

**Notes: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Accountability Focus Group Meeting – School Quality and Student Success and Graduation Rate
October 21, 2016, 8:30-9:45 a.m. (in person); October 26, 2016, 9:30-10:30 a.m. (webinar)**

The in-person focus group session on Oct. 21 covered a possible indicator for the school quality and student success domain, attendance, as a measure of access to quality instructional time. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) presented initial analysis on attendance measures with DC-specific data. The group also discussed the graduation rate domain, including the federal requirement of a “trigger” for schools under a 67% 4-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) to be identified for comprehensive support. The recap webinar was held on Oct. 26 and covered the same material.

Area Discussed	Summary of Discussion	Next Steps & Follow Up (if applicable)
<p>Domain: School quality and student success</p> <p>Focus on quality instructional time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSSE’s focus is on access to quality instructional time for all students. One way to look at instructional time is attendance in school. A measure currently used in DC (e.g., in Performance Management Framework and Equity Reports) is in-seat attendance (ISA), an average of the days “in-seat,” usually expressed as an average for the school year. Chronic absenteeism measures the days of instruction time attended or missed by an individual student. Students who miss 10 percent or more instructional days are generally considered chronically absent. It can be expressed as either instructional days attended (e.g., 90% or more) or days missed (e.g., 10% or more). Alternative would be expressing as an average based on individual student attendance. Significant research shows a link between chronic absenteeism and later educational outcomes. Analysis of DC data by school shows that schools with similar ISA rates may have varied chronic absenteeism rates. 	<p>OSSE will work to define business rules for possible attendance measure(s) and will share analysis on how attendance-related outcomes are associated with different groups of students.</p>
<p>Domain: School quality and student success</p> <p>Attendance measures – group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View expressed that DC needs a citywide measure for this domain, and ISA currently serves that purpose. Families and school staff are familiar; the measure is widely understood. Question as to why there is a need to use a new measure. 	

<p>discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question raised as to whether ISA will be accepted under the draft regulations from Department of Education. ISA may not have enough differentiation to meet ED requirements. • Point raised about when students should “count” (i.e., setting threshold for days the student attends). Comment shared that OSSE should set a minimum threshold (for example, 50% of the school year). • Another point raised was that a minimum threshold is not needed and matters less if the denominator is the number of days the student was enrolled. Understanding that it could be possible and necessary for a student’s attendance rate to count for multiple schools. • Because there are links between attendance, graduation rate, and PARCC scores, schools that have challenges in one of these areas will most likely have challenges in multiple. Point raised that this will be especially true for high schools with low graduation rates and that attendance rates for different grade bands may look different. • Possible approach shared to include a growth measure for attendance or other metrics to give schools recognition for positive movement. • View shared that attendance is one measure of school climate, although not the only measure. Other components of students’ lives could contribute to attendance patterns, such as homelessness or transportation challenges. • Question asked about how the accountability system should support highly mobile students. How can we support these students and families and the schools that serve them? • Idea suggested to use a three-year rolling average to stabilize attendance-related measures. Another point expressed that if a school is improving rapidly, takes longer for accountability score to recognize growth. • Discussion around the threshold for percentage of students attending 90% of instructional days (or missing 10% or fewer). Possible approach shared to look at chronic absenteeism on a continuum to avoid incentivizing focus on only the students near the “bubble” of being chronically absent or not (e.g., only 	
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	around 10% of instructional days missed).	
Domain: Graduation rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per statute and proposed federal regulations, OSSE must identify any school with a 4-ACGR under 67% for “comprehensive” support. Additionally, 4-year ACGR must be included in the accountability framework used to identify the lowest 5% of schools. Extended cohort rates (e.g., 5- and 6-year) and other graduation rates are permissible, but individually each additional measure must be weighted less than 4-year ACGR measure. • The federal draft regulations also require “alternative” schools to be included in a state’s accountability framework and do not permit a separate framework for schools in this category. • Concern expressed around the automatic identification of schools under 67% 4-year ACGR, particularly consequences for alternative high schools. • OSSE shared that we have flexibility around the “interventions” that schools receive who are identified by the trigger versus bottom 5% overall. • Interest stated in including a 5-year ACGR and possibility 6-year ACGR as measures in the accountability system. • OSSE also has flexibility in weighting graduation rate metrics. 5-year and 6-year ACGR together could have more weight than 4-year ACGR. • Discussion of diversity in high schools in relation to subgroups and n-size. 	OSSE is working to identify what schools would be considered alternative and therefore need to be included in the accountability system being implemented in the 2017-18 school year. Adult schools do not need to be included in the initial system, though DC may incorporate them in future years.
Closing comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern expressed around re-enrollment as a possible indicator. May unnecessarily penalize schools that enroll high numbers of at-risk or very mobile students. Another point raised of the importance of this measure in conjunction with attendance as a proxy for parent and student satisfaction and school climate. 	While this meeting focused on attendance measures, OSSE is considering other school quality and student success metrics, including re-enrollment and other academic measures in high school (e.g., PSAT, SAT/ACT, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate).

<u>Attendee Organizations</u>	National Collegiate Prep Public Charter School
Brookings Institution	State Board of Education (SBOE)
Center City Public Charter Schools	University Legal Services for the District of Columbia
DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB)	WestEd
District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)	
Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)	