that a smaller N size is more variable, but includes more schools, what minimum N size would TAC recommend for inclusion on NePAS?*

- Group size need so to provide confidence that decisions are sound.
- The designation of a supergroup also affects the Minimum N and the inclusion of more schools.
- NDE could use a rolling three-year average to include more schools.
- NDE could combine buildings to include more schools.

NePAS- B. NeSA Scale Score Growth- (Document 8)

NePAS- Question B: *Given the Board's intentions and the NeSA data provided, are NDE's assumptions and use of difference scores as an indicator in NePAS reasonable? Does the TAC have suggestions for additional analyses?*

- **Consider the advantages and disadvantages of norm-referenced growth models.**
- **Richard Sawyer asked if the NeSA assessments would change to a vertical scaling as it could prove helpful for measuring growth in the future—and is technically defensible.**
- **Brian Gong commented on use of resources—that accountability calculations require significant time and capacity—and that the in-house and contract resources need to be developed. Nebraska could continue using simple growth.**

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- When considering how to measure growth, changes in the test need to be taken in to consideration. Changing to a vertical scale would require significant change to the current NeSA tests—and may not be necessary. If NDE wants a vertical scale a Request for Proposal needs to include the specification.
- Growth is a useful measure only when districts understand how it is measured.
- Frank added that knowing how to improve growth is important to districts.
- Brian referenced the Massachusetts model, which is two-tiered and rewards schools for closing gaps.
- Neither simple growth, nor Z-score growth is preferable. AYP has set the bar so high for growth that it operates the same as status. Student Growth Percentiles can mask students not being proficient. SGP is more technically defensible based on Z score.
- When considering growth, the performance of subgroups is important.
- The hope of NDE is balance within the system that allows focus on all students regardless of demographics.
- Determining student growth percentiles is a technical calculation. Does NDE have the capacity?

NePAS- C.- Measure of Growth for NeSA-Writing

NePAS-Question C: *What measure would TAC advise NDE use for improvement at Grades 8 and 11 of NeSA-Writing for the 2014 release of NeSA-Writing scores and State of the Schools Report?*

- *Scores from NeSA-W spring 2012 and from spring 2013?*
- *Scores from NeSA-W spring 2011 and scores from 2013?*

Or would TAC advise NDE to delay inclusion of improvement for NeSA-W at Grades 8 and 11 until the spring of 2015, using 2014 and 2015 scores?

- TAC recommended not including improvement scores from spring 2014 for NeSA-Writing at Grades 8 and 11 on the 2013-2014 State of the Schools Report in the accountability section- Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS).

2:45-3:00

Wrap up and next steps.

Dates for future TAC meetings