



## Achievement & Accountability Workgroup (AAW) Feedback Report from the December 9, 2013, Meeting

### Overview

During this AAW meeting, members discussed English Language Learner (ELL) topics in relation to accountability, discipline data in relation to accountability, and survey data in relation to accountability. AAW members listened to the following presenters:

- Mr. Ben Rarick, SBE Executive Director, on the California CORE accountability system
- Dr. Paul McCold, OSPI Data Analyst, on Former-ELL data analysis
- Dr. Andrew Parr, SBE Senior Policy Analyst, on Former-ELL data analysis
- Dr. Deb Came, OSPI Director of Student Information, on discipline data
- Ms. Amy Liu, LEV Policy Director, on discipline policy issues
- Mr. Jake Vela, LEV Policy Analyst, on discipline policy issues
- Dr. Pete Bylsma, Renton School District Director of Assessment and Student Information, on the use of the Educational Effectiveness Survey in the Renton School District

Each AAW member had the opportunity to review and contribute to this report prior to publication.

### Executive Summary

During group discussions, AAW members provided input on:

Discussion Topics on ELL in Relation to Accountability	Feedback
How can we use Former-ELL assessment data to measure the progress of ELL students/programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority: Former-ELL data can be used to check if students are successful after exiting the ELL program and follow up on the long-term outcomes for ELL students</li> <li>• Concern that ELL and Former-ELL students face the greatest challenges in middle school</li> <li>• Concern that dropouts are not captured in Former-ELL</li> <li>• Two AAW members would like to see a Former-ELL versus Ever-ELL analysis with proficiency and growth, would also like to see ELL and Former-ELL disaggregated by elementary, middle, and high school</li> </ul>
What factors should be considered for creating the criteria for the English language acquisition award?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority: against only using language acquisition</li> <li>• Majority: supports the award if content acquisition is also included and growth should be used for that</li> <li>• Minority: long-term outcomes for students after they exit ELL should be used for the award (i.e. graduation, dropout rate)</li> </ul>

	<p>after exit, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minority: take percentage of ELL students in a school and the poverty level of a school into account</li> </ul>
What would be the unintended consequences of an English language acquisition award?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that penalizing bilingual schools that teach both language and content acquisition if only language acquisition is used</li> <li>• Concern that the focus of a language acquisition award would be on exiting the students from ELL rather than teaching them the content they need to graduate</li> </ul>
How best to avoid mixed signals where award recipients may have low Index ratings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority: use growth</li> <li>• One AAW member prefers an overall report on successful ELL students/programs rather than an award</li> <li>• One AAW member prefers that we don't give out awards</li> </ul>

Discussion Topics on Discipline Data in Relation to Accountability	Feedback
Is there a role for discipline data in accountability systems? If so, what is the role for it? At the state-level for ESSB 5491? At the school-level for the Achievement Index?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority: strong concern about the exclusion of students who do not pose a safety risk</li> <li>• Majority: discipline data is useful in the local management of schools but not state-level accountability</li> <li>• Minority: discipline data should be used for state-level accountability</li> <li>• General agreement: concern over the disproportionality of disciplinary actions in the "other" category</li> <li>• One AAW member stated that discipline data at the district level would be formative and at the state level it would be summative</li> </ul>
In an accountability system, how do you measure improvement or decline in the discipline indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close the gaps, reduce disproportionality</li> <li>• Improvement/decline in discipline rates over time</li> <li>• One AAW member suggested the comparison of in-school to out-of-school suspensions</li> </ul>
What are the unintended consequences of using discipline data in accountability systems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One AAW member was concerned about the use of too much data</li> <li>• Minority: an attempt to reduce discipline rates would result in a lack of disciplinary action in response to behavior</li> </ul>
Other Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General agreement: behaviors that do not pose a safety risk should be dealt with using alternative responses rather than out-of-school/exclusionary suspensions/expulsions</li> <li>• Majority: this is new data and it should be studied</li> </ul>

Discussion Topics on Survey Data in Relation to Accountability	Feedback
Is there a role for non-assessment data in accountability systems? If so, which non-assessment indicators and how would they be used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority: survey data are useful for internal district or school planning, but should not be used for external accountability</li> <li>• Minority: survey data should be used for accountability</li> <li>• General agreement: surveys are useful for collecting data on habits of the mind or twenty-first century skills that are useful for the workplace</li> <li>• General agreement: survey data allow for student voice</li> </ul>
What are the limitations of using non-assessment data for accountability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One AAW member stated that survey data are only useful if there is a plan to use the survey data</li> </ul>

