

**Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Nebraska Department of Education**  
**May 11, 2023**  
**9:00 – 1:00**

**9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Welcome and Introductions**

**Present:** Linda Poole, Jeff Nellhaus, Josh Fields, Christy Hovanetz, Chad Buckendahl

**Approval of Minutes from 3/2/23:** Approved as submitted

**9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. ACT presents evidence of validity for the state college assessment**

Questions on ACT Writing Test:

Suggested that if there was something like the writing test that we could eliminate for testing time, that would be good for schools. Other TAC expressed that the writing test was necessary for peer review and federal requirements.

**Validity study suggestions:**

- In looking at new evidence needed for submission, it's suggested looking at construct validity - has overall construct changed in some way. Used driving exam as an example of significant change: before there was no requirement for parallel parking but it has been added which is a significant skill change. ACT responded that they would need to develop new validity evidence if digital literacy was added for example. Nebraska standards changes have primarily been around writing with more specific sequence in grammar and usage. There was also addition of complexity of text, but this isn't a big change in testing. There was a large addition K-5 foundations of reading alignment to Science of Reading.
- It would be good to include state specific studies to show variation between national and state statistics to show that what is found nationally is also true for Nebraska.
- Within the internal structure research, need more population and variance studies to do factor analysis for subgroups to demonstrate structure across populations. Are we masking potential differences for different populations?
- There is also a gap in relation to other criterion variables concurrently and predictive to higher education. The relation to work keys may not be sufficient. Look for more information on moving into the workforce. Gather supervisor ratings or some indicator that there is a workforce performance correlation. Would add the kind of jobs with on-the-job training. Recommend looking at community college and course work that students don't have to retake. Not sure if currently using CTE assessment for trades but states have moved away from college degrees as requirements and having increased apprenticeships and coop programs where there is academic and on the job training. It would be good to go to those employers and see if there are deficiencies and seeing what training may be needed. Are students ready to enter into workforce without remediation? NAEP made an attempt with high school assessment to look at handful of professions that required high school degrees. Looked at relationship between NAEP and career aspects. Chad will try to dig up the report.

**10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break**

**10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Dr. Vicky Munoz presents considerations for accountability system**

### **EL Progress Recommendations:**

- With the results of ELPA used in accountability, how much does it contribute to weighting and are schools placed in needing assistance as a result? If accountability isn't high, it does have implications for models you use. How well does the model match the purpose and uses of the assessment?
- This is a big federal program piece – exiting students from EL is indirectly linked and that can look very different from accountability level. Looking at this from the accountability perspective, I'm always more interested in having aspirational goals for schools, so we aren't letting up on instruction. Time horizon isn't as big of a deal based on students meeting – not too far off. How progress is made is more important. Surprised Nebraska doesn't include kids who meet proficiency and improve while also including previously identified ELs who have reached proficiency for up to 2 years after proficiency – this helps schools. Prefer looking at success rate of individual cohort of students. Concerned that we're looking at data based on what is happening instead of what we expect to happen. What is missing on the back end of instructional practices and what can be done? Pete: subsequent analysis in terms of deceleration numbers is based on longitudinal studies not a function of students exiting the program. Instead of maintaining conditional starting point of whatever progress is in first year, reset it so get credit for progress so they are not always a year behind. Should reset when get to MS and HS.
- I like the cohort analysis approach – looking at progression of students together and rewarding them for exiting from program. Differentiations on performance levels definitions may be good to look at as well. A better understanding of qualitative differences may help where cut scores should be set. Wouldn't want to artificially set students at a level 1 or 2 if their skills are more closely associated with performance level definitions in a progressing category. Seems like artificially putting them in lower categories.

### **ESSA Recommendations:**

**Stage 2 Growth and Non-Proficiency:** Feel like this would be a welcome change. How different is the classification of schools with overlap in the filter – are they different schools? Is your growth expectation rigorous enough and what is your priority? If identifying 2 different schools with the filters than you are probably not identifying a lot of schools.

**Science:** It feels like it's whittling out schools who need assistance – science is probably more important than absenteeism. When showed the filtering approach, it says no fewer than 5% of schools will be designated – this filtering approach is designed as stages of triage to find which 5% of schools are needing assistance. Prior leadership said they want only 5%. If the definition of schools that need assistance is more than 5%, is the model set up to permit that? Not sure how philosophy has changed over time. NDE isn't trying to achieve a minimum but want to be in compliance with federal minimums.

**Stage 3 Preschool attendance:** This would not create transparency. Compulsory attendance is ages 7-17 so this would call into question Kindergarten and HS. If there is a way not to use it, I wouldn't. There are so many factors that go into it, if can swap out science than that is a much stronger indicator.

