

Technical Advisory Committee Summary

Tuesday May 10, 2011

Cornhusker Marriott Hotel

8:30 – 3:30 PM

Present: TAC members: Brian Gong, Richard Sawyer, Wayne Camara, Linda Poole  
DRC/CAL staff: Ron Mead, Dave Chayer, Patricia Johnson, Dennis Ortman, Janet Hensley,  
Governor's Office: Matt Esch  
Consultant: Bill Auty  
State Board Member: Bob Evnen (PM only)  
NDE Staff: Bill Auty, John Moon, Jan Hoegh, Ted Larson, Ed Foy, Carla Osberg, Marilyn Peterson, Freida Lange, Roger Breed (PM only), Pat Roschewski

Absent: Dallas Watkins, Carol McClain, Donlynn Rice, Scott Swisher, Brian Halstead, Cheryll Wolfe

8:30 AM Welcome and Introductions  
Open Meetings Act – Pat

8:45 AM Approve Minutes (Document 01) – Brian  
*Richard moved approval of the minutes; Wayne seconded. Minutes approved.*

8:55-9:45 Update: 2011 NeSA Testing Window (Document 1 - will be presented at the meeting)  
Pat, Patricia

- *The final numbers of students tested were preliminary as the testing window ended on Friday May 6<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 122,000 of the 150,000 students were tested online in reading; 83,000 of the 150,000 students were tested online in mathematics and a similar percentage of science students were tested online. Preliminary data since test window just ended on Friday.*
- *The DRC customer service team indicated that the testing experience in general was very positive. A few districts had technical issues, but they were handled smoothly by the DRC/CAL teams. CAL reported that 96% of students who took the test were able log in and log out without any problems.*
- *The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of suggesting the "order of testing" within the window.*
- *In discussing possible steps to take to encourage more online testing the following suggestions were made:*

- *Direct communications with districts who tested paper/pencil to find out why they chose not to test online.*
- *Communicate to districts the advantages and disadvantages of online vs paper/pencil testing.*
- *A policy statement to move the districts toward online testing, i.e. "In three years, all Nebraska districts will be online." TAC members noted that both of the common core assessment consortia, SBAC and PARCC, have announced their intentions to sponsor primarily computer-based testing; if NE is considering possibly adopting a common assessment consortium product, it should plan how to have the required infrastructure in place.*

**Update: Standard setting (Document 3) – Pat, Ron**

- *The group supported the NDE plan to proceed with the standard setting process for mathematics as it had been conducted with reading but to think ahead to possible options.*
- *The group supported the fact that NDE had reviewed the contrasting group participants ahead of time for state representation.*
- *The group discussed using the 0-200 scale for both reading and mathematics. Among the considerations were the following:*
  - *NDE should consider the checking the rigor of the NeSA-M PLDs vs. the rigor of the NeSA-R PLDs.*
  - *The group cautioned that the interpretation of the same scale across subject areas might be misunderstood unless clear communication is provided.*
  - *TAC members suggested that the advantages of using the same scale for both subject areas outweighs the disadvantages, but that it is impossible to assure that more than one cut score points are the same for two different subject areas,, i.e. a single cut score point (e.g.,the cut score between "Below" and "Meets") could be made the same scale score value for both mathematics and reading, but because the standard setting might (likely) result in different "distances" between "Below,"Meets," and "Exceeds" between mathematics and reading, it is unlikely that the second cut score could be the same across content areas (and perhaps across grades) within a content area.*
  - *The group concluded that if possible and the data support it, the NDE should keep the same cut scores for reading and mathematics unless the data would not support it.*

9:45-10:00      **Update: Long Range Assessment Plan and Item bank reports. (Documents 03 and 4) - Jan**

- *TAC members supported the NDE plan to continue item development on an annual basis.*
- *A brief discussion was held on pre-and post-equating. The use of common items supports the process of pre-equating, and DRC indicated that post-equating may be used as well for operational equating, and that post-equating checks of pre-equating item parameter values were routinely done.*
- *TAC members thought the clarified report samples provided at the meeting will be helpful in NDE future planning.*

10:00-10:15      *Break*

10:15 -10:45      **Update: Mode comparability Study for mathematics (Document 5) – John, Ron**

