

## ESSA Implementation Committee Meeting

September 15, 2022  
8:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Pioneer Room

**Facilitator:** Laurie Matzke

**Note Taker:** Lisa Johnson

### Minutes

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**Welcome:** Laurie Matzke welcomed the group and told attendees to sign the sign-in sheet. Laurie asked members to introduce themselves.

**Updates/Overview of Day:** Assistant Superintendent Matzke started the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of topics. ESSA was enacted seven years ago. The committee meets annually. New members were identified. Highlights for today's meeting are Choice Ready updates, school accountability, TSI/CSI, and Assessment RFP. School accountability will be finalized and shared on Insights on September 16. TSI/CSI schools will be identified and made public. Stan will provide an update on the new state assessment.

National priorities are ESSER spending deadlines, planning for when ESSER funding is gone, learning recovery, etc. The deadline to spend ESSER I funds is September 30, 2022. North Dakota schools are doing a good job of spending ESSER I funds. Other states are struggling to spend the funds and have asked Congress to extend the deadline. This is unlikely to happen.

Laurie asked what schools will do when ESSER funds are gone. How will learning recovery be funded? The NDDPI has been looking at how funds have been spent and which initiatives have been effective. A braided funding approach might allow us to continue these programs. Edunomics training focuses on outcome-based budgeting. Several NDDPI staff and about thirty North Dakota educational staff are attending a training in December in Washington, D.C.

Learning recovery has been an important topic due to the pandemic. North Dakota has done better than other states. To understand the impact of students' lost instructional time, the NDDPI partnered with SAS EVASS. Superintendent Baesler will share the results with the legislature.

Results show that there wasn't much of a decline in English Language Arts test scores. Math scores were a little lower. In some cases, there was a broader gap in some subgroups. There was a significant decrease in the scores for Native American students.

The annual federal funding process is looking at funding for next year. There are proposed increases for Title I, special education, and Title III. There will probably be a continuing resolution into December 2022.

Teacher shortages are a pervasive problem right now. The NDDPI has been working on two initiatives: teacher shortage grant opportunities and an apprenticeship teacher program. The special ed office started a para-to-teacher pathway program in 2019-2020. This was very successful, so it was decided to do another round of grants. The first round went to Minot State University for special ed; the second round went to the University of Mary for general ed. The third round went to Valley City State University for a dual program.

The NDDPI has also been working with ESPB to start an apprenticeship program. Tennessee was the first state to apply to the Department of Labor to create a teacher apprenticeship program. The NDDPI is providing funding to the ESPB to assist with this process. We are working with Mr. Donaldson to get an application to the Department of Labor by December.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act was passed in June 2022. It will provide funding to increase the number of qualified mental health providers, institute safety measures in and around schools, and funding for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs. This will be a competitive grant process.

The School Food Waivers ended. The Keep Kids Fed Act does increase meal reimbursement rates for the school year 2022-2023. It also provides the USDA with limited authority to issue no-cost waivers.

For future consideration is the lack of elementary accountability indicators. Some considerations when making changes is the fact that we don't want to open the State ESSA plan. Elementary principals need to decide if this is a priority. We need another indicator at the elementary level to make it more equitable for them. Laurie feels we can add something on climate without opening up the plan.

The following steps are to decide on Choice Ready and plan the virtual meeting for the winter ESSA meeting.

### **Presentations:**

**Agenda Item:** Choice Ready

**Presenter:** Laurie Matzke/Jim Upgren

**Discussion:** 61% of our students graduated Choice Ready last year. The goal is to graduate all students Choice Ready. The goal is to communicate about Choice Ready to teachers, administrators, parents, school boards, and the public. A video has been created to help achieve this goal.

**Topic:** Video

**Presenters:** Laurie Matzke

**Discussion:** Laurie asked members to help disseminate the Choice Ready video. The new Choice Ready video was shared with the committee.

