



ESSA IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

ESSA Subcommittee Meeting – Standards, Assessments, and EL

Date, Time: Friday, July 22, 2016, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Location: 135 South Union Street, Suite 215

ALSDE Facilitator: Sandy Ledwell

Members present: Matt Akin, Frank Chestnut, Pamela Fossett, Walter Gonsoulin, Krissie Allen

Members absent: none

Summary: A review of workgroup meeting #1 was presented. A discussion of 8th grade math assessment options, district high school assessment options, and standards were topics covered during this workgroup meeting. The meeting included a presentation on the review process for Alabama's Courses of Study (COS). The subcommittee was asked to review the COS process and also determine if Alabama's standards meet the rigorous requirements required by ESSA.

Handouts:

Extended Standards: <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Pages/extendedstandards-all.aspx>

Courses of Study: <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/Pages/cos-all.aspx?tab=All%20Stds/COS>

Curriculum Guides: <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Pages/curriculumguides-all.aspx>

Next meeting: Thursday, August 18, 2016, 1p.m. – 3 pm., 135 South Union Street, Suite 215

Detailed Notes

All notes below are comments with committee members and the ALSDE facilitator.

Goal: Make recommendations on standards and assessments.

Will 8th graders taking Algebra I be allowed to take a different assessment than other 8th grade students? What assessments do 8th grade students take now?

- Question posed: Is the proposed assessment for Algebra I to be used to benefit students, or is it needed for informational purposes? Answer: This is a test for data reporting. A complication is that we don't know if it will be an 8th grade Aspire test or an End of Course test (EOC). The decision will be made based on the recommendation of the ESSA subcommittee.
- Flexibility question about Algebra I: High school students do not take an Algebra I End of Course test; therefore, it would have to be decided which EOC test for Algebra I would be used for 8th grade students.
- In the current setting, 10th grade students take the Aspire, but it is not aligned to the math course they are taking.
- Do states have the flexibility to develop their own middle school criteria?
- It was noted that students take Algebra I in 8th or 9th grade.
- Why do 8th grade students take the Aspire test and 9th grade students do not? 8th grade must test by ESSA plan -- The state did not determine which grades are tested, those are federal regulations. The SDE plans for the type of test (nationally benchmarked) and provides the funding for those tests.
- **The subcommittee is recommending flexibility in testing for 8th grade by allowing Aspire or an alternate assessment. That gives systems the flexibility. However, the flexibility must be consistent system wide and cannot be decided at the school level.**
- If districts choose the EOC option, would all students have to take the same exam (even if students did not pass the course)? It was stated that the assessment would most likely come from a state suite of assessments. **ALL subcommittee members agreed with this statement because SEA identifies high quality assessments for reporting on student achievement.**

SDE is charged with identifying nationally recognized high school assessments. These assessments are to be used as a measure of success for high quality rigorous assessment. The SDE will identify a list of nationally recognized high school assessments. It is recommended that districts be able to select from the state list, but the entire district will choose the same test to administer.

- It was noted by a committee member that there was a lot of flexibility for choosing this assessment. The intent is that the entire district will choose the same test.
- The regulations for ESSA are still up for public comment until August 1, 2016. They will be finalized after August 1.
- **The subcommittee recommends allowing districts the flexibility to choose from SDE identified, nationally recognized high school assessments.**



Goal: Make a recommendation to assure that we have adopted challenging academic standards and aligned academic achievement standards.

