
June 13, 2016 Working Session Notes

Texas Commission on
Next Generation
Assessments and
Accountability

Created by Juli Fellows, Ph.D.

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Process Summary

Ten members of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability participated in a six hour facilitated work session on June 13, 2016. Members participating included Chair Andrew Kim, Theresa Trevino, Kim Alexander, Pauline Dow, Erika Beltran, Senator Larry Taylor, Representative Jimmie Don Aycock, Stacy Hock, Quinton Vance, and Maria Hernandez Ferrier. The group reviewed the 53 proposed recommendations and sorted them by level of agreement (see pages 8–10). Beginning with the recommendations that seemed to have the strongest support in the group, the commission worked its way through the list, resulting in 14 consensus recommendations and a long-term vision statement. The consensus decisions are listed below. Pages 3–7 describe the full discussion and alternatives discussed by the Commission.

Consensus Recommendations Reached on June 13, 2016

1. Limit state testing to the **readiness standards**.
2. Eliminate **Domain IV from the elementary** level. Keep it at the middle and high school levels.
3. Allow the commissioner of education to approve **locally developed writing assessments**. Results of these assessments would be reported to the state but not used for high stakes. There would be an expectation of transparency with both the state and the community to report these results. The commissioner could intervene or supervise if she/he feels that a district isn't doing well enough. All students should participate, but use stratified, random sampling for the basis of reporting(examine related models such as Sunnyvale ISD). The commission emphasizes that writing is critically important and the scope and quality of writing instruction at all levels should be expanded.
4. Develop an **individualized, integrated assessment system of multiple assessments and computerized-adaptive learning and testing with a statewide protocol** to give timely and useful feedback to students and teachers.
5. Conduct a study, using existing data, to test the **correlation between the results of stratified, random sampling and whole population testing**.
6. Make a recommendation to the State Board of Education to **streamline the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)** to create more depth in the testing protocol and ensure that Texas is testing the most essential knowledge and skills. In doing so, the commission acknowledges that the supporting standards must be taught in order to get to the readiness standards.
7. Add the **SAT and ACT to the list of Domain IV options**.
8. Fund, with state resources, a **broader administration of college readiness tests** (e.g., SAT and ACT).
9. Conduct a study **to explore replacing the state-developed assessment system with a nationally-recognized assessment** such as the SAT or ACT that aligns with TEKS.
10. Align the **state accountability system with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) accountability and reporting requirements**.
11. **Retain the Individual graduation committee (IGC) option** as allowed under Texas Education Code 28.0258. IGC provisions are set to expire September 1, 2017.
12. Conduct a **study of alternative, district-based assessment and accountability subsystems**, such as those being piloted in Coppell, Highland Park and Northwest ISDs. Move toward computer-based assessments and those that correlate with college and career readiness.
13. Encourage the commissioner of education to place **more emphasis on growth in Domains I through III**.
14. **Study** the potential effect of **weighting Domain I by the length of time that students are in the state accountability system**. Model this to better understand its consequences (both intended and unintended).

Long-term Vision

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We envision a mastery- or competency-based learning and assessment system that is self-paced rather than placing students in a particular grade based on their ages. Such systems exist now, especially the technology part. Our current assessment system shouldn't be an obstacle to reaching this vision.

Consensus agreements reached on 5/25/16

- For grades 3–8, districts should use multiple assessments geared toward growth that provide feedback early enough to be useful for instruction. Adaptive assessments are encouraged.
- Anchor next generation assessments to the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment and nationally recognized assessments, such as the SAT and ACT, and include assessments anchored to measures that are not typically used in higher education, such as the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).

Discussion of Proposed Recommendations

Options in bold text represent consensus agreements.

#1 (Limit testing to readiness standards)

- Question: Is this permissible under federal guidance?
- Answer: They are still adopting ESSA rules. However, based on the draft regulations, it is anticipated that federal requirements pertaining to what an assessment must measure are currently unchanged.
- If we test the higher standard, teachers will have to teach the supporting standards in order to get there.