**Topic:** Recommended Changes to Framework

**Presenters:** Ned Clooten

**Discussion:** The High School Principals' Advisory Committee recommended several changes to the Choice Ready Framework. Ned Clooten presented the recommendations. See below:

Ned stated that these changes probably wouldn't fit into the first column. We need to determine which column it would fit into. One committee member suggested adding the seal of biliteracy to the chart.

Laurie said about five or six ideas were presented and voted on. Laurie presented the different suggested changes and how the vote turned out. The recommendation with the most votes was: "I don't support changing any of the current pathways, however, would be in favor of adding foreign language as one of the options under "Post-Secondary Ready." The second highest was "I vote to keep the Choice Ready Framework in its current format."

Jeff Fastnacht talked about an overview of the issue. When the Choice Ready Framework was tied to the state scholarship, it convoluted the process. It took an accountability process and tied it to the state scholarship. Looking at the Choice Ready matrix, some highly skilled students don't become Choice Ready based on available options. The root of the challenge is that it has been a highly individualized kid-centered framework.

Wayde Sick talked about finding a place for foreign language and fine arts but doesn't think it shouldn't be under "Workforce Ready." His concern is finding a good fit for those courses. He doesn't want to see the "Workforce Ready" section watered down. He questions where these indicators should be placed. He would like to see foreign language and fine arts students rewarded for their efforts.

Laurie asked for feedback from committee members. Jerry Standifer mentioned the question of students who attend college in another state. How do we align these indicators to be meaningful for all students, whether they attend college in North Dakota or another state? Laurie mentioned that the perspective of the ESSA committee is to have students be well-rounded. Since then, changes have been made to career-ready practices. Students should be able to become Choice Ready in two pathways. There isn't much support for changing the names of the pathways. We want to avoid significant changes to avoid making trouble for the scholarship. There is the most support for adding foreign language under post-secondary ready. Laurie suggested that committee members talk to

their counterparts before voting. There was support for adding fine arts as an option under “Essential Skills.”

Ned agreed with Jeff and Wayde’s comments. He said the goal is well-rounded students. He agreed that we should make minimal changes to help the legislature. He thought the brown option made the most sense. We want to show students they are important. He thought of adding a bullet of foreign language. We want our workforce to be bilingual. Laurie clarified Ned’s suggestion. Ned thought adding foreign language into the middle section could be achieved without changing the column’s name. Jerry agreed with the idea of splitting them and having them in separate categories. It was questioned whether foreign languages could be added under multiple pathways. Laurie mentioned that we have been careful to have differentiation.

Dual credit could be under Workforce Ready. Laurie suggested we will add one more option to vote on to have fine arts listed under one of the categories. Jeff said if we add more indicators, we will exacerbate the problem with high schools being higher up in the accountability system, pushing elementary and middle schools into the lower accountability scores. Laurie mentioned there is a valid option for elementary schools relating to climate. The movement needs to come from elementary schools. High schools will be artificially inflated without any changes to the elementary system. Ned mentioned that the problem is the lack of indicators at the elementary level. Ned doesn’t feel the percentage will be inflated that much. This will tie up loose ends and allow high-flyers to be Choice Ready.

Melanie Kathrein suggested we must stay true to Choice Ready’s intent. Laurie mentioned that the foreign language teachers got together as a group and reached out to make their request to change the Choice Ready chart. A survey will be sent out next week for committee members to vote.

Laurie believes the success of Choice Ready is due to the hard work of principals and the Choice Ready workshops. A video is being created to provide instructions on creating a Choice Ready report. ESSER funding has been designated for Choice Ready grants. Wayde Sick offered additional resources for Workforce Ready.

**Topic:** Updates on Scholarship

**Presenter:** Jim Upgren

**Discussion:** Students currently qualifying for the scholarship through the WorkKeys test must qualify through the ASVAB score. A bill will be introduced to the legislature to change the qualifying ASVAB test score (to lower it). Jim gave an overview of the state scholarship. Starting with the class of 2025, students will only be using the new requirements. The purpose is that anyone who qualifies for the scholarship will also be Choice Ready. There is a possibility that an emergency clause will be introduced, which would have the new ASVAB score take effect for this year’s seniors. Jim reiterated that

this is not a done deal until the legislature passes a bill to lower the score. Jim will reach out to committee members this fall to ask for data about students and the scholarship and ASVAB scores.

