

MSDE Assessment and Accountability Task Force Meeting 1 Executive Summary (May 2, 2024)

This document presents a high-level summary of the key discussion points from the Maryland State Department of Education Assessment and Accountability Task Force. This first meeting was held in person on May 2, 2024, from 9:00 am-3:00 pm at the MSDE offices in Baltimore, Maryland.

1.1. Welcome and Introductions

Chris Domaleski, representing the Center for Assessment, opened the meeting, welcomed participants, and introduced the Center for Assessment team (Scott Marion and Cara Laitusis) before inviting all participants to introduce themselves. In addition, he provided an overview of logistics for this meeting, plans for future meetings, and information on how resources could be accessed. Finally, he reviewed the Roles, Norms, and Processes that will govern the task force.

1.2. Educational Vision in Maryland

Dr. Carey Wright, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools, welcomed the Assessment and Accountability Task Force members. She expressed her gratitude to the attendees giving their time and perspectives to this important work and her motivation for forming this task force.

Task force members worked in groups to discuss their initial ideas on their desired purpose, use, and goals of an accountability model. In addition, they provided suggestions for how to know the goals were achieved.

1.3. Accountability Overview and ESSA Requirements

Chris Domaleski from the Center for Assessment provided an overview of the purpose and goals of accountability and how it relates to school improvement. Chris then provided a deep dive into the federal requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that will serve as guardrails for the committee's recommendations. Chris discussed each of the federally required indicators in detail, and participants asked questions to further their understanding of federal requirements.

1.4. Overview of Accountability in Maryland

Geoff Sanderson (MSDE) provided an overview of the current state accountability model and explained how it meets ESSA's requirements. He explained how the current model meets ESSA's requirements but also identified the need for clarity in how points are assigned in order for schools to improve and the public to interpret the ratings. In addition, Geoff shared some data on the relationship between ratings and poverty.

1.5. Discussion of Current Accountability Model

Scott Marion invited task force members to discuss what is working well (strengths) and what is not working well in the current Maryland accountability model. After table discussions, each group was asked to share some points with the larger group.

1.6. Establishing a Strong Foundation - Overview and Discussion

Scott Marion led the committee through an overview of a theory of action and an activity to identify the primary design priorities and navigate tensions among competing priorities. The task force members were then divided into new groups and asked to identify a common goal and then create a Theory of Action to achieve this goal.

1.7. Design Priorities

Chris Domaleski discussed the role of design priorities in helping the group navigate tensions related to design recommendations. He described the choices that will need to be made around selecting and measuring indicators, as well as determining the business rules for assigning points to an indicator and weighting values for each indicator.

Chris explained six competing accountability design priorities and tradeoffs and invited the group to ask clarifying questions after each design tradeoff.

1. Continuity: Change vs. Comparing Over Time
2. Comparability: Flexibility vs. Within Year Comparison
3. Complexity: Simplicity vs. Comprehensiveness
4. Coherence: Single System vs. Multiple Systems (vs. Hybrid System)
5. Timeline (for implementation): Longer-term vs. Near-term
6. Scope: Additional Information vs. Minimizing Burden

After an opportunity for questions, Chris led the advisory group through an activity intended to surface committee members' perspectives on the competing priorities that could inform future meetings.

1.8. Wrap-up, Evaluation, and Adjourn

Chris wrapped up the meeting by summarizing key insights, identifying action items, and asking participants for their feedback on potential topics for the next meeting. The meeting concluded with participants completing a meeting evaluation, which revealed positive overall reactions to the meeting format, content, and processes.

The next meeting will be held on May 30th in Baltimore.