ATAC Performance Index Workgroup Proposal

Introduction:

The Performance Index Workgroup is tasked with developing a proposal to define a Performance Index framework for the new state accountability system. The proposal is to include recommendations, with rationales and advantages/disadvantages, regarding:

- **Number of indexes in the Texas state accountability system;**
- **IF the recommendation is for more than one index, which of the required indicators are recommended to be included in the components of each index; and**
- **Whether any of the required indicators will be evaluated separately outside the index/indexes.**

The initial meeting of the ATAC Performance Index Workgroup was held via conference call on Thursday, **April 5, 2012**. TEA staff reviewed workgroup instructions and the calendar of events and two sets of documents to guide the committee's work. The first documents provided an overview of the group's assignment, a discussion document to guide the group's work, and a template for the resulting proposal. In addition, TEA provided Other States Research which included a summary of accountability systems in other states that use a Performance Index framework. The group agreed to review the documents and research, submit feedback to one another via a spreadsheet template, and reconvene through a conference call the following week.

On **April 12, 2012**, a summary of input was shared, followed by responses from each participating member. The workgroup coordinator scripted notes as participants reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of performance index systems outlined in the research. The group was polled for consensus on single versus multiple indexes; if multiple, how many and the focus for each; which indicators should be included in the index/indexes; and whether any indicators should be measured outside the index/indexes. Group consensus was for multiple indexes, even if a single overall score is achieved. The group agreed on two to no more than four indexes with at least Performance, Progress, and College and Career Readiness. There was strong agreement that there should be little overlap/duplication in the indexes; they should complement one another with limited or no overlap of student results. Indicators for performance, growth, gap, Level II and Level III performance, graduation and dropout rate, and graduation plans, i.e. all of the legislative requirements, should be housed within appropriate indexes. No indicators should be measured outside the indexes.

Some discussion of additional indicators occurred, but more time was scheduled for a future meeting to conclude this discussion. Initially, the consensus was to use only reading and math for progress/growth. All subjects and all test versions should be included for achievement/performance. Discussion on the use of EOC retests was tabled for a future discussion.

Next steps were determined and another conference call was set for the following Thursday, April 19th. Assignments were made to begin developing the written proposal due to TEA on April 23rd. Group members volunteered to write various parts of the proposal and have them to the workgroup coordinator by April 18th. The agenda was set to discuss the draft proposal on April 19th, make final recommendations, and get it prepared to submit in draft form to TEA staff on April 23rd. Notes were sent to the group within 24 hours for review, corrections, and comments. Absent group members were asked for input and it was incorporated into the first draft of the workgroup proposal.

On **April 19, 2012**, the committee convened again by conference call and reported on input gathered from various groups across the state. All committee members except one were present and each member reported on meetings with superintendents, assistant superintendents, central office staff, principals, and regional administrative groups of directors and other administrative staff. Common themes emerged in the reports. There was positive feedback on the development of a performance index framework. Without exception, there was strong sentiment about ensuring that the system reports performance across a variety of areas as opposed to resulting in one overall label. Committee members worked for several hours to identify the recommended indicators for the framework, coming to consensus on Student Performance and Postsecondary Readiness indexes. The next meeting was set for Monday, April 23rd to determine indicators for an index or indexes for Progress and Gap Closure.

The workgroup concluded on **April 23, 2012**, that the indexes for Progress and Gap Closure should remain separate. Discussion focused on the use of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Indicators for Performance Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness were discussed. Consensus could not be reached on the "On Track to Graduate" indicator and the group decided to place this on the agenda for a future ATAC meeting. The group agreed on final touches to the proposal and the workgroup coordinator is to edit the proposal and submit it back to the group and TEA support staff as soon as possible. The group agreed to ask TEA staff to review the draft proposal and offer feedback on content and format. Another conference call was scheduled pending TEA's feedback.

A conference call was held on **May 14, 2012**, with TEA support staff to review the comments, questions, edits and requests for clarification regarding the draft of the Performance Index Workgroup Proposal. PI Workgroup members interacted with TEA staff to give clarity to the intent of each index as well as their vision for the framework. TEA complimented the work to date and suggested no substantive changes to the proposal. Workgroup members reported positive feedback from various groups where drafts of the proposal have been circulated. Superintendents promoting the efforts of the Public Education Visioning Institute believe the proposed framework better aligns with their vision for changes in the delivery of instruction and the ways that schools are evaluated. Curriculum directors and principals with whom workgroup members have met since the group's last conference call also received the draft proposal positively. All groups are encouraged that the framework improves the way that schools and districts are held accountable for student performance.

