

ESSA Implementation Committee Meeting

September 29, 2021
8:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Teams and Brynhild Haugland Room

Facilitator: Laurie Matzke

Note Taker: Lisa Johnson

Minutes

Welcome: Superintendent Baesler welcomed the group and reiterated the purpose of the committee and commented on the commitment the committee has shown to continually developing the plan. She thanked the group for their participation.

Overview: Assistant Superintendent Matzke also welcomed the group. She gave an overview of the ESSA plan and its implementation process. She stated the ESSA Act has technically expired. There is discussion of reauthorization but she does not expect to see it reauthorized within the next two years. Laurie welcomed the new Implementation Committee members: ND Indian Affairs Commissioner Nathan Davis, Mike McHugh and Sarah Gackle, parent representatives, Rosemary Hardie, special education representative, Ann Duchscher, for the ND Association for Gifted Children, and Deb Follman, elementary principal.

Asst. Supt. Matzke began by discussing how the pandemic has affected schools. She will discuss plans regarding this. She gave an overview of the topics listed on the agenda. Asst. Supt. Matzke also discussed the accountability process and the publication of the results on the Insights Dashboard. She talked about the impact of the pandemic on the districts. Also mentioned were ESSER funding and the new Program Manager Valerie Willis. Valerie Willis is in the process of approving ESSER III applications.

Asst. Supt. Matzke summarized the state level ESSER funding and how the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) is utilizing those funds. Waivers were also discussed. The school foods waiver allows all students across the nation to eat for free for the 2021-2022 school year. One issue relating to this waiver is difficulty in convincing parents to fill out the free and reduced lunch application which ties into Title funding. There has been a huge increase in the number students eating school lunch. There are some challenges related to school lunches due to staffing shortages, food delivery issues, etcetera.

The United States Education Department (USED) accountability waiver provides districts with additional time to spend Title funding. The accountability waiver provided flexibility in reporting and the NDDPI is not required to identify new schools for the improvement process. There are opportunities forthcoming; more information will be coming soon.

The Legislature has a couple of plans: the American Jobs Plan, which is a competitive grant award, and the American Families Plan, which was introduced in the spring. The Infrastructure bill will potentially be voted on tomorrow. This plan does not include much

relating to educational issues. They are also voting on the debt ceiling and other issues. This affects the NDDPI because the budget affects education funding. The trend is big increases in Title I, special education, and community services programs. We should know more by the end of this week.

We have not received anything formal from the USED about changes to the state plan. It sounds like there will be an opportunity to make changes. We will probably hear in the next couple of weeks. There might be an addendum which would necessitate the committee meeting in December as changes to the plan would be due in January. Laurie asked the group to be thinking about where there is room for improvement in the plan. What opportunities do we have?

Agenda Item: Overview of state results (2020-2021)

Presenter: Stan Schauer

Discussion: Stan Schauer shared information about the NDSA cut scores. These can be found in EdPortal and TieNet reporting. Test items are based on North Dakota standards. Items do not hold the same value and they are reviewed for bias. There are only forty questions on the test. Participation rates were discussed. Stan stated the numbers were very good given the conditions schools were facing during the testing period. He did mention the state is missing some data which will affect the overall outcome.

Subgroups can be compared. The biggest subgroup is Native Americans (approximately 23,000). This group faced a big drop along with another subgroup. Only about one quarter of North Dakota's students are part of a subgroup. Stan reiterated he still considers the data to be usable. The participation rate for elementary was at 97% and the participation rate for high school was at 92%. These numbers are very good.

Proficiency levels: ELA 38%; Math 32%. These numbers indicated a drop in student achievement rates. If these drops had happened during a normal year, it would be cause for concern. There was a 5% growth in students in the novice level. This is good news. The Center for Assessment disseminated data on twelve states. North Dakota was at the lower end of the list of states who had a drop in scores. The drop in scores has been compared to the affect Hurricane Katrina had on test scores.

There was not much movement in student growth scores. Stan said we made a change to make the student growth measures truer measures. He feels this made a difference. Student ISR (individual student report) reports can be pulled per student. He feels these reports give good information and is underutilized. These reports should be shared with parents.

Science data should be available soon. In summary, Stan stated the pandemic created unprecedented conditions for schools. He feels that this calls for unprecedented

measures to counter the effects. He encouraged districts to use all of the tools at their disposal to make a difference.

Laurie Matzke asked whether any schools in the nation experienced growth. Also, did some districts have major drops? Stan stated some districts did have major drops but it was not accurately reported due to a lack of participation in testing. The results are not accurate. One of the participants commented that she feels positive because all students in the country were faced with similar circumstances so they should be in a similar situation as far as learning lost.

