

ESSA Implementation Committee Meeting

December 20, 2022
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Teams

Facilitator: Laurie Matzke

Note Taker: Lisa Johnson

Minutes

Welcome – Superintendent Baesler: Superintendent Baesler thanked the attendees for their commitment and hard work in supporting the work of improvement in North Dakota schools over the past seven years since ESSA was enacted.

Overview of Meeting/Updates – Laurie Matzke: Assistant Superintendent Matzke presented a PowerPoint overview of the topics to be discussed at today's meeting, as well as some updates on national priorities.

Presentations:

Agenda Item: Assessment Updates

Presenter: Stan Schauer

Topic: Participation Rate

Discussion: Stan Schauer started by giving a presentation on assessment participation rates. He went over what North Dakota's state plan says regarding academic assessment. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) has tracked state-level participation rates. From 2021-2022, the participation rates will be tracked and monitored at the school and subject levels. Schools that don't meet the 95% rate will receive a year-one letter. This letter will outline the consequences of not meeting the participation rate in subsequent years. If a school receives a letter in year two, it will need to develop an improvement plan.

Stan said that logistical planning of test administration usually helps increase participation rates. If a school does not meet the percentage in year three, it will have a negative effect on its accountability score. They will need to figure out how many FAY students would have needed to be assessed to get to 95% and add that number to just the denominator. This will reduce their accountability score.

Stan gave information about participation rates for the 2021-2022 school year. Overall, North Dakota has great participation rates. The goal of sending letters to schools that are not meeting the 95% participation rate is to support and assist them in achieving a 95% participation rate.

There is an opt-out rule for assessments. Stan said less than 1% of students request to opt-out of the assessments. They are counted as non-participants. It was questioned whether North Dakota's opt-out rate is higher than the data shows. Stan said data is collected on why students don't test. The reason is coded. Two of those are excusable and don't count in the participation rate. Stan said a form must always be completed when a student doesn't test. Therefore, the reasons are documented. It is state law that all students participate in testing, so it needs to be documented if they don't participate.

Superintendent Baesler said the issue of students opting out has been decreasing from previous years because there is more of a push by parents to have access to standardized data to make sure students are on track with their learning.

Joe Kolosky said there is no negative consequence on the student engagement survey if they don't reach 95%. Stan commented that the 95% rate could usually be achieved by working with the school and providing support.

Topic: ACT Changes

Discussion: The United States Department of Education (ED) indicated that if a state wants to request the exception of using ACT for accountability again, it would need to pass peer review. In 2024-2025, ND A-PLUS summative will replace NDSA, and new K12 Content Standards in Math and ELA will be implemented. The plan is to then stop using ACT for accountability.

Topic: Recommended Changes to Framework

Presenters: Ned Clooten

Discussion: Wahpeton High School Principal Ned Clooten, a High School Principals' Advisory Cabinet member, presented information about the proposed changes to the Choice Ready chart. The original proposed change to the chart was trying to accommodate "high-flying" kids who were not graduating Choice Ready. It was suggested that adding world language and fine arts to the chart would address this situation.

Ned gave a history of the evolution of the proposed changes. Initially, it was proposed that world language be placed under Post-Secondary and fine arts be placed under Workforce Ready. There was much feedback, especially from CTE staff, that there were concerns about this change. After further discussion by the subcommittee, the proposal was altered to place fine arts under Post-Secondary and world language under Workforce Ready. Ned gave an overview of the changes. Each of these requirements will require students to take three courses. It was thought that having world language in Workforce Ready made more sense in a diverse workplace where numerous languages might be encountered. It was also thought that this change would be easier to justify to legislators.

The three-course requirement was added to ensure the new indicators would be at the same level as the CTE course requirement, which also requires three courses to be completed.

Ned outlined the next steps in the process. The committee voted via Microsoft forms. A vote of thirty to one approved the vote to implement the proposed changes. The language of the proposal was as follows:

“A motion to revise the Choice Ready chart to change foreign language to world language, put world language under Workforce Ready and fine arts under Post-Secondary Ready, requiring completion of three courses for each of these measures.”

These changes will be communicated to the field. Also, the Choice Ready guidance and chart will be updated and posted on the NDDPI website.