Discussion centered on the use of student groups to ensure accountability for every child but to also avoid negative duplication of scores in the accountability framework. While Indexes 2 and 4 focus on student group performance by race and ethnicity, Index 2 cannot be implemented until the second year of the new system when progress data becomes available. Group consensus was to add participation by race and ethnicity to Index 1. This ensures that the All Student accountability for performance does not mask the degree of test participation by race and ethnicity. Final edits were planned to be completed by the end of the week so a final draft could be submitted to the Performance Index Workgroup for approval. Once approved by the group, the final draft was submitted to TEA for use with the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee on **May 30, 2012**.

Performance Index Workgroup Proposal

The Performance Index Workgroup developed this proposal based on certain beliefs about a state accountability system. We believe that a state accountability system should:

- **Improve student performance for every child;**
- **Direct resources for improvement;**
- **Be comprehensive in nature;**
- **Focus on narrowing the performance gap between historically disadvantaged and advantaged students; and**
- **Measure indicators that move a school/district toward higher performance.**

The group proposes a Performance Index framework for the state accountability system. Names for the indexes were chosen to match the language in the Accountability System Goals and Guiding Principles.

Three indexes focus on student achievement for all students and by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

- **Performance Index 1 focuses on student achievement for All Students and participation by race/ethnicity**
- **Performance Index 2 focuses on student progress by race and ethnicity.**
- **Performance Index 3 focuses on closing performance gaps between high- and low-performing students.**

A fourth index focuses on measures of Postsecondary Readiness and includes a measure of the role of elementary and middle schools in developing the rigor necessary for high school students to successfully meet graduation standards.

Separate indexes for Achievement and Progress equalizes the system for high performing schools that often appear more successful with proficiency, while high poverty effective schools will benefit from a progress measure. Including a gap closure index addresses the masking of student groups in the student achievement index.

Performance Index 1: Student Achievement **Indicators:** • **% Met Level II Standard (Satisfactory)All Students –Reading** • **All Students – Writing** • **All Students – Math** • **All Students – Science** • **All Students – Social Studies** **Participation by race/ethnicity**	**Indicators included in Performance Index 1:** **STAAR, STAAR-Modified, STAAR-Alternate, and STAAR-L grades 3-8 English and Spanish** **STAAR, STAAR-Modified, STAAR-Alternate, and STAAR-L End-of-Course (EOC) assessments** **Grade 11 TAKS performance (2013 only)** **Performance combined across grade levels for each subject area.** **Participation rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity.**
Rationale: **Reporting Participation Rate by race/ethnicity ensures that the Student Achievement scores include high participation by all student groups.** **Strengthens focus on student groups during first year of implementation when Student Progress Index cannot be calculated.**	**Rationale:** **Meets requirements for general performance indicators and Level II performance requirement.** **Meets requirement that assessment indicators must combine performance across grades for each subject.** **Meets requirement that indicators must include performance of race and ethnicity as well as all students.**

TEA Comments for Performance Index 1: Student Achievement

Assessment performance indicator definitions for the Student Achievement Index will be discussed in much greater detail at the August 2012 ATAC meeting. Between the May and August meetings two ATAC workgroups will develop proposals related to assessment indicators, the EOC Indicators Workgroup and ELL Workgroup. In addition to percent met standard, there may be proposals to use scale scores and/or cumulative EOC performance measures. Proposals for consideration of the performance of English language learners (ELL) with less than three years in U.S. schools who no longer receive exemptions from the state assessments will also be presented at the August meeting.

