

ESSA State Plan Stakeholders Meeting
September 26, 2016 10:00AM – 4:00PM
Radisson Colonial Hotel, Helena

Meeting Summary

Meeting Objective: For Stakeholders to discuss accountability and long-term goals for schools. For the Stakeholders to come to a consensus on those topics, move forward with developing the ESSA State Plan and to provide feedback to OPI for the parts of the plan they have started to develop.

Issues Discussed:

Required elements of the Accountability System:

- 1) English Learner progress (proposed weight 15%, must apply to all schools)
- 2) Statewide Assessment Proficiency (25%, all schools)
- 3) Statewide Assessment Improvement (25%, law only requires K-8, Montana will include it for all schools)
- 4) Graduation Rate (25%, high schools)
- 5) Additional indicator (state chooses). Proposed: Attendance (proposed weight 10%, would apply to all schools), and College readiness (proposed weight 10%, college remediation for high schools, percent of students older than they should be for their grade for K-8 schools)

Things to consider:

- Academic indicator must have greater weight than the additional indicator
- ESSA regulations are out, but not finalized
- Has to be a system that differentiates schools on a yearly basis
- Has to require an assessment of the school using the four required indicators, plus the fifth additional indicator
- Whether or not to collect additional data for the fifth indicator
- The law says that schools with less than 100 students may be omitted from the planning process when identifying schools for either targeted or comprehensive support
 - Although the Federal level does not require it, Montana might want to include those small schools in an alternate way
 - Take small schools into account when designing a scoring/ranking system
- No immediate plans to change from using Smarter Balanced and the ACT as assessments

Stakeholder consensus: Most stakeholders commented on the importance of moving towards a growth model and moving away from NCLB and the penalties it imposed on schools who did not meet the required levels of proficiency, though using a growth model for the State Plan would be several years away due to a lack of past data. Many stakeholders commented on the possibility of using multi-year cohorts to solve the problem of small sample sizes for the rankings, though most opposed increasing the sample size (n-number) in order to avoid sizing out small schools. Many also commented on how to weigh growth versus proficiency so that neither high achieving nor low achieving schools were unfairly disadvantaged. Most stakeholders also agreed that using school attendance and college readiness would not work well as the additional indicator and that something else, possibly related to school climate or

arts in the schools, would work better. Stakeholders also raised the importance for the plan to be culturally responsive regarding the different needs of American Indian students and reservation or American Indian-majority schools, especially since most of the schools targeted for improvement will be those schools. Most Stakeholders do not want to have to collect more data or increase the number of standardized tests students would take. They also felt that what OPI brought to the table acts as a good framework to build on. OPI will continue to take the lead in designing the State Plan with Stakeholder input.

Long-term goals:

The long-term goals for schools in the ESSA State Plan should be aspirational and ambitious but also reasonable and doable. There will not be penalties against schools who do not meet the goals like there were under NCLB. The data driven process for goal setting that OPI created has six steps:

- 1) Identify a trend and pattern
- 2) Calculate the difference from year-to-year
- 3) Identify a starting point
- 4) Apply step 2
- 5) Project this pattern out
 - a. Identify interim growth for years 1 and 2. Identify long term growth for year 4
- 6) Revisit the trend and pattern

The process should look at ESSA requirements, use appropriate comparisons, make predictions using past data, set aspirational goals, and use guiding questions.

Stakeholder consensus: The stakeholders agreed that it was important to make sure schools were not penalized for not meeting the goals. Schools at different levels of achievement would not be expected to improve the same amount to reach goals. Meeting or failing to meet the goals will not affect a school's ranking. Many stakeholders also commented on the importance of striking a balance between making the goals too aggressive versus too complacent. Some also commented on the possibility of making the reports on school goals more focused on a school's increase or improvement towards a goal rather than their level to allow low-achieving schools a chance to focus more on how they are improving than failing.

Public Comments: The importance of making parents and caregivers feel included and engaged in their communities, the importance of school libraries and librarians, and the importance of taking into account the mental health needs of the students.