#26 (Review of A–F)

- We can assume this will happen. There are multiple measures in each domain in the statute.
- It's an opportunity for more substantive work. Look deeper at the evidence of A–F to support learning.
- They just reviewed it.
- We want A–F to not just represent socioeconomic status. Perhaps adjusting by whether or not a school is over or under performing compared to its peers is a way to overcome this.
- We don't want "false grades" where everyone gets an A.
- Some other proposed recommendations involve changing the percentages for the domains.
- 47 and 48 represent a desire to not just represent socio-economic status but instead meaningful growth.
- We don't want to get this wrong and corrupt the system (cause unintended consequences).

Options Discussed

- a. Using a higher percentage for Domains I–III and eliminating Domain IV.
- b. Drop the lowest of the domains if a campus/district is closing the student performance gap or outperforming its peers.
- c. Each domain could have a minimum standard.
- d. Eliminate Domain IV from elementary. Keep it at middle and high school levels.**
- e. Give 80% to Domains I–III.

#27 (A–F each domain, multiple assessments)

- This is already in place.

#7, 8, 9, 10, 41, 43 (writing assessment)

- Don't mandate writing at the state level but mandate it at the local level.
- Writing is critically important and the scope and quality of writing instruction at all levels should be expanded.

Option Discussed

a. **Allow the commissioner of education to approve locally developed writing assessments. Results of these assessments would be reported to the state but not used for high stakes. There would be an expectation of transparency with both the state and the community to report these results. The commissioner could intervene or supervise if she/he feels that a district isn't doing well enough. All students should participate, but use stratified, random sampling for the basis of reporting. (Sunnyvale ISD may be a good model of this system. The group wants to emphasize that it feels that writing is VERY important and they want to expand the scope and quality of writing instruction at all levels.)**

#13 (Diagnostic assessments)

- A goal would be to get to a series of summative and formative assessments for grades 3–8, not just one day, one test.
- Getting real-time information back to teachers is very important.
- These tests could be locally adopted.
- Proposed recommendations 3, 13, 19, 39, 42 and 45 all relate to diagnostic assessment.
- Diagnostic assessments are done in the two benchmark tests.
- Multiple tests have multiple standards, so it would be very hard to compare districts.
- It's hard to measure growth without using the same test at pre and post.
- This is done in Minnesota.
- We don't need to invent our own tests. Could use the resources for school improvement.

Options Discussed

A. Multiple assessment statewide protocol with focus on growth. Option for computer-adapted but not required.

B. **Develop an individualized, integrated assessment system of multiple assessments and computerized-adaptive learning and testing with a statewide protocol to give timely and useful feedback to students and teachers.**

#24, 28, 29, 37, 38, 51 (Stratified random sampling)

- The challenge is sampling in smaller population schools— getting sample sizes for breakdowns.
- If the population is below a certain size, everyone's "in."
- The vast majority of our students are in large districts.

Option Discussed

a. **Conduct a study, using existing data, to test the correlation between stratified, random sampling results and whole population testing results.**

#44 (Limit adoption of TEKS)

- Is this within our purview?

- We addressed this in our discussion of readiness/supporting standards.
- Our goal is deeper, richer testing (more depth, less breadth). We want to give teachers more time to teach each standard.
- SB 313 (84th Texas legislature) to streamline TEKS didn't pass.

Option Discussed

a. Ask the State Board of Education to streamline TEKS in order to create more depth in the testing protocol and ensure that we are testing the most essential knowledge and skills. In doing so, we acknowledge that the supporting standards must be taught in order to get to the readiness standards.

#40 (Terminal assessment related to college/career readiness)

- We want to raise the bar to encourage more students to go to college.
- There's no current assessment with an active link to college/career readiness at high school level.
- Recent studies showed that 65% of students took the ACT or SAT and, of those 65%, only 25% were at or above the criterion.
- SAT/ACT is currently in Domain IV.
- Have the final level standards correlate to a national test.
- Should we continue down the road of Texas developing its own tests? We spend lots of money doing this. That money could be redirected to help improve instruction.
- If we use SAT or ACT, how will we align these to our curriculum standards?
- The current system doesn't terminate in something that is nationally recognized.