- *TAC members commended NDE on the improvement of the study in comparison to the one done in reading.*
- *Members suggested that since the choice of testing mode appears to be not a student characteristic but rather a school level decision, NDE might consider using a method (Hierarchical linear modeling ) that would allow the school effects to be separated from the student characteristics.*
- *TAC members suggested the NDE might use the results from another external student performance measure in the comparison to address the critical issue that students are not randomly assigned between “treatment” conditions (paper and pencil and computer administration). A TAC member suggested investigating using NE reading results as a possible covariate since no common mathematics external measure is available in the state for mathematics at this time.*
- *It was suggested that additional numbers of students be added to the study and perhaps fewer grades.*
- *The NDE should be prepared to Investigating address mode issues if results support an interpretation that there are systematic, significant differences in student performance between modes. Because this study is intended to determine where there are score*

*differences due to mode and not whether the scores are appropriate (i.e., finding a difference doesn't say whether the higher scores were correct, the lower scores were correct, or both), if differences are found, additional validity studies might be planned.*

**10:45-11:45      Update: NeSA-Writing Discussion – Next Steps (Documents 6, 7 8, 9) Pat, Ed**

- *The group discussed the rationale for changing the two day writing process in grades 11 and 8 to a one day process. Input had been gathered from the field, from the TAC, and from discussions with DRC before that decision was made.*
- *The overall administration of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade online writing went well. The technology glitches that did occur will be solved and the dictionary/thesaurus will be replaced with a better version.*
- *The TAC discussed the results of the survey regarding 4<sup>th</sup> grade writing. Based on the results, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade NeSA will remain paper/pencil and will continue in a two day format.*
- *The TAC suggested that the writing Performance Level Descriptors should be revisited as part of the 2012 standard setting for writing.*
- *The TAC discussed the proposed 200 point scale for writing. Two TAC members recommended a smaller scale because of the relatively small number of possible (32) score points in only one prompt. If the writing test had the same 200 point scale as the reading and mathematics tests, users might incorrectly infer that the measurement precision for writing is similar to that of reading and mathematics. With one prompt, writing will likely have considerably less measurement precision. DRC was asked to generate possibilities for a smaller scale from the 0-200 based on running the distributions from this year's data and provide the NDE with a new scoring plan.*

**11:45 – 1:15      Lunch -    Begin Discussion of the “Check 4 Learning” System (Documents 10,11,12)**

- *The TAC stressed the importance in deciding on the reports that would be generated from the Check 4 Learning system. Item analysis reports will be among the reports that will be helpful to teachers instructionally. This is especially important to help identify which reports NDE is likely to be able to stand behind, and which will need to be supported by local work. For example, many interim and formative tests constructed by a teacher or local unit from the item bank may not have very good technical properties, or may lend themselves to*

*misinterpretation. It is also likely that NDE will be able to identify several reports that many districts would like, and thereby develop those reports more efficiently than each local unit developing the report independently.*

- *TAC members discussed the kinds of procedures and supporting materials that would need to be generated, e.g. security, appropriate item use, directions for building tests, etc.*
- *The group discussed possible uses for the system: instructional improvement, test preparation, prediction, etc.*
- *It was suggested that the NDE develop a guide for districts such as “How to Most Effectively Use C4L.”*
- *It was suggested that NDE develop an “egoless” item development process --- no identification of the item sources.*

1:15-1:30      Break

**1:30-3:00      State Accountability Model (Documents 13,14,15) – Pat, Bill**

- *Members pointed out that 12% of the weight of the model is based on growth; the larger portion is based on status factors.*
- *The TAC discussed using a continuum, or a continuous scale for the performance indicators, rather than an index. This could result in a higher level of precision and perhaps more reliable accountability decisions.*
- *The group suggested weighting the performance indicators. It is important to be able to understand and explain the rationale for each indicator and its weight.*
- *It was suggested that the subcommittee move forward and operationalize the chosen model and then make adjustments later based on data.*
- *The plan currently is to bring before the whole board a motion to agree upon the status indicators, publicly report the indicators in a chart for each building and district in the fall of 2011, and then continue to study growth options.*
- *TAC members suggested moving growth into the model as quickly as possible, as opposed to waiting for three years, as is recommended by some.*

- *Caution should be exercised regarding use of labels, as confusion may occur with overall classifications of buildings.*
- *The TAC reminded the group that it is important to think about what will happen as a result of being placed in a lower category --- is one lower category adequate?*

3:00-3:30      Wrap up and next steps

- The TAC commended the NDE for the progress made since the last meeting and the forward thinking in the upcoming months.

Next meeting date – **Wednesday November 2, 2011 – Embassy Suites – Lincoln, Nebraska**