

Minutes
State Board of Education Special Session
Monday, September 18, 2006

The Arizona State Board of Education held a Special Session at the Arizona Department of Education, 1535 West Jefferson, Room 417, Phoenix, Arizona. The meeting was called to order at 10:13 AM.

Members Present

Mr. Jesse Ary
Dr. Vicki Balentine (via telephone)
Ms. JoAnne Hilde
Superintendent Tom Horne
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Mr. Larry Lucero
Ms. Anita Mendoza
Dr. Karen Nicodemus (via telephone)
Ms. Cecilia Owen (via telephone)

Members Absent

Dr. Michael Crow
Mr. Bill Estes

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, MOMENT OF SILENCE AND ROLL CALL

1. GENERAL SESSION

Presentation, Discussion and Consideration of Proposed Modifications to AZ LEARNS School Accountability Formula

Dr. Robert Franciosi, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Research and Evaluation Section, Arizona Department of Education, presented the information provided in the materials packet, explaining the two modules to AZ LEARNS:

- New scale for evaluation of K-2 schools
 - Moving to new norm referenced test
 - Based on Terra Nova
- MAP
 - Elementary schools only; high schools do not get MAP points
 - 27 possible points
 - i. 18 points from status/growth
 - 1. 6 Math
 - 2. 6 Reading
 - 3. 6 Work
 - ii. Focuses on success of student passing AIMS
 - Measure of academic progress gives credit for students passing that move higher on the scale

Dr. Franciosi explained the logic used to arrive at this proposal which compares 2005 to 2006, measures the difference in growth, and gives credit for the progress made over the previous year, but proficiency doesn't matter. Dr. Franciosi noted that regression analysis had not been used prior to this.

Regarding the expected growth, Dr. Franciosi noted that the measured growth compared to last year's score, using regression analysis, draws a line through each point of scores and the slope of the line is the adjustment from where the student started and the scores above the line show the expected growth. The scores below the line show the adjustment which equals the difference between the two lines. He

noted that the higher a student starts, the lower the expected growth will be. He noted that MAP is the difference between actual and expected growth.

Dr. Nicodemus asked on what basis a school can earn greater than it earned in the past and Dr. Franciosi responded that a school in the 75th percentile on average earns 6 points. Ms. Mendoza noted that a student who is moving from one grade to the next could contribute negatively to the overall progress of the school due to the negative growth ratio in compared scores. Dr. Franciosi noted that the expected growth is based on the average recommended by the advisory committee and that the bar was set based on the average this year and will reward schools for making progress each year. Regarding whether the data is influenced by AIMS, Dr. Franciosi noted that the change in standards was posted last year and each year there is a new standard, with the expected growth based on statewide averages.

Ms. Mendoza noted special circumstances experienced by charters, small and rural schools:

- Smaller populations
- Not room for averages
- Not a normal bell-curved population, many times
- Many students are at-risk

Superintendent Horne stated that this is not a fair comparison for charters but that it will provide benefits as it measures progress after one year. He noted that the percent proficiency is unfair for those schools that are working with at-risk students and that his proposal is to increase the significance of MAP to show progress being made with at-risk students.

Ms. Hilde arrived at 10:47AM during this discussion.

Dr. Balentine asked about schools in the extreme high or low categories and whether the ADE is studying this type of school and whether there is a penalty or extra points for those schools.

Dr. Franciosi responded that the ADE is also interested in this issue but the analyses have not yet been performed.

Ms. Mendoza pointed out that a school may concentrate on a particular area where the scores were low and perhaps experience a lower score in a different area, which would make the school's average stay the same. She noted that this may skew the information that goes back to ADE and questioned what this might do instructionally and how this is addressed as nationwide trends in achievement. Dr. Franciosi explained that this was the reason the analysis was based on state averages, as there was no way of knowing what kind of growth was expected, and the averages could be based on the experience of last year.

Dr. Franciosi explained the process for measuring schools that don't have enough students, stating that the 2005 AZ LEARNS profile, without MAP points, was used to set the threshold so the schools would earn the same profile as schools with MAP points.

Dr. Nicodemus stated that there should be some basis on which this was originally set up and now we are doing something more favorable to districts, which looks like too much bonus work in a class and suddenly an "A" is more achievable than it was originally. Dr. Franciosi noted that the old MAP was based on the Stanford 9 rather than state standards and now it is more relevant, as getting more MAP scores says more about a school and recognizes the school's work.