Other Recommendations about AQuESST:

1. We need stability in the model.
2. System needs to be transparent for all stakeholders.
3. Legal clarification regarding how student discipline is required by state state-really hard to have uniform measures across the state-can we just include the data but not use for accountability.
4. have annual timelines for districts to utilize information to plan effectively.
5. Schools need to know why they are

classified as they are and what needs to be done to improve. So can we provide data templates to districts/schools? 6. We shouldn't include PK absenteeism since PK is optional and districts shouldn't be punished for providing PK. 7. What happens when a student moves from one district to another. If they are in a district for 10 days, I believe they are included in both districts data. Is this fair? Some students could have a double effect either for the better or worse.

**Next meeting:** Would like time to process this and provide feedback. Schedule 90 minutes or 2 hours to extend this conversation.

**Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee Meeting  
Nebraska Department of Education  
May 19, 2023  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

**2:00 – 2:10 p.m.      Welcome and Introductions  
Present: Christy Hovanetz, Jeff Nellhaus, Josh Fields**

**2:10 - 4:00 p.m      Dr. Vicky Munoz presents considerations for accountability system**

**Feedback on the short-term ESSA amendment designation amendment:**

Final decisions will need to be simulated before they become official to see how it identifies schools and make sure we have the right schools.

I would look at conditional standard error on scale score. Students should be able to make growth at least at error level.

May be better to describe it as the overall performance of the school performing at the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile – cut points are very different for elementary vs high school

**Stage 2 Filter**

- You want to make sure that only identifying as many schools as you can actually support – you have to address the capacity of the department. Optimally you'd like to help many schools meet a criterion for decent performance. You have a reason to advocate to the legislature for more funding if you identify more than you can handle. You want to let people know the reality of the schools not just what we can do.
- Certain student groups are often overlooked, and they may be only identified for one or two subgroups, so it's up to districts to put the focus on that. I'm hesitant not to have it identified. Can look at how many schools are identified for a single group, two groups, etc. Hesitant to make change for identified school. Correlation between all indicators needed.
- We need to look at what growth means - is it one NSCAS scale score forward? Do we have a vertical scale between grades (most states don't have this). It is important for the strongest kids to grow as well as reducing failing. What is the signal you are sending?

- Schools want to do what is best for kids but don't want death sentence that can't get out. It's important to have an exiting point. What do they need to do in the classroom and for the kids to get out of ATSI and CSI.
- is the word "and" or "or" they didn't make growth and efficiency or identified for one or the other? TAC doesn't support the "and;" it needs to be an "or." This is lowering expectations. It's tough to exit but there is a reason – the current exit criteria isn't even as rigorous as the entry criteria. Even with 3-year advocacy, would make sure identifying as many schools as can and identify as many kids as can't meet challenges when looking at averages. We are on the lower side of designations compared to many other states – some places do 8-year id. Like the idea of looking at states with similar demographics which would provide some context if we're an outlier or not.
- Summary of recommendations on current vs. proposed change: there is a certain practicality in terms of student performance. If schools are used to our designations than would keep it as it is. Like the "or" rather than "and". This is a low bar for growth at 1% reduction don't need to make it lower

### **Stage 3 Filter**

#### **Science in Federal Accountability**

- Would include science – we take the test and it gives value to what asking kids to do. It is a strong signal to pay attention to science. If leave science out, there is a tendency not to pay enough attention to it.
- Science and chronic absenteeism don't seem to go together. What is the overlap? Should those be separated out somehow? You can do Science as an "or" or at a stage 4. Does it fit in better at a stage 2? May identify more schools and then have absenteeism at the end. Are we weighting science to low?
- NDE's feedback from field is that chronic absenteeism was extremely high and it is an overwhelming indicator. Science as an "or" can mitigate the problem with absenteeism.

#### **Chronic Absenteeism:**

- What do other states do with absenteeism? 27 states have some measure of it. Some states stay away from it because it's hard to measure and schools don't not have control of absenteeism. Since Covid, states have been trying to move away from it. Would be inclined to favor science over absenteeism. Also, generally, absenteeism is measured by an average over 3 years but that is different kids.
- This is a conversation that need to have for longer term accountability goals. A lot of this is policy that the new commissioner will want to talk about. The options are science and/science or/no absenteeism. Maybe in the future, we would want to split these two up.

#### **Including preschool in absenteeism?**

- TAC thinks it is fair to remove preschool.

#### **Discipline will be discussed in future meetings because will be part of the 23-24 modeling baseline for future.**

This is loaded with problems because schools just stop disciplining. And it's hard to measure.