In addition to the planned AAW discussions, five people made comments on special education issues. Their comments urged that stakeholders listen to the special education community and address the unique, usually complex, needs of special education students. They stressed the need for cultural competency when dealing with special education students. They stated that research shows that a large proportion of special education students can be expected to perform at a similar level as their All-Student peers. They stated that the level of performance of special education students varies based on the category of disability. However, they cautioned against setting different levels of expectations based on the category of disability. Throughout the comments, they offered their own experiences with the school system as parents and advocates of special education students.

#### **AAW Feedback on ELL in Relation to Accountability**

AAW members were in general agreement that a language acquisition award should not be based on only English language acquisition. There was strong concern that ELL students need to understand the content, not just the language. AAW members noted that schools with bilingual instruction are using a successful practice to teach both the academic content and the English language. Two AAW members felt that the language acquisition award would penalize schools that offered bilingual instruction. AAW members felt that the language acquisition award would send the wrong message by placing emphasis on exiting students from ELL programs rather than providing the support that ELL students need to understand content. AAW members suggested, and showed strong support for, the use of growth in addition to language acquisition for an ELL award. Three AAW members wanted the award to be based on the long-term outcomes of Former-ELL students (i.e. graduation rate after exiting ELL or dropout rate after exiting). Two AAW members requested that, in addition to recognition, the award be used to replicate the successful strategies in the award-winning school. Two AAW members wanted to know how much this achievement award would cost and indicated that the money may be better spent on other system improvements, including one suggestion to do a data-informed report on ELL students/programs.

After hearing that proficiency of Former-ELL students was, on average, higher than the All-Students group, two AAW members were concerned that the Former-ELL subgroup does not capture dropouts

and, therefore, may show unrealistically high proficiency. AAW members demonstrated strong concern that ELL and Former-ELL students face the greatest challenges in middle school. There was general agreement among AAW members that the long-term outcomes for ELL and Former-ELL students should be examined.

#### **How can we use Former-ELL assessment data to measure the progress of ELL students/programs?**

- “It demonstrates whether ELL students are successful after having received services.”
- “Very carefully.”
- “High schools will most likely have the largest numbers of former-ELLs – graduation rates of Former-ELLs, access to AP are important criteria.”

#### **What factors should be considered for creating the criteria for the English language acquisition award?**

- “Both language acquisition and academic growth.”
- “Should be both English and academic content and measure growth in both places.”
- “Congratulations, tell story of exemplary program.”
- “Do we have enough data to also measure growth?”
- “Differentiate the percentage of ELLs in a school. Poverty Level of school. Success of Former-ELLs in academic tests.”
- “Should find a way to honor schools that provide bilingual instruction and allow students to develop and administer their 1<sup>st</sup> language. For example, include in the measure points for students who acquire HS credit in a world language in middle or High School.”

#### **What would be the unintended consequences of an English language acquisition award?**

- “What is the message in rewarding language acquisition in the absence of that translating into academic performance (growth)?”
- “Take into account system resources.”
- “Letting people believe that it serves the needs of the students for entry into the real work / the issue of real access.”
- “English only, schools with larger percentage of ELLs may be penalized. Dual language schools may feel penalized.”
- “Through coursework or competency assessment.”

#### **How best to avoid mixed signals where award recipients may have low Index ratings?**

- “This is a tough one; but it seems like schools who are making substantial growth in any subgroup should be recognized.”
- “Use growth data.”
- “Don’t do awards.”
- “We would be better served by having a more overall report on what test data indicates rather than a mere award vs. punishment system. Better example: where are we doing well vs. where can we do better – not just percentages.”
- “Schools with high percentage of ELLs and poverty will most likely not receive awards if this is an issue.”
- “Include growth in the measure.”