Superintendent Horne noted that he had suggested no cap on the scores in order to get more than 8 points, which says a lot about a school. He noted that if a school is doing well and making progress the school should get more credit. He stated they were trying to be fair to schools that are possibly in poor neighborhoods that make more progress in spite of difficult situations.

Mr. Horne also clarified that a school's label can only be improved to performing and not higher and if the school is showing a lot of growth it will not need assistance from a Solutions Team. Dr. Franciosi

noted that last year was a stop-gap measure that no one was happy with and what is being done this year is not comparable.

Ms. Hilde noted that an over-emphasis of MAP is sending a message that says student performance is the same in any school and she challenged the truth in packaging, which could give the impression that “my child can go anywhere and be ‘performing’”. She noted that we cannot give this assurance and that we have to make sure the broad width of performing is understood. Dr Franciosi noted that this is a problem the formula has even without MAP, as progress can be shown by AIMS scores or student progress. Ms. Hilde clarified that for a school to be performing, at least half of the students have to have grade level competencies as measured by AIMS and Dr. Franciosi added that the growth component is tricky. He noted that 50% would make it difficult but there are schools that will be able to show improvement over the previous year and earn points. Ms. Hilde added that while she supports rewarding progress, her concern is that by rewarding growth we are telling people that everything is okay and it is not.

Dr. Nicodemus noted that the lay person’s and district’s understanding may differ but that we need to celebrate progress while being careful to show the differences in districts’ student population/needs. Superintendent Horne noted that school report cards are available online with school scores/labels, and added that a high performance during the year reflects good teaching.

Mr. Ary asked if representatives from schools affected by this scale (that have registered complaints regarding this subject) participated in the advisory committee and what happens to these districts in 2007. Dr. Franciosi responded that they receive feedback from schools in many formats and that the ADE will listen, respond and consider suggestions in structuring the formulas.

Dr. Nicodemus noted that the ELL form will need to be modified and that she is still uncomfortable with having the actual test results when looking at the formula. She noted that the formula should be set without seeing the end results first. Superintendent Horne responded that the formula should be set with impact data to eliminate unintended consequences. Dr. Nicodemus stated that she is concerned about the timing.

Dr. Balentine noted that the pilot data information should be seen by June as schools need to know up front what they are accountable for.

Dr. Cindy Ziker, Glendale UHSD, stated that the model should be explained, starting out with a hypothesis. She noted that at this time it is assumed that all students are going to grow, but with only two years of data, we don’t know if that is the case. She added that hierarchy, linear modeling should be used to show the grade level (showing how all students do in all kinds of schools) and model-fit statistics should be considered.

Dr. Ildi Laczko-Kerr, Scottsdale USD, noted that the most important component is clear, concise and immediate communication of this formula to schools. She noted that schools need this information for the following reasons:

- Will focus efforts where needed
- Need to know what impact underperforming students will have on the school
- Need to identify the students noted by the ADE
- Need to know if they can appeal
 - Schools are less likely to gain scores if already highly performing
- Need to know how to use data to be meaningful
- Need to see the standard measure of error

Dr. Joe O’Reilly, Mesa PS, noted that we are showing a gain through AIMS and that:

- Schools/principals need clear communication as to what they are being held accountable for
- ADE needs to make a strong effort to explain this process to schools
- Six months after the data has been collected it is distributed to schools and schools are being held accountable for this data

- We have several years of good AIMS data
- Some good steps have been made to date

In response to Mr. Ary, it was noted that two of the three previous presenters did not serve on the advisory committee.

Ms. Mendoza asked what the consequences would be if this formula was not adopted today and Dr. Franciosi responded:

- In 2005 the original intent was to be allowed to compare individual student level scores in Terra Nova and SAT 9 but the result was that this could not be done
- AIMS to AIMS comparisons could not be done since grades 4, 6 and 7 were not included
- National Advisory Committee suggested that the 2005 AIMS scores be converted to a norm referenced score and then compare that to SAT 9
 - This was done but did not produce satisfactory or meaningful results
- We are now in a stop-gap measure, which is not recommended to go back and do again
- A comparison between grades 3-8 would be possible in the proposal being brought today
- As alternatives, doing last year's would be nonsense, so going back to the pre-2005 to compare Terra Nova to Terra Nova would not be recommended as it puts more emphasis on a test that doesn't measure state standards

If the Board is still unsure, Dr. Franciosi recommended that the SBE approve today's proposal and give schools the option of getting the better of the points they would earn under this formula or what they earned last year.