Kirsten Baesler stated that North Dakota has an advantage over other states because we are willing to look at reality and to use the resources available to us to make a comeback. Laurie Matzke discussed the ESSER funding and how some districts were doing phenomenal things in providing resources to students. She discussed the ESSER III application approval process and the NDDPI's report to the state legislature. The NDDPI will share the report with the committee once it is available. There are reports due in January, June, and December of 2022. She believes the Legislature will be making decisions on state funding based on how districts utilized ESSER funds.

Agenda Item: ACT for accountability update

Presenter: Bonnie Weisz

Discussion: Bonnie Weisz stated there have been changes to North Dakota Century Code. The state no longer requires all students to take the ACT or WorkKeys tests. However, the state will use these test scores for the state scholarship and Choice Ready indicators. Some districts use the ACT as an accountability tool. This number continues to increase. So far, 77 districts have indicated they want to use the ACT as their accountability tool. These numbers are initial numbers. Districts may make the decision to switch back to the NDSA test up until the testing period.

There is an online version of the ACT. By next year, the ACT will be strictly online. There is research to determine if the science section could be used for accountability measures. This could replace the science portion of the NDSA test.

90% of our juniors participated in the junior state test for 2021. The average composite did go down slightly. The largest decline was in math. There was an increase in the scores but a gap in subgroups. Bonnie anticipates there will be enough evidence about science testing for it to be moved to ACT. The question was posed about the use of keyboards for testing. Bonnie indicated they are working with ACT on the issue of whether iPads can be used for the testing. Bonnie indicated it is important to place students on a consistent method of testing. This is important for peer review.

Superintendent Baesler stated this will be the last year the ACT will be offered in a pencil and paper format. We are working with ACT to try to determine a consistent testing

platform throughout the state. Many of the districts use Apple iPads which ACT currently does not allow. There is a test window for each. There is much more flexibility.

Is there a possibility to mine the data for those who used the online platform to test? There was a decline in student performance. Bonnie stated this decline was across the board. Stan stated they will continue to push for the online testing platform for the NDSA.

Agenda Item: Public release on Insights

Presenter: Ross Roemmich

Discussion: Ross welcomed the group. He gave a demonstration on Insights and how to use the website. He highlighted data specific for a district or school. He also shared the accountability pie for Valley City Public Schools. Some of the components are: Choice Ready, On-Time Graduation, Student Achievement, Room for Improvement, etcetera.

Ross also went over some accountability calculation indicators. He also explained the issue small schools have with some data indicators. Due to their small size, some results cannot be posted publicly due to the possibility of students being identifiable.

Agenda Item: Monica Blomker presentation

Presenter: Monica Blomker

Discussion: Monica talked about the student engagement survey for the purposes of accountability. Monica focused on types of engagement reported on the engagement survey. There are distinct descriptions in the engagement types. The goal is to increase the number of engaged students and lower those that are disengaged. School points are earned by increasing the number of students committed across domains. There is no difference in the amount of points earned between engaged students and disengaged. A change would allow for differentiation between the different engagement types.

The theoretical implications are that it allows for a greater understanding of engagement types on the continuum. It also allows for a greater degree of differentiation. This change would also allow for a greater opportunity to register growth in the accountability model for disengaged, compliant, and committed. Monica talked about the ramifications of a different scoring method. The suggested scoring method is strongly correlated with the current scoring methodology. Cognia looked at data from different years and saw consistency between methodologies. The new methodology would not result in a decrease in scores. They would either remain the same or increase.

Rank orders could change under the new methodology. This is because of the differentiation between compliant and disengaged. TSI/CSI schools are not typically low performing in the student engagement indicators. Because rank order changes can occur, how would these schools be affected? When studied, only a small percentage would change rank due to the new methodology.

Asst. Supt. Matzke asked the group about whether anyone had clarifying questions about the suggested change to the accountability process. Joe Kolosky gave an overview of how the new process would work. Asst. Supt. Matzke summarized by saying the new system would give a small boost to the districts which had compliant students. Joe stated it would reward students for being compliant. Monica said the level of engagement is measured across all three domains which are reported. Asst. Supt. Matzke mentioned this change can be implemented without changes to the plan.

One committee member asked the question about how schools can affect students' mindsets about student engagement. Joe Kolosky mentioned that there is a wide range of information available on interventions in this area. Joe said he can provide resources. Monica Blomker stated there are instructional strategies and interventions available to affect different areas of student engagement. There is professional development on student engagement. Cognia is also developing a short guide which covers each domain of engagement and ways to facilitate stronger student engagement. Monica will check into a resource to be disseminated to the group.