Jim mentioned that it is very important that Choice Ready reports be submitted on time. A verification report is being created for non-public schools. Jim said no one testified against the bill, which passed with the current ASVAB score of 85.

**Topic:** Workshops

**Presenter:** Laurie Matzke

**Discussion:** Laurie Shared the two remaining Choice Ready workshop dates with the group. She also shared the content presented at the workshops with the committee.

**Agenda Item:** Accountability Results

**Presenters:** Ross Roemmich

**Discussion:** Ross gave an overview of the accountability data. The report cards will be coming out on Insights on September 16<sup>th</sup> by the end of the day. Ross thanked people for bringing forth questions and concerns about the accountability data. He also requested people to bring forth ideas and recommendations for improvements.

Ross went over an accountability pie and Insights and the different components. He showed attendees how to determine how their accountability score was calculated. Clicking the accountability button breaks down the numbers used to calculate the score. If a score is not showing in a specific category, the numbers cannot be displayed if the n-size is ten or less. The data can also be exported to an Excel spreadsheet. Jeff Fastnacht and Tracy Korsmo helped create the new system. When an n-size is too small, the points are redistributed to Choice Ready.

Superintendents have immediate access to STARS Reports. The superintendents can give access to other staff at their discretion. People with questions can call Ross for assistance.

Ross went over the results, comparing '20-'21 and '21-'22. Math scores went up slightly. English stayed equal. English Learner growth saw significant gains. They went from 5% to 29%. Student Engagement also went from 81% to 85%. The completer and graduation rates went down. The Choice Ready rate went up.

**Topic:** TSI/CSI

**Presenter:** Amanda Peterson

**Discussion:** The accountability process allows us to target resources to underperforming schools. Amanda mentioned a recent statement by Secretary Cardona to use assessment scores to assist schools rather than as a punitive measure. Amanda stated that North Dakota uses the scores to help schools and wanted to get that message out.

Amanda talked about the identification timeline. Last year's results are used to identify this year's supports. Other states use older data. She stressed the importance of school leaders submitting reports on time so that valid data can be used for identification. Amanda mentioned that in the future, she would notify schools in the pool for identification rather than identifying them as TSI/CSI during the accountability process. Two trainings will be held in September on TSI and CSI.

Amanda advocates for more opportunities for schools for accountability indicators to receive points in the accountability process.

Amanda went over the CSI selection process. She went over the criteria and calculation process. She said there would always be a line due to the cap. There were 382 eligible schools for the accountability process. Smaller schools are not eligible. The CSI exit criteria were displayed. After three years, the list is rerun, and to exit, they must not be in the bottom 5%.

There were fifteen schools identified for CSI. Schools must send a letter each year informing parents that the information on Insights has been updated. Targeted schools must also state that they have been identified for improvement.

Amanda reviewed some CSI statistics. Six former CSI/TSI schools exited and are no longer on the improvement list. 7/15 identified that CSI schools did not exit and are entering their second round of CSI status. These schools must enter a more rigorous improvement process.

Amanda went over the TSI selection process. These schools are identified every year. Identified schools have been in TSI for three years. She also went over the exit criteria. There were 23 schools identified for TSI support. She said that nationally, middle schools were disproportionately affected negatively by the pandemic. Math scores were particularly negatively affected. 39% of TSI schools are middle schools. 26% of TSI schools are high schools, and 35% of TSI schools are elementary schools.

There are required checkpoints for all schools, such as training and implementation. There is a parent notification requirement for identified schools. CSI schools are required to participate in the Be Legendary School Board Leadership Institute. This is optional for TSI schools. The NDDPI out-of-school improvement funds will pay for this.