Performance Index 2: **Student Progress** **Indicators:** **% of students in each race/ethnicity who met growth standard for Level I to II or III** • **reading grades 3-11** • **math grades 3-8** **% of All Students who met growth standard for Level II to III** • **reading grades 3-11** • **math grades 3-8** **% of All Students at Level III who maintain Level III** • **reading grades 3-11** • **math grades 3-8** **Progress of previous EOC failers**	**Indicators included in Performance Index 2:** **Individual progress toward Level II in 2014** **Individual progress toward Level III in 2014** **Measures of progress within each Level as well as Level to Level**
Rationale: **Separating Progress from Achievement equalizes the framework for high performing, homogeneous organizations and effective high poverty organizations.**	**Rationale:** **Initially include only grades 3-8 for mathematics in the calculation of the progress measure because EOC course sequences in math may not lend themselves to reliable progress measures.** **Focus on progress of students results in overall improvement in achievement.** **Meets requirements for indicators of progress toward Level II and Level III standards.** **Meets requirements for indicators of performance by race and ethnicity.** **Meets requirement for use of EOC retest scores.**

TEA Comments for Performance Index 2: Student Progress

An update on STAAR student progress measures will be presented at the May ATAC meeting. Multiple student progress measures are being developed for STAAR, including separate measures for ELL students. Progress measures are being developed for all subjects, for Grades 3-8 and EOC assessments. This includes measures of progress from Grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I and from Algebra I to Algebra II. It also includes progress measures for writing, science, and social studies that are not administered in consecutive years. Between the May and August meetings an ATAC Progress Measures Workgroup will look at the STAAR progress measures being developed and bring proposals to the August ATAC meeting for indicators to be included in the Progress Index.

Progress measures cannot be finalized until after results from the 2012-2013 administration are available (the first time the progress measures can be calculated with two years of STAAR results). One option is to use improvement measures (change in aggregate campus/district performance) until student progress measures developed for STAAR are available. An interim indicator may be necessary in order to include evaluation of Level II performance of race/ethnicity student groups in the 2013 ratings.

Both the EOC Workgroup and Progress Measures Workgroup could also consider Progress of Prior Year Failers. Proposals may also be developed for the August meeting for indicators for Progress of Prior Year Failers for Grades 4-8 (Student Success Initiative).

Student groups are a topic on the agenda for the May ATAC meeting and will be discussed within the context of the Progress Index. The discussion will include consideration of special education and ELL student groups as well as race/ethnicity.

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Performance Index 3: **Closing Performance Gaps** **Indicator:** **Decrease in number of percentage points difference between student performance of Gap Group and All Students**	**Indicators included in Performance Index 3:** **Gap Group = ECD student group or lowest 25% where ECD and All Students are largely duplicated or ECD does not meet minimum group size** **Add safeguard to ensure closing the gap "up" – such as defining a performance level range for the high end. If it is the same or higher as last year, and low end performance improves, there is gap closure "up".**
Rationale: **Including a Gap Closure indicator ensures attention to differences in performance between high performing and historically disadvantaged students.**	**Rationale:** **Use ECD or lowest 25% to define Gap Group instead of multiple student groups to minimize negative duplication of student results.** **Meets requirement for use of socioeconomic status in assessment indicators.**

TEA Comments for Performance Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps

The student groups discussion at the May ATAC meeting will address issues related to assigning students to groups for use with gap closure measures. Gap closure measures require comparison of performance of two groups and issues include whether the two groups need to have mutually exclusive membership, assignment of students to a comparison group based on performance, and options for campuses that do not meet minimum size criteria for the gap comparison groups.

Research on gap closure measures is on the accountability development calendar for February 2013, as part of the distinction designations topic, but can begin earlier so that proposals for gap closure measures can be brought to the August or November ATAC meetings. In addition to decreases in percentage point difference between groups, proposals may include use of scale scores or cumulative EOC performance, or use of other types of statistical measures.

Performance Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness **Indicators:** **4-and 5-year graduation rates by All Students and race/ethnicity** **Dropout rates by All Students and race/ethnicity** **% students graduating under RHSP and Advanced High School Program by All Students and race/ethnicity** **% students who met Level III performance on one or more tests by All Students and race/ethnicity**	**Indicators included in Performance Index 4** **Graduation Rate – 4 year and 5 year** **Dropout rate for grades 9-12 defined as it was for completion rate** **Level III performance for reading, writing, and math – grades 3-11**
Rationale: **Use of All Students and race/ethnicity ensures that small schools who do not meet minimum size criteria for any race/ethnicity will be evaluated for graduation rate, dropout rate, and graduation plans.** **Exclude dropout measure for grades 7-8 since it is really a measure of data quality. Suggest that data validation monitoring will ensure that this continues to be tracked.** **Use of met Level III on one or more tests recognizes that students have strengths/talents in certain areas, but not always in all areas**	**Rationale:** **Include Level III performance for 3-8 so elementary and middle school understand the importance of their role in preparing students to achieve this level of performance in high school.** **Omit science and social studies until such time that the college readiness standard is established.** **Meets requirements for dropout, graduation rate, and graduation plan indicators.**