The question was posed about whether this indicator is influential enough to spend significant time specifically addressing improving this indicator. Supt. Baesler stated that we are required to have one nonacademic indicator. The other option is attendance. She feels it was fortunate that student engagement was the indicator versus attendance during the pandemic. The question was posed about the timing of the student engagement survey. Joe commented the survey has been administered at different times and there is no optimal time. The January time was chosen due to various factors. Joe invited districts to reach out to him and Steve Snow to obtain data which might help them to increase student engagement. He stated it is difficult to find one stop shopping for increasing student engagement.

Sara Medalen stated she has done research on underperforming students. She said relevance seems to be a key factor in increasing student engagement. How can we make learning relevant?

There were comments supporting a change to the methodology regarding student engagement. For those that oppose the change, it was suggested that we remind ourselves of the purpose.

There was discussion about strategies to improve student engagement. It was questioned whether there is a strong correlation between engagement scores in schools and the achievement scores. Monica Blomker addressed this question by stating there is a tremendous amount of research tying student achievement to student engagement. State summative summits are not the most accurate assessments regarding engagement. We see stronger relationships in assessments that are more strongly related to classroom assessments. Longitudinal trends tend to provide a more accurate picture of survey outcomes. Year after year consistency will provide more accurate outcomes.

Supt. Baesler addressed the fact that the nonacademic factor is required and is 30% and nonacademic factors are harder to measure. The goal of this program is to produce well-

rounded, lifelong learners. While academic factors might not be matching engagement factors, we still are asking the question, is this a valid indicator?

One attendee stated he feels this is a very subjective measure. He also mentioned that some of the survey questions relate to culture. Is the survey measuring what we think it is measuring? The questions do not seem to measure what the schools are trying to measure.

Asst. Supt. Matzke stated this will be a continuing conversation. She suggested looking at changing the time of year the survey is administered. (Joe will discuss this issue with Cognia in their monthly meetings.)

Agenda Item: Overview of state results (2020-2021)

Presenter: Laurie Matzke

Discussion: Asst. Supt. Matzke gave an overview of the Choice Ready timeline. The 2018-2019 school year was the first year data was reported. Districts are not penalized for a bad year. It is just recording year after year growth. Asst. Supt. Matzke highlighted the importance of the essential skills section. She also highlighted the scores for the Choice Ready Data for the 2020-2021 school year and went over how schools obtain points. Accountability results were also summarized. Some of the low scores were due to user error which needs to be addressed. The NDDPI/REAs are hosting Choice Ready Workshops. This will show districts the Choice Ready report and give them ideas on how they can fund Choice Ready initiatives.

The NDDPI can provide more one-to-one support to districts. The NDDPI will also provide more resources and tools on the DPI website. Asst. Supt. Matzke stressed the importance of implementing the four-year rolling plan with each student. She also mentioned the new scholarship requirements. She stressed the importance of providing information on this to the field.

One member talked about the focus of the Coordination Council in making sure districts are filling out Choice Ready reports. Luke Schaefer recommended that districts reach out to him for resources and recommendations.

Agenda Item: Alternate Choice Ready Results

Presenter: Michelle Woodcock

Discussion: Michelle Woodcock is a special education regional coordinator. Michelle went over the Alternate Choice Ready chart. She explained some of the elements on the chart and Alternate Choice Ready data. She and Lea Kugel checked into why some of the Choice Ready results were lower than they had hoped. They discovered that some of the questions were not being completed.

Agenda Item: K-12 Education Coordination Council

Presenter: Shelby Hubach

Discussion: Shelby with Marzano Research holds the REL Central contract. They work with data. They support states on anything data-related. They have six long-term outcomes and are developing measurable goals for them. The process involved a core working group made up of five teachers. The focus of the group is to revise and/or approve goal recommendations. Each long-term outcome will be taken through the three-phase process to arrive at a goal recommendation. They have recommended three goals to the Coordination Council. The strategic committee will now become involved. They will now begin work on the next three goal recommendations.

Agenda Item: Alignment of scholarship with Choice Ready

Presenter: Jim Upgren

Discussion: Jim Upgren went over a North Dakota scholarship chart which aligns with the Choice ready chart. Jim has received feedback on the ASVAB score. The feedback suggests that students who are not able to get a 24 on the ACT will probably also not be able to get an ASVAB score of 85 or greater. He encouraged group members to send him related data.

