

Minutes
Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Steering
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 22, 2017

The Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System (ESSA) Steering Committee met Wednesday, February 22, 2017, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Johnny Key called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Commissioner Johnny Key, Chair; Ms. Ouida Newton; Ms. Ima Etim; Ms. Keli Gill; Dr. Harold Jeffcoat; Ms. Joyce Flowers; Ms. Gloria Phillips; Ms. Melissa Bratton; Mr. Anthony Bennett.

Members Absent: Ms. Michelle Hayward; Senator Jane English; Representative Bruce Cozart

Audience: ADE staff, general public, and press.

The meeting was live streamed and the recording was posted on the ADE website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/public-school-accountability/every-student-succeeds-act-essa/stay-informed-archive>.

Consideration of Approval for Minutes – January 25, 2017

Ms. Gill moved, seconded by Ms. Flowers, to approve the January 25, 2017, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Federal Funding

Assistant Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Services Mr. Greg Rogers proposed a change in the method of determining the poverty count in Title I and SPED allocations. He said using direct certification would remove a requirement for free and reduced forms. He said the use of direct certification is a more transparent process.

Education Program Manager Ms. Amy Thomas said previously free and reduced counts were used for calculation of funds. She said the 1.6 multiplier would level funding and is set in federal legislation. She said the direct certification is common data used across other agencies. She said the Department would prepare estimates for districts to review. She said the funding change would begin in the 2017-2018 school year.

Accountability

Office of Innovation for Education Director Dr. Denise Airola gave a “big picture” look at accountability and aggregating indicators in the context of Arkansas’ vision. She asked the following questions:

What are the most important outcomes for the accountability system today?

What about in five years?

What parts of the current state systems are driving the desired outcomes and what do we want to change?

How can the assessment and accountability system drive desired behaviors and instructional/assessment practices to increase student learning and engagement?

Dr. Airola said state indicators that will be used for state and federal purposes, should be applicable and relevant statewide, and should be utilized to gauge the success of federal and state accountability and continuous improvement support for districts and schools. She said additional indicators may be used for reporting purposes.

Dr. Airola said Arkansas will need to determine which indicators will be used for the state accountability system and/or local cycle of inquiry for driving continuous improvement. She said the state indicators must provide meaningful differentiation of schools and required identifications. She said local indicators allow for the deeper evaluation of learning opportunities.

Dr. Airola said the required indicators must measure academic achievement, student growth, adjusted cohort graduation rate, progress in acquiring English language proficiency, and at least one indicator of school quality or student success. She said the theory of action is - If the ADE provides a flexible, comprehensive accountability system that uses multiple measures and weights within a continuous cycle of inquiry to incentivize and inform the priorities of the work of districts; then districts will identify and address the needs within their local systems using a cycle of inquiry that integrates state, district, and local data to inform their strategic provisions of support and resources (human and fiscal); and this will enable continuous improvement in all schools and close achievement gaps within schools and among schools in Arkansas.

Dr. Airola said a goal-based system sets targets for schools and reports would indicate if the school met the target. The challenge with goal-based systems is in combining the information from all the targets into an overall rating. She said an index system is a rating system that assigns points to each indicator and then total points are used to rate schools. She said every student counts in an index system. The challenge for an index system is setting the point ranges for the overall rating. She said a matrix system uses the x axis and y axis to categorize the zones. She said each indicator would need a

matrix and may be challenging when determining an overall classification of schools. She said a dashboard system contains multiple measures clustered by themes for transparency to stakeholders. She said the final option is a combination of systems.

Dr. Airola said indicators are being evaluated using four lenses: equity, alignment, practicality, and efficiency. She said the survey, PowerPoint, and Zoom recording could be posted on social media to encourage more educators to participate.

English Learners

Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Committee Member Ms. Melissa Bratton provided an overview of decision points from the EL/Title III advocate group. She said EL coordinators and teachers from across the state have been reviewing research, and working to provide feedback and recommendations to the Steering Committee. She said the group was considering the English Language Proficiency indicator, N size, entrance and exit criteria, length of time for monitoring exited students, and how to include recently arrived English learners in the accountability system. She said the group examined data from the ELDA and ELPA21 assessments. She said the group recommended considering current English learners (more than one year in US); English learners with disabilities; and former English learners (for four years).

Dr. Airola said data on 4-year former English Language students indicated average achievement above the state average of English Only students.

Revised Projected Timeline

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said the Department plans to post the first drafts on April 17 for feedback. She said the proposed plan will be posted May 15 for a 30-day public comment period.

Advisory Teams Update

Each Advisory Team gave an update on the progress of their work.

a. Accountability

Office of Innovation in Education Director Dr. Denise Airola said the advisory group is meeting via Zoom. She said the meetings are open for others to join. She said the materials are also available to the public via Google Folder: ESSA Accountability Advisory Team Folder. She said the group was working through multiple decisions and would have recommendations for the Steering Committee in March. She said the group was working to identify a fifth indicator that addresses the diversity of the state.

b. Comprehensive School Support and Improvement

Public School Accountability Coordinator Mr. Elbert Harvey said the school improvement group has discussed N-size, planning year, criteria for identification, capacity of the agency to provide support, differentiation for elementary, middle and high schools, impact of growth on identification, effective funding options, timeline for identifying schools, exiting criteria, rigorous interventions,

He said the group recommended a competitive process for 1003a funds. He said the group recommended differentiated support to districts and schools. He said the group discussed how the state and federal accountability systems can be aligned.

c. Educator Equity and Effectiveness

Licensure Director Ms. Cheryl Reinhart said ESSA requires the state to identify whether low-income and minority students are served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers. She said this work required definitions. She said the group has convened six focus groups to work on definitions for effective leader, effective teacher, and ineffective teacher and several more focus groups are scheduled. She said the group will also look at defining ineffective leader based on the focus group feedback. She said additional surveys and feedback are needed. She said the group recommended multiple measures for determining effectiveness. Ultimately under ESSA, these definitions will help the state and school districts report on professional qualifications of educators, and will inform efforts to identify and work to eliminate any disproportionality.

Educator Effectiveness Director Ms. Sandra Hurst said across the state educators knew the indicators of effective teachers and leaders but they may not be implementing TESS and LEADS with fidelity.

Dr. Airola said resources will be needed to support this work in schools and districts.

Next Steps

a. Regulation Update

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said the accountability regulations have been delayed until March 21, 2017. She said a revised template will be posted March 13, 2017.

b. Work Session

Commissioner Johnny Key encouraged the members to consider a work session for March 29, 2017. The group discussed a work session and then schedule live stream for the report out from the work session. The topics would be the work from the advisory groups. The group decided to conduct the work session from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. with

a working lunch and then reporting from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Live streaming will be available for the public from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

c. Next meeting date: March 29, 2017

Ms. Newton said the next Steering Committee meeting date is March 29, 2017.

Announcement

2016 Teacher of the Year Ms. Meghan Ables and 2017 Teacher of the Year Ms. Courtney Cochran will host a Twitter Town Hall come and go chat on February 22 from 8:00-9:00 p.m. using #ESSAinAR. Ms. Ables said every 7 minutes a question will be posted.

Adjournment

Dr. Jeffcoat moved, seconded by Ms. Phillips, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman



Johnny Key, Chair