

Technical Advisory Committee  
**Nebraska Department of Education**  
**December 4, 2013**  
**Cornhusker Marriott Hotel Lincoln, NE 8:30 am-3:00 pm**

**8:30 AM**      **Welcome and Introductions- Valorie**  
New Appointment to TAC  
Dr. Chad Buckendahl- Vita Included (Document 1)  
Reappointment to TAC  
Superintendent- Frank Harwood, Bellevue Public Schools

**8:40 AM**      **Approve Minutes of April 24, 2013– Brian** (Document 2)

**8:40-9:45**      **Update: Check for Learning- Jeremy** (Document 3)

Check 4 Learning [C4L] is in its third year of use with 176 districts that have signed the Memorandum of Understanding and use the system. NDE has also partnered with ESUs in order to support district efforts. The item bank will contain approximately 10,000 items by the end of the year. NDE provides this interim assessment tool for any Nebraska district but does not prescribe a specific type or frequency of use. Ultimately, NDE would like to determine effective ways in which Check4Learning system is being utilized by districts to improve student learning. NDE is partnering with Regional Education Laboratory Central [REL Central] to conduct a survey of districts and users of the Check4Learning system.

We are working together to determine:

- At what level C4L is managed in districts.
- The uses of the C4L system and the frequency of use.
- The uses of C4L data and the frequency of use.
- The structure of C4L professional development.

Project Timeline

- January 2014- Finalize surveys
- February 2014- Pilot the survey
- May 2014- Conduct surveys electronically
- June & July 2014- Analyze survey data

Check4Learning information and proposed surveys included as Document 3.

**Question:** *What input does the TAC have for content of the surveys? Are the data being gathered useful to identify possible districts with which to partner for further research?*

**9:45-10:00**      **Break**

**10:00-11:30**      **Nebraska Accountability - Valorie** (Document 4)

Accountability

Nebraska Statute 79-760-06 established a legal requirement for an accountability model

derived from NeSA scores, participation in NeSA and graduation rates. Based on the statute, the current NePAS system was adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education in August 2012. In 2012-2013 Nebraska legislative session, LB 438 was introduced and is currently On File. If passed in 2014 in its current form, LB 438 would move accountability to a model that combines multiple measures to determine levels of performance for schools and districts. The direction of discussion and/or action of the Nebraska State Board of Education and Nebraska Legislators suggests that NDE research best practices of accountability models in order to be prepared to effect change. Indicators considered for inclusion by the Nebraska State School Board Ad Hoc Accountability Committee are included as Document 4.

**Question:** *Looking at the indicators globally, does TAC see the indicators as a sufficient and effective collection for school/district accountability? Does the TAC have suggestions for indicators not included or see any inherent difficulties in suggested indicators and/or their measure? What guidance can TAC share on use of Median Student Growth Percentile [SGP] or Median Student Adequate Growth Percentile [AGP] or a combination of both? Can TAC share technical advantages of basing status and growth measures on scale scores versus percent proficient? What are the advantages or disadvantages of setting goals within an accountability system?*

**11:30-12:30 Working Lunch—Small Group Discussion (Document 5)**

Nebraska Department of Education is currently reviewing its accountability model-- NePAS. In addition, because Nebraska state statute requires a review of standards every five years, NDE Curriculum department has developed a plan for Nebraska Reading and Math Standards review. If Reading or Math standards are revised, NeSA tests will be reviewed for possible revision. We invite participants to hold discussions over lunch concerning their experiences with the current NeSA and NePAS systems through their work in the state and possibly in Nebraska school districts, the current atmosphere of testing and accountability in Nebraska and in the nation, and considerations to be included to provide effective leadership during times of transition. Proposed Schedule for Standards Review is included as Document 5.

**12:30-1:00 Input from TAC on transition**

**Question:** *What guidance can TAC offer to NDE that may contribute to smooth transition should the accountability model and/or state tests change?*

**1:00-2:45 Update: Nebraska Performance Accountability System [NePAS] - Valorie (Document 6)**

In November of 2010, the State Board of Education voted to approve the Framework of State Accountability that identifies the beliefs, values and purposes of such a system. In August of 2012 the Nebraska State Board of Education approved a policy to initiate an accountability system based on status, growth, and improvement, which are derived from NeSA scores, as well as participation, and graduation rate.