TEA Comments for Performance Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness

The proposal includes Grade 9-12 longitudinal dropout rates as well as graduation rates. Options for the dropout indicator will be reviewed at the May ATAC meeting

Combining dropout rates (lower is better) and graduation rates (higher is better) in the same index will require some additional computation.

The Level III performance indicator proposed for the Postsecondary Readiness Index combines performance across subjects to give credit for a student who meets the Level III performance standard for any of the three subjects. Any proposal for additional or alternate indicators, including proposals for indicators of whether high school students are on track to graduate, will be brought to the August ATAC meeting when assessment indicators are discussed.

Indicators evaluated separately outside the index	**Indicators not included in Performance Index**
None – if it is required to be measured, include it in an index.	**SAT/ACT participation – award distinctions** **SAT/ACT performance – award distinctions** **Advanced Course Completion to include CTE 3 courses/certifications - award distinctions** **Possibly award bonus points like Florida for completing CTE certifications in high school.**
	Rationale: **These are important measures to report, but not to include as accountability indicators.**

RATIONALE

POLICY GOALS

The proposed Performance Index framework addresses stated policy goals as follows:

- ***Advanced Academic Performance:*** A Performance Index focused on postsecondary readiness includes indicators for Level III performance on STAAR assessments.
- ***Closing Achievement Gaps among Groups in Advanced Academic Performance and Graduation under the Recommended High School Program and Advanced High School Program:*** Performance Indexes related to progress and closing performance gaps include indicators that not only gauge individual student progress, but also systemic progress toward gap closure among student populations. The RHSP and AHSP goals are addressed as indicators within the Postsecondary Readiness Index.
- ***Progress for All Students:*** A Progress Index indicates individual student growth, as well as progress by race and ethnicity groups toward meeting academic achievement goals.

INCENTIVES

Use of a Performance Index framework for the state accountability framework establishes some incentives for schools and districts.

- A multiple index framework provides multiple opportunities for successful performance.
- A multiple index framework provides multiple vehicles for communicating success to stakeholders.
- A performance index framework lends itself to narrative and graphic reporting that may more effectively communicate strengths and areas for improvement.
- Multiple indexes afford views of performance from multiple perspectives – All Students, race and ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
- Rather than being punitive in nature, an index framework can really drive school improvement in multiple areas resulting in incentives for schools/districts that are working hard to improve.
- Indicators may be more relevant and easier to communicate in a meaningful way than the current Academic Excellence Indicator System.

The workgroup identified several potential unintended consequences of a Performance Index Framework. Each of these can be addressed by communicating with others in the development and implementation process so that negative consequences can be avoided. Building models of the system once it is fully developed may help schools/districts prepare to use the data the system will provide.

- By nature, an index translates into a numerical score. If the scores for a multiple index system are combined into a cumulative score resulting in a single rating label, the index framework results in the same negative perception of schools/districts as the Separate Indicator Framework currently in place.
- Creating multiple measures in areas for which standards have yet to be set could result in negative, unintended consequences that cannot be predicted.
- Including a Postsecondary Readiness Index could result in more challenges for high schools that already face the greatest challenges.

- A Performance Index framework has the potential to be fairly complicated and could be difficult for schools/districts to use data for forecasting.

INSTRUCTION

Although several indicators may be grouped under one index, the detailed reporting methods possible with the use of a performance index system for the new state accountability system will provide disaggregated information for each STAAR subject area. This disaggregated data, reported in a variety of ways (e.g., by student group, economic status, ELL status), will adequately inform school and classroom practice and enable educators to address individual student needs. In addition to academic performance, indicators for graduation rate, dropout rate, and graduation plans will inform organizational structure and scheduling at high schools.

In addition to reporting performance by reporting category, it is imperative to provide schools with item analysis summary reports so that educators may determine strengths and weaknesses at the student expectation level.

Providing the data and information described above in a timely manner will ensure that educators can focus staff development efforts in the summer and the following school year on the true needs of their students and work to improve instructional practices that will positively impact student performance.