Superintendent Horne noted that the reason this is not being recommended is that it would cut the number of underperforming schools down from the percentage this year to half the number and there would be schools in need of help that wouldn't be getting assistance, and therefore, the presented formula is recommended.

Mr. Ary asked if there is an implication that many of those schools that were in the non-conforming category before are now being enhanced to move to the "meets" category and Superintendent Horne responded that some schools will move up and others will go in the other direction. He noted that the impact of the formula yields a distribution that is reasonable, that is almost exactly the same as last year in terms of percentage of schools that are performing and underperforming.

Dr. Franciosi noted that schools can always move to a higher level but in some cases it could be based on two-year-old data. Superintendent Horne added that if we accept the proposal as it is presented, the percentage of students that are underperforming this year will be approximately the same as last year, which is a reasonable percentage, about 8-9%. He noted that this is a percentage the Department can work with and that the Department has the resources to do this. He also noted that if the formula is not adopted, it would cut the number in half, which they do not believe is a good thing.

Ms. Hilde noted that this feels like manipulation of data rather than a clear, concise statistical analysis.

Mr. Horne explained that a clear, concise analysis would be:

- If the Board does what is recommended, we would have 9% underperforming which is consistent with our history and reasonable
- If the Board lets schools choose the best of 2 years, which is not recommended because last year's data was a stop-gap measure that was not a good measure, there will be schools that need help but won't get it

Mr. Lucero noted the variability in people that schools are dealing with in the overall process and Mr. Horne further explained that if the student is not in school in the first 10 days, they are not counted. He added that the school is responsible for the student if the student had a full year of instruction but "churn" is not addressed.

Ms. Mendoza asked why we can't use a "meets the standard at a given grade level" as the expected growth and Dr. Franciosi responded that this is how NCLB measures, which is crude and unfair, and

that the proposed formula is more fair. Mr. Horne noted that this would be more unfair to schools with at-risk students.

Mr. O'Reilly noted that mobile students are included in the new MAP formula but the expected growth will be less.

Dr. Laczko-Kerr noted that if a student is mobile the district doesn't have electronic copies of the student's scores and asked ADE to release data at the same time MAP is released.

Mr. Yanez and Ms. Pollock pointed out that legal counsel would look into the ramifications of how this information should be released and Superintendent Horne added that the Department is willing to release the information.

Dr. Ziker noted that it is the assumption that a mobile student doesn't do as well but this assumption should be data-driven.

Ms. Hilde noted a thread of concern regarding the process by which this goes to the districts with full explanations:

- Some districts don't have the added staff to work with this information
- ADE needs to develop a dissemination plan
- Clarification is also needed regarding the legal issues around releasing the data (actual student data around the mobility question)
- The State Board needs a copy of the dissemination plan so members can answer questions posed to them from members of the public

Dr. Franciosi pointed out that Arizona is ahead of 47 of the 50 states in using this method. He also noted the following:

- Arizona principals are capable of using this method
- Technical manuals will be distributed
- Suggestions from the advisory committee are considered
- Frequently asked questions are available for the lay person
- The Department makes statewide presentations to make sure everyone understands the methods/system
- The Department will do anything to assist schools in understanding this process

Ms. Hilde noted that this is not a question of the intelligence of our administrative staff in Arizona but rather this is another change and the ability to value change rests with the process by which it is given. She added that another change imposed on school staff should be understood.

Ms. Mendoza also noted that the AZELLA data may incur some future changes.

Mr. Yanez noted that the proposed motion could be to accept both modifications to AZ LEARNS formulas for K-2 schools and the new Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) as proposed.

Motion by Dr. Balentine and seconded by Dr. Nicodemus to accept the proposal made for the K-2 Schools AZ LEARNS Evaluation Formula. *Motion passes.*

Motion by Dr. Nicodemus and seconded by Mr. Horne to accept the recommendations of the Arizona Department of Education modifications to the AZ LEARNS Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) formula. *Motion passes.*

2. ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Ary and seconded by Ms. Kramer to adjourn. *Motion passes.*

The Board adjourned at 12:00PM.