Four charts that include multiple indicators and rankings are provided for each school district, based on grade level configurations:

Chart 1: Grades 3-5

Chart 2: Grades 6-8

Chart 3: Grades 9-12

Chart 4: District

NePAS sample charts and Framework of State Accountability included as Document 6

**NePAS- A- Minimum Number- (Document 7)**

The decision was made to include in rankings any group with ten or more students. At some grade configurations in 2013, status scores for NeSA-Reading and NeSA-Math included 249 districts out of 249, which had enough students to be included in rankings. For NeSA-Science, which is administered in grades 5, 8, and 11, and in writing, which is administered in grades 4, 8, and 11, fewer schools are reportable for 2013 due to student numbers fewer than ten. Research on N is included as Document 7.

**NePAS-Question A:** *Given that a smaller N size is more variable, but includes more schools, what minimum N size would TAC recommend for inclusion on NePAS?*

**NePAS- B. NeSA Scale Score Growth- (Document 8)**

The Nebraska Board of Education has set simplicity as a priority for all elements of the accountability system. To that end, growth for individual students has been defined as the difference between this year's score and last year's score. The indicator for school accountability is the average of those differences for students enrolled in the school (matched sample). NeSA does not have a vertical scale; however the scale scores at every grade are set such that the range is 0 to 200 with 85 as the proficient cut score and 135 as the advanced cut score. Using the average of differences in scale scores across grades as a school accountability measure rests on the assumption that each scale score and difference score has a similar meaning across grades and specifically that a difference score of zero indicates roughly a year's growth. Research on growth is included as Document 8.

**NePAS- Question B:** *Given the Board's intentions and the NeSA data provided, are NDE's assumptions and use of difference scores as an indicator in NePAS reasonable? Does the TAC have suggestions for additional analyses?*

**NePAS- C.- Measure of Growth for NeSA-Writing (Document 9)**

The 2012-2013 NeSA- Writing testing window took place January 21 through February 8, 2013. The test engine on the writing test caused some formatting errors for students in grades eight and eleven. NDE received reports of considerable frustration on the part of some students due to the formatting. The on-line issue was not resolved over the course of the three-week window. For the evaluation of the essays, Data Recognition Corporation [DRC] created a training packet and trained the DRC graders for a "fifth domain," in which the essay evaluators indicated for each essay if a formatting error appeared. The "fifth domain" did not contribute to the essay's score but merely serve as identification of essays that had formatting errors. Graders were directed to evaluate

the essays without penalizing students for any formatting errors, and if any grader had a problem in evaluating a particular essay due to formatting errors to pass the essay to a team leader. "Presentation" is not a domain by which essays have ever been evaluated on NeSA-Writing.

Based on advice from the Technical Advisory Committee at the April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013 meeting, NDE made the following decisions:

- To release the NeSA-Writing scores for Grades 8 and 11.
- To indicate on the score release reports and on the State of the Schools Report that formatting issues occurred in the on-line engine at grades 8 and 11.
- To **not** include the NeSA-W status scores for grades 8 and 11 in Nebraska Performance Accountability System [NePAS].
- To **not** include the NeSA-W scores in improvement for grades 8 and 11 in NePAS for the 2013 State of the Schools Report.

Statement included on score release reports and on the State of the Schools Report

^ Students at grades 8 and 11 experienced formatting issues with the NeSA-Writing online test administration. While research into the score results does not indicate an effect on student results, it also does not assure there was no effect. Scores should be interpreted with caution and are not included in Nebraska Performance Accountability System [NePAS].

Summation of NeSA Writing results at Grades 8 and 11, NeSA Writing 2013 –Formatting Analysis (presented at April 24, 2013 TAC meeting), and NeSA Writing 2013-Formatting Analysis Update are included as Document 9.

**NePAS-Question C:** *What measure would TAC advise NDE use for improvement at Grades 8 and 11 of NeSA-Writing for the 2014 release of NeSA-Writing scores and State of the Schools Report?*

- *Scores from NeSA-W spring 2012 and from spring 2013?*
- *Scores from NeSA-W spring 2011 and scores from 2013?*

*Or would TAC advise NDE to delay inclusion of improvement for NeSA-W at Grades 8 and 11 until the spring of 2015, using 2014 and 2015 scores?*

**2:45-3:00**

Wrap up and next steps.

Dates for future TAC meetings

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