COMMUNICATION

There are communication challenges with the use of a Performance Index framework, but the possibilities exist for developing a system that more effectively communicates both the strengths of schools and districts and the challenges they face.

It is the belief of the workgroup that a performance index framework for the accountability system can contribute to an understanding of school performance more effectively than the current single rating system. A Performance Index system can contribute to a more complete understanding of the multiple aspects of school performance by parents, teachers, school administrators, policy makers and the general public. A reporting system can be designed to effectively communicate how districts and schools are meeting expected targets across several areas.

Stakeholders are accustomed to an accountability system that results in a single rating label for campuses and districts. A Performance Index framework usually results in a numerical score that is translated into a grade or status label. Whether multiple index measures are combined into a single, overall score, or reported as separate scores, the challenge still remains to make that score meaningful. Use of letter grades (Florida and Louisiana) or rankings based on a single overall index score increases the potential for negative community perceptions of schools and districts, and provides little insight into the strengths and weaknesses of a campus or district. The use of weighted scores, weighted students or weighted indexes increases the complexity of the system, reduces its transparency, and decreases understanding by the public. Single score results such as Louisiana's School Performance Score, Ohio's Performance Index (PI), and Oklahoma's Academic Performance Index (API) rely on weighting and percentiles, neither of which is easily communicated to stakeholders.

Carefully choosing descriptors for each index which clearly address the index indicators could mitigate some of the communication challenges. For example, North Carolina's use of High Growth, Expected Growth, Less than Expected to describe growth or progress is easy to understand and quantify at the index level. Kentucky is transitioning to a rating classification system that uses a single, overall score from three indexes to classify schools and districts as Distinguished, Proficient, Progressing, and Needs Improvement. Each of these classifications has a clear definition of how the rating is achieved and would be easy for stakeholders to understand. Ohio has similar labels, but they are not as easily defined.

One possibility for a system of labels that combines index results could be to utilize the Colorado model where district labels include the word Accredited with an additional descriptor indicating the type of Improvement Plan required. The Performance Index Workgroup suggests that this type of rating system could be used to integrate the Texas accountability system with the Performance-Based Monitoring System (PBMAS), Data Validation Verification Monitoring system, and school Improvement planning to ensure that the system triggers appropriate interventions for improved performance. In Colorado, schools are measured and receive a rating on each Performance Index that evaluates the extent to which state expectations were Exceeded, Met, Approached, or Did Not Meet Expectations. Again, these are easy to define and easy for stakeholders to understand. The Performance Index Workgroup strongly believes that a properly defined Performance Index Framework opens the possibility for a more narrative school report that effectively highlights both the strengths and challenges school districts and campuses face.

ACCOUNTABILITY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

As other workgroups continue the development and implementation of the proposed Performance Index framework, the workgroup has identified some advantages for the continued work:

- A performance index provides a more complete definition of the many facets of school performance. It broadens the lens for stakeholder inspection of school performance.
- Multiple indexes provide opportunities for a more narrative school report that would allow stakeholders to understand both the strengths and challenges of each district/school.
- It will be easy for future ELL, Progress, and EOC workgroups to add indicators to indexes as needed to meet requirements without the need to change the entire framework.
- Exceptions with performance floors and the 85% option are unnecessary in a performance index because there are multiple ways to gauge performance.
- A performance index framework lends itself to the addition of indexes and/or indicators for AEA, ELLs, Top 25%, EOCs, etc.
- The proposed framework lends itself to alignment of PBMAS, DVVM systems and continuous improvement planning.

The one critical disadvantage of a Performance Index system is that it could be scored and reduced to a single rating label, resulting in a system that would mirror the same negative perceptions as the current Separate Indicator system. Feedback from across the state also led the workgroup to note that the use of a Performance Index score to rank schools/districts is also perceived as a critical disadvantage. As the development and implementation of the proposed Performance Index

framework continues, the Performance Index Workgroup strongly recommends continued attention to the following:

- **Maintain accountability for every child and every student group, but avoid negative duplication of student results across the indexes.**
- **Develop reporting that focuses on each index instead of a cumulative framework score.**
- **Avoid the use of rankings among schools and districts.**
- **Maintain the focus on indicators that help move schools/districts forward.**