

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 19, 2016

TO: MEMBERS, State Board of Education

FROM: STAFF, California Department of Education, WestEd and State Board of Education

SUBJECT: Select Terminology and Definition of Terms for the New Accountability and Continuous Improvement System

Purpose

The purpose of this Information Memorandum is to summarize concepts and terms for the State Board of Education (SBE) that have been introduced in prior SBE board items and Information Memoranda on the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) evaluation rubrics. It also details new terms and concepts that will be introduced in the information memos that follow on the new accountability and continuous improvement system. This memo is the second in a series of February 2016 Information Memoranda that will help to inform the March 2016 SBE board item.

Background

The LCFF evaluation rubrics are an integral part of the new accountability system. Once developed, the rubrics will direct attention to areas in need of additional support to meet the adopted performance standards and expectations for improvement for local education agencies (LEAs), student subgroups, and school performance relative to the state priorities as required in *Education Code (EC)* Section 52064.5. Specifically, the evaluation rubrics will: (1) assist LEAs in evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement; (2) assist county superintendents of schools in identifying LEAs in need of technical assistance and providing resources for technical assistance; and (3) assist the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) in identifying LEAs for which technical support and/or intervention is warranted. The SBE must adopt the evaluation rubrics by October 1, 2016.

In September, 2015, the SBE discussed an approach for defining standards and expectations for improvement through two types of standards within the evaluation rubrics: (1) *Practice Standards*, defined as qualitative narrative statements that convey research-supported practices, and (2) *Quality Standards*, defined as measurement-based data displays that demonstrate progress on the state priorities (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/sep15item14a3.doc>). The example for the quality standards references an approach used by Alberta, Canada that supports a continuous improvement framework within an accountability system. Beyond the focus on student outcomes, the Alberta system includes a measure of improvement that reflects the percentage change (e.g., growth or decline) to be considered as part of an LEA's overall performance.

At its January 2016 SBE meeting, the item on developing a new accountability system included information about setting "standards" as part of the LCFF evaluation rubrics by reference to a preliminary analysis of the graduation rate indicator. The March 2016 SBE board item will include further discussion around the selection of key indicators, the development of standards, and the implications of this selection for evaluating performance and determining the need for technical assistance, support, and intervention.

The sections that follow identify proposed terminology for concepts currently included in the LCFF evaluation rubrics prototype. It is intended to provide a foundation for forthcoming information memos, specifically, the memos that describe the potential architecture of a single, integrated continuous improvement and accountability system and design features of the LCFF evaluation rubrics.

Context of Standards

The term "standard" is used in various contexts.

- Academic content standards are broad statements that describe specific knowledge and skills that students should learn at each grade level. For example, the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, communicate the expectations for content learning for English language arts, mathematics, and science, across grades 3–12. Performance relative to the academic content standards may be measured through formative and summative assessments that are aligned with the academic content standards.
- Performance standards refer to the expectations for demonstrating achievement of the standards by students. These may include opportunities for teachers to observe and evaluate student work and activities, record evidence of student learning, and assess strengths and weaknesses in students' understanding to inform instructional decisions.
- Within the context of the LCFF statutes, the term "standards" is applied at the LEA or school level for all students and for student subgroups. It is therefore an expectation for LEA- or school-level performance. These standards will reflect performance on input, processes, and outcomes that are not aligned to specific academic content standards. For example, performance standards on basic learning conditions, such as the *Williams'* legislative requirements, in addition to performance standards on student outcomes, such as drop out and suspension rates may be established.

Terminology

Indicator: provides evidence that a certain condition exists or whether certain results have or have not been achieved.

- The current LCFF evaluation rubrics prototype has introduced a distinction between "key indicators" and "associated or related indicators" as a way to facilitate the grouping of indicators to streamline and organize analysis.
- The Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) template that the SBE adopted uses the term "metric" to describe the statutory elements identified for each of the LCFF priorities (LCAP Template, Section 2 Instructions).

- Some of the metrics in the statute are a rate or method of measurement (e.g., graduation rate, suspension rate), whereas others are indicators that require the identification of a method to measure (e.g., parent involvement).
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) uses only the term “indicator.”
- The distinction between “indicator” and “metric” is not always significant, for example, whether students are graduating (indicator) is essentially the same as graduation rate (metric).

Standard: the rubrics *must* include “standards for . . . performance and expectations for improvement [for] each of the state priorities.” *EC 52064.5(c)*.

- SBE must set at least one standard for performance and improvement that applies to each LCFF priority area. However, the statute leaves room for the SBE to set a single standard that applies to multiple state priorities.
- As noted above, the SBE discussed an approach for defining performance standards and expectations for improvement through the practice and quality standards.
- *Practice Standards* describe research-supported practices related to “key” indicators, and could also be developed for related or “associated” indicators. Practice standards convey characteristics and an example of high functioning practices associated with the “key” indicators.
- *Quality Standards* provide a measurement-based system against which to assess progress for “key” indicators, and where state data is available, could also be developed for related or “associated” indicators. Quality standards promote growth and reflection by providing feedback regarding “improvement” and “outcome” for the LEA and its schools, including significant student subgroups. Quality standards are intended to support continuous improvement. To provide this support, quality standards would include a range of expectations that are ambitious yet attainable for the majority of LEAs and schools.

In addition to ambitious, yet attainable performance that is reflected in the quality standards, this memo introduces the assistance and support standard(s) that help identify which LEAs and/or schools are eligible for technical assistance, support, and/or more intensive state-directed assistance.

Assistance and Support Standard: a standard for assessing the eligibility criteria for technical assistance (e.g., under *EC 52071*) or more intensive state-directed support and assistance from the SPI (e.g., under *EC 52072*), which collectively represent LCFF’s support and assistance system.¹

- An LEA is eligible for technical assistance if it “fails to improve pupil achievement across more than one state priority” for one or more pupil subgroups, as specified in *EC Section 52071*.

¹ The rubrics shall “assist” a county superintendent in identifying districts eligible for technical assistance under *EC 52071(b)* and shall “assist” the SPI in identifying districts that are eligible for more intensive state-directed support and assistance under *EC 52072*. *EC 52064.5(a)*. Each section also states that the evaluation rubric shall be used in assessing a district’s eligibility. *EC 52071(b)*; *EC 52072(b)(2)(C)*.

- The SPI may identify an LEA for intervention if the LEA “did not improve the outcomes for three or more pupil subgroups” for “more than one state priority” “in three out of four consecutive years” as specified in *EC* Section 52072(b)(1).

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment 1: Education Code Sections 52064.5, 52071, 52071.5, 52072, 52072.5, and 52074 (4 Pages)