Overview of presentation by Michele Matin on Alabama's standards:

- Establishment of Course(s) of Study (COS) committee:
 - Credentials of Course of Study (COS) committee members are checked to ensure that all who are on the committee are qualified. School systems nominate members. Care is taken to ensure that members meet criteria set forth in the code. On occasion, there are gaps in content. If this happens, a task force is selected. Not only is this committee defined by law, the legislature issues a charge. Each committee has content and process specialists. Michele stated that 28 members were on the committee – 21 plus the Governor's appointments. The current committee is made up of 34 members to ensure that the gaps in content are resolved.
- Goals were shared to show how content standards are developed and how attention is given to making standards challenging and to ensuring vertical and horizontal alignment. The committee researches current courses of study, national standards, and other states' standards.
- Examples of vertical alignment, trajectories, and rigor from the May COS meeting were shared. The COS development process takes a year – publicity on website, developing of standards, publicizing standards for review, approval of SBOE, etc.
 - Math example for what occurs in the process: The grade 4 standard from 2003 asked students to measure, and in grade 5, to calculate. Now, the standards requires measuring, calculating, and applying.
 - Another example from Algebra: The Algebra I standard in 2003 just said solve graphically or algebraically and include two variables. The standard now says create the equation, graph, etc. in two or more variables.
- Do the standards address reading a tape measure/ruler? Many students/graduates applying to jobs cannot read a ruler. Michele said that the standards say that students should be able to apply measurement fluently and that teachers should pay attention to fluency.
- It was noted that new COS ensures the rigor. Michele shared the schedule for courses of study. She also referenced Alabama code that the standards are reviewed every other year. Alabama has been reviewing math and ELA every year since the last adoption.
- A page from the most recent review was included. The process is simple for someone to request a change to the standards.
- March 30-31, 2016, the COS committee discussed the public comments. The committee asked if changes have been made based on comments. Michele said that changes had been made based on some recommendations. Michele explained the process with committee members each having an individual review of the comments. Once individual committee members have made their own recommendations, the committee meets to make decisions. The committee also meets in grade bands. Each group comes to consensus. Recommendations are only accepted if they meet consensus of the whole group.



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- The COS document is posted for review in January and up for six weeks. During that time, the public can make comments. After public comment is close, each member gets the document for one week, and then the committee meet as groups. If changes are recommended, the amendment is submitted to the Alabama State Board of Education (SBOE) for approval.
 - There was a question concerning national standards. Michele said that all content-specific professional organizations are considered for content. It was also added that other publications/research are consulted – best practices, teaching practices, etc. This process is just for math and ELA.

This committee is charged with deciding if rigorous standards are needed for other subjects. The decision for this committee will be to determine if Alabama has challenging academic standards in place. If so, the committee can accept the standards (process and product) that we have in place. If the committee determines that the standards are not rigorous and recommends changing the process, some pieces will need to stay in place due to laws.

- It was stated that balance is provided by the Governor’s appointees. Alabama has a long way to go. It was recommended to accept the current process and standards.
- It was added to the discussion to look at the reality of the ELA standards. It was clarified that acceptance would mean that standards remain on a six-year cycle with yearly revision.
- Question posed as to how stakeholders are informed of COS changes. Michele clarified that comments go to a committee chosen by superintendents, Governor, etc. The committee makes a recommendation to keep standard(s) or make a change. If changes are made, revisions go to SBOE in work session and board meeting. A full presentation is made at the work session prior to the SBOE’s vote.
- How do teachers/parents receive a new COS document? It was stated that COS are now posted online. When changes are made, the new COS is posted online. The effective date of the COS will be on the adopted/updated COS document, and only the most current Courses of Study are viewable on the website.
- Are the current assessments (Aspire and ACT) aligned to state COS standards? Additionally, were standards adjusted to ensure alignment of standards? If COS is updated, will assessments be updated?
 - Sandy directed the ESSA subcommittee back to the question – is the subcommittee satisfied with the standards, or would they like to recommend a different process/standards? Michele also mentioned intentional efforts of SDE to be inclusive of all districts—makes a lot of phone calls to ensure representation.
- Decision was to recommend that Alabama provide documentation that rigorous process and standards are in place. There is a concern about rigor and review. There is a review of the standards each year. It is a concern that real input is not solicited by this process.



