

Hannah Report on May 12th, 2014 State Board Accountability Committee

Gifted Indicator Update and Vote

Chris Woolard, Director of Accountability, gave an update on the Gifted Indicator. The Work Group came to an agreement on a framework to present to the State Board. The general framework has three parts: Progress, Performance and District inputs for gifted students. A district or building must meet a minimum threshold on each part in order to meet the indicator.

The Gifted Indicator will be reported on the 2014 Report Card but not counted until 2015.

The Gifted Value-Added (VA) Grade will be the progress measure for the indicator. The enrollment threshold of 600 ADM was agreed upon to determine how districts are evaluated for the indicator. A phase-I enrollment threshold was recommended to be 1,200 in SY14, 900 in SY15, and 600 in SY16.

The phase-in aspect was questioned by Chair Gunlock. Woolard said the phase-in would allow districts to adapt to the new measures. Gunlock said, "I don't want to give districts a pass. We've been working on expanding the gifted programs for years now."

Matt Cohen, the department's Chief of Research, said, "Our expectation is that even if you have only 600 students, you will have at least have 6 students identified in a graded subject area." Community schools are not required to identify gifted students because they don't have the data.

Chair Gunlock emphasized that he was not in favor of the phase-in. "We have given districts enough time to do this work," he said.

The Gifted Performance Index (PI) will be the achievement measure for the indicator. Items for the Board to revisit prior to 2016 Report Card would be the impact of new assessments and potential additions to the performance measure, such as the ACT, according to Chris Woolard.

The Gifted Input measure will be a point total based upon service as a percentage. Gifted identification would be a percentage of enrollment and Gifted service a percentage of identified students.

These inputs would be in place across Academic/Superior Cognitive, Visual and Performing Arts, and Creative Thinking. It would include students in racial/ethnic minority categories and students who are economically disadvantaged. Items for the Board to revisit prior to 2016 Report Card would be the impact of point structure and the addition of formal acceleration.

Board member Ruddick asked if the definition of "service" was discussed. Woolard said, "Acceleration should be one of those pieces."

Woolard summarized, "Each of the three parts of the indicator requires a threshold, and simulated results of various threshold combinations are available for Board consideration." He asked for approval from the Board on the framework.

Board member Velazquez-Skillings said there should be some correlation between the size of the school district and their ability to test. "This suggests to me that 600 is not the right number," she stated.

Cohen said, "We are making an assumption that there was no change from 2013-14. You ought to have one year to get your ducks in order. To do this, you start identifying districts that have 900-1200 which should be able to identify enough of the gifted students to be at 600."

The Board voted to approve the framework without the phase-in.

Woolard introduced a discussion on the issue of cut scores to decide the threshold for Gifted Value Added (VA). He noted that the Gifted VA added grade would be a C–D, if the Gifted PI ranges from 110-114; Gifted Inputs (point total) range from 25-30 out of 100; the percentage of rated Districts meeting Indicator range from 53.3 percent to 47;6 percent; and the percentage of schools meeting the Indicator range from 61.7 percent to 35.2 percent.

Cohen said the median for all districts would be a C. "These are the same statistical scales used for rating schools and evaluating teachers," Woolard said. "This is based on the 600 threshold."

Velazquez-Skillings asked, "For those districts that have a specific building for their Gifted, how would the data be presented?" Woolard said that building would be evaluated on the criteria, and the other buildings in the district would not be evaluated.

Woolard then introduced a discussion on combining measures and said they have created a dynamic measure based on some simulated data. Weighting Achievement Measures are the same as they were presented last month, but they are broken down by district typology. The options on the table are weighting the emphasis on the Indicators.

Weighting the Achievement Measures includes 4 options: 75/25 Emphasis on PI; 65/35 Emphasis on PI; 50/50 where the PI and Indicators are weighted equally; and 25/75 Emphasis on Indicators.

Board member Jones said, "The purpose of metrics is an exercise in dart throwing. The metrics that we come up with here are intended to push education leaders to perform better. I am somewhat edgy coming up with anything where districts are failing as it undermines confidence and credibility."

President Terhar agreed and questioned the Vice President's support of 50/50. Gunlock said combining measures will not allow districts to realize which areas they need to work on. Woolard noted, "It's important to get this information out to the schools before the next school year."

The option of 75/25 Weighting of Achievement Measures with the emphasis on Performance Index was promoted by Jones.

Board member Oakar said, “Just on the surface, this data does not mesh with the data we found on the Urban and Rural Committee.” Board member Smith said the sample size is too small and that committee is working on barriers. Woolard said the numbers are based on actual performance.

Board member Dodd supported the 50/50 measure stating, “A D or an F – neither of them are good.”

Woolard then introduced Weighting the Graduation Rate with four options before the Board: 80/20, 75/25, or 60/40 with Emphasis on the 4 year rate; or 50/50 with equal weight on the 4- and 5- year rate.

Vice President Gunlock recommended 60/40. The 60/40 was passed unanimously.

In Weighting Value Added, Woolard proposed the following: “In adopting benchmarks for assigning letter grades, for overall score on VA progress dimension under division (C) (1) (e) of this section, the State Board shall prohibit the assigning of an “A” for that measure unless the district’s or building’s grade assigned for VA progress dimension for all subgroups under division (C) (1) (f) of this section is a “B” or higher.”

He explained the two options with regard to addressing the missing subgroup measures. Overall 55 percent, Subgroups (combined) 45 percent (55-15-15). The first option would be 50 Overall/45 for the lowest 20 percent for a total of 100. The second option is 55 Overall/15 for the lowest 20 percent for a total of 70. The Board approved the 55-15-15 measure.

It was announced that Dr. Smith will be the new vice chair of the Accountability Committee.