Notes: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Accountability Focus Group Meeting – Measures of Academic Achievement and Subgroups
October 18, 2016, 3:30-5:30 p.m. (in person) and October 24, 2016, 2-3 p.m. (webinar)

The in-person focus group session on Oct. 18 and webinar recap on Oct. 24 centered on academic achievement and subgroup measures in the ESSA accountability framework. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) presented information about English language learner performance on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment in the District of Columbia. In addition, the group discussed the context of student diversity within and across schools in DC, and how the city's landscape may impact decisions around measures of academic achievement for specific groups of students.

Area Discussed	Summary of Discussion	Next Steps & Follow Up (if applicable)
Domain: English learner proficiency based on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 exam	• DC's accountability framework must include English learner (EL) proficiency as a domain – this is outside of reporting out on EL performance on PARCC/MSAA as part of the academic achievement domain. • OSSE presented initial analysis on historical ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 data in DC (the assessment DC currently uses to measure English language proficiency). • Questions for initial analysis included: How are performance levels distributed for first-time ACCESS takers? Is higher growth more common for students at level 1?	OSSE is looking further around data analysis for ACCESS for ELLs data, including how the number of times a student took the test is associated with performance and growth.
	• Scores (levels 1 through 6) are related to English language proficiency. Growth does not necessarily translate to academic years. • Question raised about how these score levels relate to the number of years that a student has received English language services. Could OSSE use the number of times a student took the test as a proxy? • WIDA publishes grade-level "can-do" statements to help others understand what different levels at different grades mean in terms of English language proficiency. • While the levels don't describe the same skills at each grade level due to differing developmental expectations, level 1 is always lower English proficiency while level 6 is always higher English proficiency, as in the chart below:	

WIDA Performance Levels	Score Ranges
Entering	1.0 – 1.9
Emerging	2.0 – 2.9
Developing	3.0 – 3.9
Expanding	4.0 – 4.9
Bridging	5.0 – 5.9
Reaching	6.0 or above

- Descriptions of the WIDA levels can also be found on page 25 of the English Learner Guidebook.

- Based on national research, OSSE was interested in whether growth on ACCESS was strongest in the earliest grades. In reviewing DC's data this was generally true but with some nuance. Growth was lower in grades 6-8 and increased again in grade 9.
- Data suggest that using a single overall proficiency gain metric (e.g., percentage with a gain >.6 as was used in AMAOs) may not be sufficient to track progress because students start at different proficiency and grade levels.
- Agreement that it would be good to find a measure that captures both proficiency and growth for this measure.

Domain: English learner proficiency (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 exam) N-size for English learner students	• Many schools do not have a large enough population of EL students for OSSE to report separately on EL proficiency. The n-size we select will have an impact on which schools are included in this measure. • The n-size used for the English language proficiency measure will need to be consistent with the n-size used for other measures in the accountability system.	OSSE will do further analysis on the stability of scores year over year and based on n-size.
Domain: Academic achievement on PARCC and MSAA N-size for specific groups of students	• While materials presented reference n of 10 for illustrative purposes, OSSE has not made a decision about n-size. OSSE has interest in decreasing below 25, while maintaining student privacy and ensuring reasonable, stable threshold for accountability. • Concern expressed about a small n-size for accountability	OSSE will do further analysis on the impact of using different n-sizes in both the accountability system and for public reporting purposes.

	purposes because it can cause large and misleading change in numbers given the small group of students. • Point presented that it is important to report data for smaller n-sizes from a transparency and civil rights point of view. • Idea to report the error as well as the figure if the n-size is small.	
Domain: Academic achievement and specific groups of students Small group discussion and report-out	• One group reported wanting to include students at levels 3+ and 4+, and no interest in including the decrease of students at levels 1 and 2. Level 4+ should be weighed more heavily. • Belief that DC should be a system that works well now and in the future. If schools get to a place where 1 and 2 were uncommon, this measure would no longer work. • Including levels 3+ and 4+ rewards schools for hard work, especially as it is more difficult to move students from level 3 to level 4 than from level 1 to level 2. • Second group discussed how to incentivize schools to equally focus on students who have high educational needs, or are at lower levels on PARCC. Interest in including measures that reward for growth from level 1 to level 2 to 3. • Discussion around role of subgroups for diverse and non-diverse schools. Idea that the framework could weight based on that group's population in the city, with recognition that this would change the incentive structure and could produce unintended consequences. • Comment raised reflecting on the data presented about the diversity of our schools and the importance of ensuring that we don't build a system that works for some schools, but not for others.	OSSE will do further analysis and modeling on different achievement and growth metrics, including 3+, 4; differential weighting, and growth that applies to movement from any starting level.
Designing interventions and supports for schools	• Comment that OSSE should focus on supporting excellent teaching, learning, and school culture in all schools. • Agreement that designing smart supports and interventions and helping schools use the accountability framework is critical.	

Attendee Organizations	OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
AppleTree Institute	State Board of Education (SBOE)
Community member	Tembo
Education Forward DC	University Legal Services for the District of Columbia
E.L. Haynes Public Charter School	
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Public Charter School	
Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)	