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- Does a person get feedback from the comment submitted? Michele noted that this process gets thousands of comments and that feedback is impossible. It was a concern of the ESSA subcommittee that real input was not solicited by the current review process. The facilitator asked if the recommendation of feedback could come under the operations section of the SDE to ensure that the public allows greater input.
 - Does the committee have adequate time to consider comments? Is there an opportunity for the public to see the resolution of the comments? Michele said that this would be a decision of supervisors and that she had documentation of all committee decisions. There is a request for a more transparent way to review comments. Michele mentioned that most comments are positive, and that many negative ones are not specific.
 - **The ESSA subcommittee agreed that Alabama has rigorous standards in place for math and reading. The other subjects will be reviewed at a later date.**

Does the committee recommend that all students have the same standards or that different standards be adopted for those students who are identified with disabilities? Alicia Hodge discussed alternate or extended standards for special needs students.

- After the COS adoption process is complete, a task force members are solicited from recommendations from state superintendents. Once task force members are identified for the eight State Board districts, the committee is comprised of content, IHE, and process and content specialists. When the task force convenes, there is a presentation of how COS was developed and the process for creating the curriculum guide.
- Task force is divided into Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. These groups look at developing instructional objectives that represent foundational skills needed to master content standards.
- Objectives are also vetted through a vertical and horizontal alignment process and then reviewed by Curriculum and Instructional Services section, special education coordinators, and teachers. Curriculum Guide is also posted on the SDE website for comments for a 6-week period (same process as COS public review).
- Alicia referred to page 2 of the Curriculum Guide document to explain organization. The document includes standards from each of the content areas of the Courses of Study and then identifies foundational objectives. The diamond, bulleted standards are required for students on the essentials course track.
- Alicia referred to the Algebra I standards—No. 1 is exact content standard. The foundational skills are in the objectives. Next to the objectives, the diamond indicates the content required for essential skills courses. This means that the students are working toward the standards in the regular Algebra I course.
- Students who take four or more essentials courses are required to complete a work requirement as a part of graduation requirements. Sandy clarified that these objectives (with diamonds) might become the standards for students with disabilities.



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- The Alabama extended standards follow the same process as COS standards. The curriculum guide is then developed. Then the extended standards are developed and are tied to Alabama Alternative Assessment (AAA). Sometimes extended standards have to be revised more often to ensure alignment to AAA.
 - Extended standards are developed along complexity levels. Complexity levels offered to students are dependent upon the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Assessment required these extended standards to be more aligned to COS standards.
 - P. 33 and 112 of Curriculum Guide or Extended Standards Guide, examples are shown. The extended standard is lower rigor.
 - Even though the SDE special education department developed the guide, it should be used as a resource for the regular content teacher. Alicia Hodges mentioned that a committee worked on extended standards for Algebra II and Algebra II with Trigonometry.
 - The Curriculum Guide document is being routed for approval at the ALSDE. Extended standards will also be available for Algebra with Finance. In Algebra I, the open diamond and colored diamond indicate whether content is for Algebra A or Algebra B—defined on page 2. The date for this document will change to 2016 when Algebra II and Algebra with Finance standards are included.
 - Does the ESSA subcommittee want to adopt alternative standards (standards in Curriculum Guide) and the Extended Standards for special education or make any changes to the standards? Or do you recommend that we utilize the standards already developed?
 - **The ESSA subcommittee noted that challenging and aligned academic standards and processes are already in place in Alabama. The subcommittee unanimously recommended to keep these standards and processes.**

Sandy reminded the subcommittee that the ESSA regulations will be posted until August 1, 2016. Please go online and make suggestions/comments.

Next Steps:

On August 18, the entire ESSA Implementation Committee will meet in the State Capitol Auditorium. This committee needs to decide two things for this meeting:

1. Choose spokesperson to share 3-5 minute synopsis of committee work. **Pamela Fossett and Matt Akin will present.**
2. The subcommittee opted to share the items approved and any operational concerns.
 - a. For the 8th grade math course, the subcommittee wants flexibility but the logistics of assessment, standards need to be worked out as it is an operational concern about transparency.