Senate Bill 2289 aligns the new scholarship requirements to Choice Ready requirements. After 2025, the new requirements will be fully in effect. Guidance is in the process of being finalized. He hopes to have it out to the public in about a month. Jim stated that it is hoped the scholarship requirements will be able to be pulled directly from the Choice Ready report.

Jim stated the purpose of the North Dakota scholarship is to align with the strategic vision of students graduating Choice Ready. Every student that gets the scholarship will be Choice Ready, but not every student who is Choice Ready will get the scholarship.

Jim also went over the scholarship requirements which include a 3.0 cumulative GPA, a four-year rolling plan, and civics exam.

Jim went over post-secondary ready requirements. He feels the new requirements will be more flexible. He also went over the workforce ready requirements. He addressed the question of whether students may “double-up”.

Jim stressed the importance of districts providing as much information as possible when reporting military ready indicators.

A question was asked regarding ASVAB scores. Jammy Ryckman with the National Guard went over the areas which comprise the ASVAB score. He is working with MEPS to get some sample scoring data for the group to review. There are four areas which are graded. There are practice tests online. Many schools administer ASVAB tests. The counselors receive the data in order to formulate the student plans. Are there

opportunities for retesting? There are, but there is a 30-day waiting period. Students can contact a recruiter to do so. They can also contact a MEPS site coordinator. Mr. Ryckman went over the score ranges and gave an indication of what score ranges would qualify a student for in the military. Mr. Ryckman encouraged members to have counselors reach out to recruiters and MEPS staff for help in interpreting ASVAB scores.

Laurie asked for recommendations. None were given.

Agenda Item: Financial Transparency

Presenter: Greg Carlson

Discussion: Greg Carlson went over the Insights Dashboard. There are state-level and district level results. These are based on the submissions districts provide in WebGrants. The requirements differ on each of these, especially on the specifics, but it gives an indication on where the funding is. The reporting on this is due in December. ESSER II and ESSER III recipients need to explain how they are addressing learning loss.

Project goals are to develop education finance reporting in STARS which will be able to be viewed by school districts. He mentioned the STARS upgrade initiative. This will be in the analytics portal being developed by EdPortal. Steps are being taken to determine which information can be provided on Insights. Currently, only the ESSER funding information is being provided on Insights. There will be a financial reporting section in the analytics section of STARS. There will be expanded reporting on Insights. They intend to tie this to educational outcomes within schools. We will be working with the NDDPI and stakeholders in the field to develop strategies about how they will report this information to the field. This is a four-phase project. The user requirements have been completed. The data collection and design process is completed. They are about to begin the dashboard development phase. Greg highlighted data sources they are reviewing.

Agenda Item: English Learner Updates

Presenter: Lodee Arnold

Discussion: Lodee gave an overview of the long-term plan for English learners. The goal is for learners to attain English proficiency and to exit the program. It was decided to make the goal for proficiency five years. The exit criteria have changed. Students are tested in five domains. Lodee gave historical data on the EL exit rate.

Their interim goal for students each year is to grow and stay above their target growth trajectory. Lodee said the current measures are very black and white. They are considering changing the standards to account for growth which might not be displayed due to factors such as having a bad test day. At the next advisory committee meeting they will be looking at the data to potentially offer a points system. The suggestions will be provided at the next ESSA Implementation Committee meeting.

Testing results can only be used from schools which have tested two years in a row. Lodee went over questions to consider such as data points to use, whether to use a point-type system, etcetera.

Questions and Answers: Asst. Supt. Matzke mentioned that she thought North Dakota would be getting the addendum. Some suggestions for updates were: student engagement/climate (nonacademic indicator), add to the elementary pie (academic indicator), a possible reset for TSI/CSI schools. Asst. Supt. Matzke asked for suggestions from the group. She stated there is no master list of indicators. She also addressed the issue of a school climate indicator. The problem with this is that it is currently measured by a survey. They are currently looking into another way to measure it. Jim Upgren stated that some districts were using the Cognia student engagement survey and calling it a school climate survey. They are still looking at ways to measure school climate.

The comment was made the accountability system is used to measure which schools will end up in TSI/CSI status. The goal is to look at ways to change the accountability system. The system is supposed to identify schools which need support.

Are there other indicators which would tell district's the quality of their school? The comment was made that the Choice Ready program has been a game changer for North Dakota schools. It has led to a more robust measurement of school progress.

One committee member expressed concern that the testing at the elementary level is not an accurate indicator of what students have learned. She would like to see the system use assessment results that matter. Another committee member liked the idea of exploring more accountability pie measures.