Options Discussed

- Move the protocol so that for K–12 we have a set of skills that help students gain access to “more” – whether college or career – that open doors for them. Don't use this as a criterion for graduation.
- Retie the current end-of-course exams (EOCs) in Domains I–III to something that is statistically correlated to national tests. Don't just give once in 11th grade. Don't require this for graduation. We're not saying to have an Algebra II EOC.
- Get EOCs that correlate to national tests.
- Use the SAT/ACT with a lower standard and require it for graduation (instead of our own EOCs, for example in math.)
- Increase the weight of Domain IV to motivate more students to get more than a HS diploma.
- Fund, with state resources, a broader administration of college readiness tests (e.g., SAT and ACT).**
- Add the SAT and ACT to the list of Domain IV options.**
- Eliminate EOCs and use national tests instead.
- Create a system where the termination is something that is nationally recognized.
- Conduct a study to explore replacing state-created assessment system with a nationally developed one (e.g., SAT or ACT) that aligns with TEKS.**

#36 (Align accountability and ESSA)

- Proposal #20 relates to this (using national civics exam instead of U.S. History EOC).
- Will #20 lower the bar?
- We currently have 118 standards in U.S. History to teach in 135 days.
- We don't want to add even more tests.

Options Discussed

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a. Align the state accountability system with federal ESSA requirements

- b. Integrate portions of a national civics exam into EOC.
- c. Increase rigor by using the U.S. History EOC for reporting but not accountability and require passing the civics portion of the naturalization exam for graduation.
- d. In the short term, limit state testing to the requirements of federal law; in the long term, remove the federal oversight and get standards we think are more relevant.
- e. Use other ways to measure student proficiency, including project-based learning.

#35 (Weighting by time in district)

- Our population is so mobile, we are holding districts accountable for students who've only been there a short time, say less than a year.
- Putting a greater emphasis on growth (from where the student started) would address this.
- Be careful not to create a nightmare for TEA. The accounting part of this might be very difficult.
- This seems like an overly complex solution.
- Currently the last Friday in October is now the cut-off for the Snapshot, so there are some mechanisms in place to deal with this.
- We want to avoid the temptation to only teach those students who are "accounted."

Options Discussed

a. Move the Snapshot date farther out.

b. Study the potential effect of weighting Domain I by the length of time students are in the system. Model this to better understand its consequences (both intended and unintended.)

#16 (Graduation committee option)

- We don't want this to be just a check-off point, but if we continue to require high stakes testing, this seems like a vital piece.
- You could report out the implementation of this (i.e., which students graduate as a result of this?).
- I'd want to know about outcomes—what happens to the students who graduate this way?

Option Discussed

a. Retain the graduation committee option allowed under Senate Bill 149 (84th Texas Legislature).

#4, 11, 12, 25 (Learning-based, formative, district-based assessments)**Options Discussed**

- a. Conduct a study of alternative, district-based assessment and accountability subsystems, such as those being piloted in Coppell, Highland Park and Northwest ISDs. Move towards computer-based assessments and those that correlate with college and career readiness.**
- b. Use recommendation #5 from the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium. There are current pilots of these models.
- c. List some examples of pilots, such as Coppell, Highland Park, Northwest ISDs. Continue this work.
- d. Encourage the commissioner to place more emphasis on growth (Domain II) over Domains I and III.
- e. Encourage the commissioner of education to place more emphasis on growth in Domains I through III.**

#32, 49 (Domain V)

- ESSA provides an option to use discipline data.
- You could add discipline data as an option for a distinction designation (positive motivation).
- Caution—we don't want to inadvertently drive administrators' behavior by this. Some teachers already feel administration doesn't support them sufficiently regarding discipline.
- This was a negotiation and compromise point in the legislative process. The goal was to acknowledge the positives, de-emphasize the weight of the tests.
- This would be good to report but shouldn't be part of the accountability system.
- We know some districts have trouble hiring certified teachers.
- In some cases, the most qualified person isn't the certified teacher. This should be under local control.

