

Maryland State Department of Education
Assessment and Accountability Task Force

Meeting 6, October 15, 9:00-3:00

Baltimore, MD

This document summarizes the key discussion points from the Maryland State Department of Education Assessment and Accountability Task Force. This meeting was the sixth meeting of the Task Force and was held on October 15, 2024. The meeting was held from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the MSDE offices in Baltimore, Maryland.

1.1. Welcome and Introductions

Scott Marion opened the meeting by welcoming participants and reviewing the future meeting dates planned for November 12th (in person) and 22nd (virtual). Scott emphasized that this meeting will include reaching a final resolution on several outstanding decisions. He recognized that all participants may not agree, so dissenting opinions will be noted in the Task Force report.

1.2. Assessment Recommendations

Scott summarized the pros and cons of a variety of test design considerations, including: Fixed form or adaptive, testing time, item types, and score reporting. He then shared that the group consensus at the last meeting of the Task Force appeared to be mixed, with members recognizing both the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. These impressions were as follows: the group was generally opposed to item-level adaptive testing, the group showed potential interest in exploring a stage-adaptive testing approach, the group was favorable towards fixed-form testing. Task Force members were given the opportunity to voice agreement or disagreement with this interpretation. During the course of the discussion, there was movement toward a multistage test, provided that the public understands how it works. Next, the group transitioned to a discussion of design consideration and score reports. The Center for Assessment shared some proposed language, and several suggestions were made to include “timely” and “useful” score reporting as a recommendation.

1.3 Systems or Summative Only

Next, the Task Force discussed some options for the state to provide assessments in addition to the summative assessment. Task Force members were asked to weigh in on three possible options. Participants voiced a variety of opinions and preferences. The possibility of optional non-summative

interim assessments received the most support from participants. However, some concerns were expressed about whether this might be cost-prohibitive in terms of both the time of retraining staff and if the financial costs could be used better for other opportunities.

1.4 Communication

Task Force members next discussed the criteria for an effective communication strategy. The participants agreed that one recommendation of the Task Force should include a clear communication strategy. Many task force members expressed concerns about the credibility of the current system and the need for improvements in score reporting as one way to address these credibility concerns. Participants shared that a thoughtful communication plan should tout the benefits of the current assessment system and should also communicate the results of policy-related research based on the state assessment system.

1.5 College and Career Readiness

Chris Domaleski reviewed recommendations from the college and career readiness subcommittee and discussed the remaining questions to refine the framework. One concern was a lack of parallelism across the CTE and College-going tracks between the three components: Participation, Performance, and Additional Accomplishments. A decision was made to convene an additional CTE subcommittee and make some revisions to share at the next full meeting.

1.6 Accountability Indicator Recommendations

Finally, Chris Domaleski shared information about the remaining ESSA accountability indicators to finalize recommendations. The task force agreed that the growth model should minimize the relationship with prior achievement, not favor high or low-performing schools, be technically strong, and prioritize approaches we can communicate more easily with few misconceptions. No consensus was reached for SGPs vs Value Tables. Proponents of SGPs shared that they prefer it because it shows growth relative to students who were at the same starting point. This is for both schools and students. Others stated support that Value Tables were more straightforward to communicate without adding SGPs into value tables. Uncertain Task Force members reported that they needed more clarity on who the user is and understanding. Value tables are easier for the public to understand, and SGPs are better for school-level administrators. The final recommendation of Task Force members was to use impact data to model different approaches and then show a group of principals and school administrators.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Chris wrapped up the meeting by summarizing key insights and reviewing action items. The meeting concluded with participants completing a meeting evaluation. The next meeting will be held remotely on November 12, 2024.