There is an updated support framework. NDDPI is contracting with NDREAs to support TSI and CSI schools, specifically related to ESSA Accountability measures. This process is to help hold teachers accountable for the fidelity of the process in the application of interventions. We are looking at evidence-based programs.

Title I schools support is how the identification process is funded. State funds are not used for this process. Approximately \$3 million is used to support these schools. The TSI funding support is \$1,492,500. She went over changes to the funding process to make it

equitable. They are required to give grant funds in a sufficient amount to make a difference. CSI funding is \$930,000. The grant timeline has been extended from June to December to allow TSI schools to spend funds for improvement.

Amanda went over the goals and uses of the funds. Schools need to use evidence-based interventions but have the flexibility to use any measures they need.

**Agenda Item:** Assessment RFP

**Presenter:** Stan Schauer

**Discussion:** The new state assessment will not go into effect for two more years. Stan gave a history of how it was decided to implement a new assessment. The goal is to link the interim to the standards and the interim to the summative. He said assessment literacy is an important element of the assessment process. The interim assessment study was presented to the interim assessment committee. The old interim assessment law was repealed, and a new one needs to be created.

Research was conducted to determine a new method to assess. A model was selected called the “modified Alaska model.” State procurement calls for an RFP to choose a partner in the assessment process.

Stan went over the RFP process. An RFP was issued on June 30, 2022. Final scores will be submitted on September 23. Stan listed the members of the RFP committee and explained how they were chosen. He described the ND A+, an assessment system that consists of state-wide summative and interim assessments. Both are connected to each other and the state standards—both online and computer adaptive.

ND A+ interims will start in school year ‘23-‘24, and the ND A+ summative will be administered in the spring of ‘24-‘25. A strong focus of the project is assessment literacy. This was written into the RFP.

He explained how the ND A+ is different from other models. It takes an interim and works to have items that strictly align to and measure skills/knowledge within ND standards. It will connect the summative/standards and allow a school to connect to both for a complete comprehensive/connected system.

Stan went over the ways the ND A+ has communicated to the field, including the Weekly Blast, The Educator’s Edge, presentations, etc.

Stan went over the next steps. A vendor will be selected in mid-October. Committee work by teams of ND educators and content experts will work on blueprint development and approval, item pool content and bias, item alignment, achievement level descriptors creation, etc.

A committee member asked whether the state would pay for the assessment. Stan said that if the school goes with the state assessment, the state will pay for it. If the school chooses its own assessment, it will pay for it.

A committee member stated that K-2 is a new component of the interim assessment. She expressed concern about students being able to sit through a long summative assessment. Jerry Standifer said the K-2 would not do a summative assessment. They will only do interim assessments. The committee member also expressed concern that the current summative assessment for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders is too long.

Stan said that testing time would be considered when creating the assessment. With the computer adaptive, the time has dropped a little bit. The assessment is designed to be as quick and efficient as possible while maintaining validity.

A committee member asked if the test would be based on specific standards. Stan said the test blueprints will be available. It will be broken down by standards. They can also view results by substandard. Stan said they would request feedback while building the new assessment.

One committee member mentioned assessment fatigue within the schools. Stan addressed this. He said that most of this is due to local assessments. The state-required assessments take up a small percentage of the school year. He said the ND A+ is trying to address this issue.

Stan said they have made the state assessment as low stakes as possible. They use other measures to determine success. A student can still go onto the next grade level even if they don't do well on the NDSA.

Laurie Matzke stated that the goal is to make the state assessment the best we can while fulfilling federal requirements for the assessment. Jerry said it is about providing more tools for educators with less confusion.

Laurie asked for a discussion about adding indicators to the elementary accountability pie. Any new indicator must fit into climate. It also must be something that can be uniformly given. Also, we are trying to find something schools are already doing which would lessen the reporting responsibilities. Ann mentioned it must also be something that needs to be desegregated.