Option Discussed

a. Require schools/districts to report the number and percentage of certified teachers who are teaching in their field, the number and percentage of teachers who are fully certified, the number of teachers with more than three years of experience, and teacher retention rates. Use data to require schools/districts to ensure an equitable distribution of teachers.

#12 (Remove all high stakes)

- Remove all high stakes on students to pass at 5th and 8th grades mathematics and reading STAAR assessments.
- Pass five EOCs and meet curriculum requirements to graduate high school.
- Instead of this focus on national norm-referenced tests. This isn't a proposal for social promotion.
- There are concerns about passing kids on to the next grade and then they get even farther behind. If you can't pass grade 3 reading and math, how can you pass later ones?
- Don't want to go back to high school graduates who can't read. Don't want to go back to social promotion.
- If there are no stakes to the students, will it lower performance?
- Goal is to de-emphasize sanctions associated with the accountability system.

Our long-term vision

We envision a mastery- or competency-based learning and assessment system that is self-paced rather than placing students in a particular grade based on their ages. Such systems exist now, especially the technology part. Our current assessment system shouldn't be an obstacle to reaching this vision.

#14, 21 (Norm-referenced tests instead of STAAR)

- This is part of our recommendation for future study.

Initial Sorting of Proposed Recommendations

Recommendation	# indicating support as written	# indicating willingness to discuss further
1. Limit state testing to the readiness standards	6	0
2. Establish true learning standards -based state assessments	2	0
3. Use an individualized, integrated assessment system that is tied to the readiness standards and provides near real-time feedback to teachers and parents in a way that informs instruction and drives learning, while measuring individual student growth	1	1
4. Establish true learning-based assessments and require that each instrument used for accountability meet specific criteria	1	2
5. Limit state testing and its inclusion in the accountability system to the requirements of federal law	2	0
6. Expand the opportunities for innovation into alternative, district-based assessment and accountability subsystems	1	0
7. Eliminate the state writing assessment and require districts to formally assess writing through a locally-adopted process once in elementary, middle school and high school	2	3
8. Replace writing tests with portfolio or an assessment developed by Local Education Agencies that follows the iterative process of writing. For assessment purposes, districts must report writing results to TEA and publish them for their communities	3	0
9. Keep writing assessment and assess expository writing at state level; Transition to an authentic writing assessment but more frequent basis	0	0
10. Eliminate 4 th grade writing assessment ; Continue 7 th grade writing assessment	0	0
11. Provide districts state-funded technology -based formative assessments that districts may use to monitor student learning locally	3	0
12. Remove all high stakes on students from the tests	2	3
13. In grades 3–8, use diagnostic assessments that give timely and useful feedback to gauge how children are learning	4	1
14. In high schools, administer the PSAT/ACT equivalent in 9th or 10th grade or ACT/SAT/TSI , in lieu of EOCs , in 11 th grade to demonstrate how children are performing to satisfy ESSA	3	2
15. All tests must be age appropriate	2	0
16. Retain the graduation Committee option allowed under Senate Bill 149 (84 th Texas Legislature)	4	0
17. Consolidate High School state assessment of five EOCs to four exit-level assessments in ELA, math, science and social studies and make available the standards in each subject area tested to teachers		1
18. Align college readiness standards to state assessment in reading and math	2	
19. Contingent upon adequate and consistent network capability across the state, consider the use of computerized-adaptive testing, or tailored testing , for statewide assessments; In conjunction, consider multiple, "low touch" assessments throughout the school year to measure student growth	3	4
20. In lieu of a U.S. History end-of-course exam, administer the civics portion of the United States naturalization test to all 11 th grade students	2	1
21. In lieu of a STAAR exam, districts shall administer in eighth grade a valid, reliable, and nationally norm-referenced preliminary college preparation	1	2

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assessment instrument.