An attendee asked whether students must complete three years of the same language to meet the requirement. The answer is that currently, students can meet the requirement by taking three different languages, three years of the same language, or any combination, adding up to three years of language.

Topic: Updates on Scholarship

Presenter: Jim Upgren

Discussion: Jim Upgren talked about potential changes to the North Dakota Scholarship. Jim gave background information about the scholarship. SB 2289 aligned scholarships to the Choice Ready requirements. The classes of 2023 and 2024 may use either the current or new requirements. Starting with the class of 2025, students will only be able to use the new set of requirements.

Jim shared a chart with the scholarship requirements. He stressed that the Choice Ready chart does not determine eligibility for the scholarship. He also said that the changes to the Choice Ready chart do not automatically affect the scholarship. The legislature determines the scholarship requirements.

Jim highlighted the difference between the scholarship requirements and Choice Ready requirements. Some differences include the required GPA, the ACT score, the number of CTE credits required, and the ASVAB score.

The NDDPI proposes introducing two bills to update the new scholarship requirements. One bill would lower the ASVAB score for military ready. It is called the ASVAB Revision Bill. The bill will start with a recommended ASVAB score of 50. Jim will send information about the bill number to the field as soon as it is available. Other provisions of this bill would allow a student to complete basic training the summer after they graduate to use

the ASVAB score of 31. It would also allow an SAT of 1180 to satisfy the testing requirement in Workforce Ready.

Jim asked for school data about the number of students that received the scholarship in 2022 and the number of students in 2022 that would have qualified under the new requirements if the ASVAB requirement was 85, 65, 50, or 40.

The second bill would add the following options for students in Choice Ready:

- C or better in 3 fine arts courses for Post-Secondary Ready
- 3 credits of the same foreign language could replace the 4 credits of CTE with 2 in the same plan of study for Workforce Ready.
- 2 credits of JROTC or Civil Air Patrol in lieu of the two additional indicators for Military Ready.

One committee member brought up the point about world languages and allowing credits in different languages and that it would defeat the purpose of what is trying to be accomplished with the state scholarship.

Jim thought the state scholarship should be kept at three credits of the same foreign language rather than allowing credits in more than one language. Lodee Arnold mentioned that for the seal of biliteracy, students need to complete at least three years of world language instruction to receive a silver seal and four years for a gold seal.

Jim will recommend to the legislators that it be three years of the same foreign language unless there are objections. There was a discussion on this. There was general agreement that it would be beneficial for the requirements for the scholarship to be above and beyond the Choice Ready requirements. There was discussion about whether all schools can offer three foreign languages. Jim said there are options available to all schools in North Dakota. For example, through ITV and the Center for Distance Education.

Agenda Item: Elementary Accountability Proposal

Presenters: Jon Dryburgh and Jay Townsend

Discussion: Jon Dryburgh and some other elementary principals have been working on proposed indicators for the accountability pie chart. Some were concerned that some of the middle school data was being reported on the elementary side. They don't have any control over middle school professional development. To be fair, they felt the data's importance should be lowered or removed altogether.

The following indicators were discussed:

1. Attendance
2. Family engagement events

- a. Parent-teacher conferences – attendance %
 - b. A check box with a narrative about reading data and curriculum information
 - c. A link to Aptogy, a Facebook group (communication methods and a narrative)
3. Mental health (some of the information could come from the superintendent's report on this information)
 - a. Narrative box about the support of students' emotional and mental health (relationship mapping)
 - b. Suspension/Expulsion data (this information is already reported and could be communicated with STARS)
4. Professional development
5. MTSS/RTI indicator (school could upload files with a flow chart on MTSS/RTI progress)

One committee member asked about the culture audit. She wondered whether this would be one report with multiple facets. Jon confirmed it would be for the school overall rather than individual students. He commented that improvement should help a school's culture. Jon said they had a good representation of all school sizes on their committee. Amanda asked if it would be a yes/no or if there would be a rubric with leveling or rating system. Jon said that if it were based on a rubric, they would rely on the ESSA committee to determine that information. Jon said they felt if schools had multiple items to report on, it would be agreeable to working toward the goals. The objective of the committee he has been working with is to add another piece to the accountability pie.