## **AAW Feedback on Discipline Data in Relation to Accountability**

AAW members expressed interest in the correlations between disciplinary action and life outcomes and the disproportionality of discretionary suspensions/expulsions among subgroups. However, AAW members had mixed responses on whether or not discipline data should be included in an accountability system. Some AAW members felt strongly that discipline data should be used for state-level accountability. Other AAW members felt that summative state-level discipline data would be useful for raising awareness of disproportionality, but that it should not be used for state-level accountability. Some AAW members questioned the quality of the data and believed that it should be studied further before being considered for use in accountability. The majority of AAW members felt that the discipline data was important for local management of schools.

There was strong concern among AAW members about the exclusion of students from school for behavior that did not result in a safety risk. Several AAW members noted that the loss of instructional time due to exclusionary disciplinary action results in a loss of learning and negatively effects life outcomes. There was agreement that kids who are unsafe – threatening lives and safety – should be excluded. For behaviors that were not a safety risk, there was general agreement among AAW members that alternative responses (disciplinary options or resources) that involve in-school disciplinary action should be made available to teachers. One AAW member suggested a comparison of in-school suspensions to out-of-school suspensions. Three AAW members felt that it is important for teachers to be able to use disciplinary action to control the behavior of students in their classrooms. There was general agreement that professional development is needed for instructors so that they were appropriately applying disciplinary action. In particular, there was general agreement that cultural competency training is important to reducing disproportionality of disciplinary actions.

AAW members noted that many disciplinary actions are often taken by particular teachers or administrators or schools. When rolling the disciplinary actions up into a summative indicator, one could lose the message that a few teachers or administrators are taking many disciplinary actions while others seldom take disciplinary action.

### **Is there a role for discipline data in accountability systems? If so, what is the role for? At the state-level for ESSB 5491? At the school-level for the Achievement Index?**

- “I think it should be studied further for its correlative value.”
- “Not part of Achievement Index, should only be used by districts to help direct work.”
- “State-level, strikes me that local data are formative, state data are summative.”
- “Not sure how I feel about this. I think it would be great to know what districts are doing to provide services to students who have been expelled – what is intake (re-entry to school) process – how can a student be guided not to re-offend? What are the success rates of programs or interventions?”
- “Yes, I think the role for discipline data is at the state and district level, but used for accountability primarily at the district level. Its use at the state level is for trends and awareness (perhaps in the accountability dashboards).”
- “Proportionality and common sense need to be considered. Feels like this is critical indicator for management at school and district level that could help understand differences in discipline levels, but I can’t see how this gets included in accountability system.”

### **In an accountability system, how do you measure improvement or decline in the discipline indicators?**

- “Close the gaps”
- “By having clear, broken-out indicators. The clear indicators will allow you to see trends over years in terms of improvements/decline in rates.”
- “Compare schools to themselves – look at improvement over time.”

### **What are the unintended consequences of using discipline data in accountability systems?**

- “Can alter the focus of what needs to be attended to – so managing too much data”
- “1. A focus on “soft skills” more than academic skills. 2. Lack of disciplining by schools. 3. A rise in cultural insensitivity – due to peanut butter spread of discipline responses”

## **AAW Feedback on Survey Data in Relation to Accountability**

AAW members felt strongly that habits of the mind and twenty-first century skills are very important for students to be prepared for the workplace. AAW members were interested in the student voice that is heard through motivation, engagement, and culture and climate surveys. There was general agreement that survey data were useful and worthwhile at the district level. However, there was only minority support for using survey data in accountability. The majority of AAW members felt that internal use of surveys in schools or districts was preferable to external use of surveys for accountability. One AAW member suggested that the surveys be required for Focus Schools. One AAW member stated that the surveys will only be useful if there is a plan for how to use the results.

### **Is there a role for non-assessment data in accountability systems? If so, which non-assessment indicators and how would they be used?**

- “Not in accountability Index, but only for districts to use for internal improvement”
- “Absolutely – stuff like habits of mind are an expectation of students that people are expecting”
- “Without having an idea of what this might be or look like, I don’t feel like I have an opinion on this topic. Students need “soft” skills. How to measure, not sure.”
- “Yes, development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills is essential to student success in further education or career. I would prefer to see if an “off the shelf” assessment for this exists. However, the assessment shown today would be easy to add to existing assessment system (like SBAC) because it is very short.”

### **What are the limitations of using non-assessment data for accountability?**

- “Interpreters/analysts need to share lenses – and authentic voices that can shape real opportunities for engagement/learning.”
- “Fits in for overall improvement plan but may or may not fit as an accountability metric.”