22. In lieu of required writing, reading, and math end-of-course exams, districts shall administer the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Test to all 10 th grade students.	1	1
23. In lieu of STAAR exams administered in grades three through seven, districts shall choose from a state-approved list of vendors to administer locally developed assessments . The vendors would share data with both the district and with the state.	1	1
24. Seek relief from the mandatory whole population testing requirements for grades 8 and 10.	1	2

Accountability Recommendations

25. Expand the opportunities for innovation into alternative, district-based assessment and accountability subsystems	2	1
26. The 85 th Legislature conduct a thorough review of both the positive and negative impacts of implementing a full scale A–F accountability system for the 2017–18 school year.	5	0
27. Provide A–F rating for each of the domains in the accountability system rather than one letter grade; Provide a multiple grading system as a profile	2	1
28. Continue to assess all students annually to comply with federal law but randomly sample student results for inclusion in the state accountability system for campuses and districts	1	1
29. Use stratified random sampling for accountability tests, and thereby “seek relief from the mandatory whole population testing requirements for grades 3–10” and derail our test-obsessed culture.	2	2
30. Do not use the state standardized test (STAAR) for the 2015–16 year for accountability	0	0
31. Remove middle school and elementary school accountability requirement from Domain IV	2	2
32. Reduce Domain V percentage to 5% of the overall calculation	1	3
33. Provide a campus and district profile report card with multiple measures reported rather than one measure for any one campus or school district	1	3
34. Retain distinction designations beyond 2018 as part of the state’s accountability system		1
35. As part of the state's accountability system, give a higher weight to the performance on state standardized tests of the students who have been continuously enrolled in a school or district for a longer period of time	2	1
36. Align state accountability system with federal ESSA requirements	1	2

Research/Other Recommendations

37. Begin modeling stratified, random sampling from past tests and future tests	2	1
38. Explore the use of stratified, random sampling whenever data are required to satisfy broad policy goals	1	2

Late Additions - Assessment

39. Adopt computer adaptive testing models (whether current STAAR protocol or national tools such as MAP: NWEA) that allow for more flexibility in testing protocol and shorter return time for assessment data thus making it more usable at the classroom, school, and district level. Administer these tests multiple times during the year (baseline and EOY if not mid-year as well).	3	1
40. Ensure that testing protocols end in a terminal assessment that has a significant correlation to college and career readiness; This could mean utilizing existing national exams as the terminal assessment for high school (SAT and/or ACT) or reinstating EOCs that have been statistically proven to have a high level of correlation	2	2
41. Eliminate statewide writing assessments and create a framework that	3	1

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requires districts to build authentic writing assessments and report that data locally		
42. Work in partnership with local school districts to develop state-wide standardized diagnostic assessments, interim Assessments, and summative Assessments Limit district- and state-level standardized test to these three assessments (limit district’s ability to administer additional benchmark exams throughout the academic school year)	1	0
43. Restructure, but keep writing tests	1	0
44. Require that the SBOE limit and narrow the adoption of TEKS to only those most essential	2	2
45. Integrate technology in assessments systems that allow for real-time feedback and monitoring of student learning	2	1
46. Add geometry EOC at High School; Add chemistry EOC but for reporting only; Make U.S. History report only; Change statute on EOC to ELA w/writing, Alg. I, Geometry, ELA II. U.S. History, Biology, and Chemistry will be for reporting only	1	2
Late Additions - Accountability		
47. Increase the weight of Domains I–III to 80% and eliminate Domain IV for ES ; Place the highest emphasis on student growth while crediting schools for maintaining student performance above established performance threshold correlated to college and career readiness metric (prerequisite is that assessment protocol is aligned to C+C as well)	3	2
48. Prescribe 50% of score on Domain I–III to growth	1	0
49. Include college enrollment and discipline trends as options to report in Domain V	0	0
50. Require schools/districts to report number and percentage of certified teachers who are teaching in their field, the number and percentage of teachers who are fully certified, the number of teachers with more than three years of experience, and teacher retention rates; Use data to require schools/districts to ensure an equitable distribution of teachers	1	1
Late Additions – Research/Other		
51. Research and test the use of stratified, random sampling for school and district accountability	2	0
52. Continue to invest significantly in assessment and item development to ensure we are testing critical skills	0	0
53. Provide a statewide report of school districts that have high academic achievement at a low cost and document best practices to disseminate across the state	0	1