

Maryland State Department of Education
Assessment and Accountability Task Force

Meeting 7, November 12, 2024

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 seventh meeting of the Task Force and was held on November 12, 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, which were planned for a meeting on November 22nd (virtual) and the presentation of a report to the Maryland State Board of Education on December 3rd. He emphasized that the current meeting will include reaching a final resolution on several outstanding accountability design decisions and reviewing the draft report. He recognized that all participants may not agree, and dissenting opinions will be noted in the Task Force report.

1.2. Accountability Design Decisions

Scott Marion shared two primary design decisions that required discussion: (1) aggregation of indicator information and (2) producing and reporting annual determinations.

First, information was shared with participants on how states aggregate multiple indicators and the decision-making process based on these indicators. This highlighted the requirements of federal law for decisions on Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI). Scott also shared slides on methods for making overall determinations (compensatory, conjunctive, disjunctive, and profile approaches) and examples from other states. He also led the group through a discussion of nominal and effective weights and the importance of policy priorities in establishing weights. Task force members were asked to discuss their current model and offer ideas for how the new model could work. Participants discussed various approaches to setting performance levels and simplifying report cards. There was a general preference for a model with common levels (e.g., 1-4) for each indicator, but Task Force members emphasized involving teachers and stakeholders in determining qualifications for each level. Concerns were raised about the complexity of the current system and the way the information is currently presented on the Maryland report card. One task force member shared the Indiana report card and an example because of the way it highlighted key initiatives for the state. Overall, task force members prioritized ease of

communication and strongly suggested that educators should play a significant role in deciding cut scores for each indicator level.

Participants also had the opportunity to share their views on these topics. Many agreed there was a need to move to four levels for indicators, allow for dropdown menus, elevate the most important indicators (growth and proficiency), and not entirely abandon a total composite score. Another suggestion was to include a “portion of total points earned” rather than star ratings. However, concerns were raised that getting 40 of 100 points signals a school is failing. Concerns were also raised that removing any composite score would signal that Maryland was walking away from accountability. Suggestions were also made to conduct some studies of users to determine the degree to which various users interpret accountability reports and whether having an overall rating or not leads to the intended interpretations. Several suggestions were made to move from five to four levels and not to use stars to avoid confusion with the current system. Finally, the Task Force participants agreed that this decision would need further discussion and suggested doing public feedback sessions on the different approaches between two different models of total scores or levels.

1.3. Report Recommendations

The final agenda item included reviewing the recommendations in the draft report shared prior to the meeting. Scott Marion shared slides reviewing each of the recommendations for assessment, including considerations for fairness and accessibility. Next, he reviewed the accountability design principles and indicators (academic achievement, growth, graduation rate, and college and career readiness frameworks). The slides summarized key points and proposed actions. Task Force members had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, and several recommendations were reworded. Considerable discussion was generated on the college and career readiness framework. An agreement was made to revise this recommendation and revisit it at the Task Force's final meeting. The group requested that an additional guiding principle be included that emphasized the use of the indicators to inform and support continuous improvement.

1.4 Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Scott Marion 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 22, 2024.