Laurie commented that we would need a way to differentiate between schools. Shawn Oban had a question about attendance. He commented that attendance is the result of parents rather than something the school controls. He suggested that the indicator might relate to what the school is doing regarding attendance. Jon commented that he had a similar concern regarding suspension and expulsion reports. Shawn suggested a melding of Title I status and attendance. Jay thought part of the family involvement could be linked to attendance. Such as the school's efforts at family engagement events to improve attendance.

Jerry Standifer talked about West Fargo's attendance rates. He agreed that it is difficult to affect attendance, but it can be done. He feels the focus needs to be on chronic absenteeism. Jerry thinks chronic absenteeism should be part of the pie rather than attendance. He said that 1% of North Dakota students make up 15% of the absences.

Debra Follman commented on attendance at schools with high poverty rates. She is leery about using attendance as an indicator. She does not want to see schools with low socioeconomic status penalized. Jon agreed that this was a concern. They are putting it forth as an idea and are open to suggestions.

Jon talked about the professional development piece. He said the PD is important in how he steers his school. He feels this information could be pulled from reports already being done. Principals could report some PD information.

Jon thought PLCs would need to be another narrative. This is done differently at different schools. At his school, they look at data regularly. He feels it helps their growth data.

Amanda Peterson stated that at the NDDPI, the report on PLCs does not provide in-depth information. She said it might be hard to determine what Jon would like to see reported based on what is provided in the report. The new SOR report might be harder to use. Jon commented that a narrative on PLCs would be beneficial since all of the information wouldn't show up on a report. Jon commented that having a vision regarding PD is important.

Laurie said members would be doing a follow-up survey on the proposed changes to the elementary accountability pie. The resulting information will be shared with the group.

Laurie stated that North Dakota doesn't want to open up its ESSA plan. The proposed change to elementary accountability would be one small piece of the pie under climate. We have been clear with the ED that any changes would occur in the climate portion of the pie. Half of the pie would be the student engagement survey, and half would be climate.

Ann Ellefson asked whether students' data for the climate/engagement section needs to be desegregated. Laurie said that is not required for this section.

Laurie told Jon and Jay that the NDDPI would be in contact with them and provide feedback from the group.

Agenda Item: Title I Allocation Formula Change

Presenter: Amanda Peterson

Discussion: Amanda talked about the proposed Title I allocation formula changes. The NDDPI has hesitated to change the formula because it was thought schools would lose money if they changed it. The advent of ESSER funds raised some questions. The NDDPI is considering joining the 43-plus states that use Census Bureau data to determine Title I allocations. North Dakota's eleven largest districts already use this method.

Currently, the NDDPI has special permission from the ED to use an alternative poverty method for smaller districts. It includes the following data:

- Census (15.5%),
- Foster (15.5%),
- Free lunch (46%), and
- Reduced lunch (23%) data.

Amanda commented that SEAs could choose the numbers from the school years that would result in the most advantageous allocations for districts. Free lunches for all have skewed the numbers usually used. Amanda said that as they have looked at some of these numbers, they determined it might be appropriate to use Census Data rather than the data traditionally used.

Amanda shared a timeline of the process the NDDPI has been following regarding these proposed changes. Amanda said that on the two ends of the spectrum, there would be many schools that would receive more funding under the change and many schools that would receive less funding. Jamie Mertz, Stef Two Crow, and Amanda Peterson are creating a chart to compare how formula changes would affect allocations. She said that if they continue to use free and reduced lunch forms to collect data, it is questioned whether these forms will be completed by those eligible for the program. This will affect Title I eligibility for districts.

NDDPI plans to hold a comment period in January 2023 and put it to a vote. Preliminary federal Title allocations will be released in April 2023. If the new method is implemented, some districts will see a loss in Title funding, and some will see a gain.

Agenda Item: Spring Meeting

Presenter: Laurie Matzke

Discussion: Laurie gave a recap of the meeting. The changes to the Choice Ready chart were approved. Communication about the meeting and changes to the Choice Ready chart will be sent out on January 3, 2023. Information will be sent to the accountability committee to determine whether changes will be made to the elementary accountability pie. A meeting poll will be sent out for the March meeting.

Meeting adjourned.