# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

October 1, 2014
9:45 a.m.

Indiana Government Center South
Conference Room B
302 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Board Members Present: Superintendent Glenda Ritz (chair), Mr. Troy Albert, Mr. Dan Elsener, Dr. David Freitas, Mr. Gordon Hendry, Mrs. Sarah O'Brien, Mr. Tony Walker, and Mrs. Cari Whicker.
Mr. B.J. Watts attended by phone.
Board Members Absent: Ms. Andrea Neal and Dr. Brad Oliver.

## I.    CALL TO ORDER

Superintendent Ritz called the meeting to order and roll was called. The roll reflected all members present in person or by phone except Ms. Andrea Neal and Dr. Brad Oliver. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## II.    APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by a voice vote of 9-0.

## III.    APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes to approve.

## IV.    STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR

Superintendent Ritz did not have a statement.

## V.     BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS

- Mrs. Sarah O'Brien expressed concern about breaking into small groups for the meeting. Specifically, she said she had open door law concerns and felt it would be better to allow for opinions to be expressed to the entire Board.  Superintendent Ritz stated that counsel for the Board felt it would be permissible as long as the public was made aware and was invited to hear the conversations. Ms. Whicker stated that she appreciated Mrs. O'Brien's opinion but felt that smaller groups could facilitate better dialogue with the Accountability System Review Panel members.
- Mr. Walker commented that he agreed with Mrs. O'Brien and would like to hear from everyone. Mr. Hendry stated he would have liked to have seen any presentation materials in advance, especially a voluminous presentation. Mr. Hendry also echoed Mrs. O'Brien's concerns about breaking out into groups. Mr. Elsener recommended more dialogue during the presentation. Superintendent Ritz responded that they will streamline the presentations since the Board has the materials.  The Board did not break into groups.

## VI.    GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (public comment on specific agenda items are taken at the time each item is before the Board)

There was no general public comment.

## VII.   CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items on the consent agenda.

## VIII.  NEW BUSINESS – ACTION

A. *Readoption/Expiration of Rules*

- Dr. Freitas moved to approve the initiation of the rule readoption process. The motion carried 9-0.

B. *SBOE Resolution Regarding Staffing*

- Superintendent Ritz invited a motion to approve the resolution regarding the retention of new board legal counsel and affirming Board staff job descriptions. Mrs. O'Brien so moved and Mr. Hendry seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 8-1; Superintendent Ritz voted no.

## IX.   BEST PRACTICES

The Board did not discuss this item.

## X.   DISCUSSION AND REPORTS

A. *Accountability Systems Review Panel and Board Discussion on the new A-F Accountability System*

- Superintendent Ritz introduced Dr. Steve Yager, Co-Chair of the Accountability System Review Panel ("Panel"). Dr. Yager began by thanking Superintendent Ritz for being cognizant of time constraints for members of the Panel. Dr. Yager then introduced the following Panel members present:

  Steve Baker, appointed by Senator David Long;
  Derek Redelman, appointed by Senator Long;
  Robert Lugo, appointed by Governor Mike Pence;
  Claire Fiddian-Green, appointed by Governor Pence;
  Sheila Seedhouse, appointed by Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma;
  Scott Bess, appointed by Speaker Bosma;
  Cheryl Ramsey, appointed by the Indiana Department of Education;
  Dr. Michele Walker, appointed by the Department;
  Dr. Yager, appointed by Senator Long;
  Melanie Park, appointed by Senator Long;
  Dr. Jim Snapp, appointed by Governor Pence;
  Cassandra McLeod, appointed by Governor Pence;
  Dr. Shane Robbins, appointed by Speaker Bosma;
  Jessica Dunn Feeser, appointed by Speaker Bosma;
  Keith Gambill, appointed by the Department;
  Dr. E. Ric Frataccia, appointed by the Department; and
  Cari Whicker, appointed by Governor Pence.

Dr. Yager commented on the hard work of the Panel and stated the Panel's goal was to present something to the Board that is clear and concise and that will benefit Indiana's children. He said the bottom line is that the Panel wanted to compare a student's progress to their own progress, and not to students throughout the state. Superintendent Ritz thanked Dr. Damian Betebenner, Wes Bruce, and the Department and Board legal staff for their contributions.

- Dr. Yager presented using slides. He began by outlining federal expectations with regard to accountability, including looking at achievement and a high quality assessment. He then moved to state expectations, including A-F categories.

- Mr. Elsener inquired about a portion of the presentation dealing with comparing the academic performance and growth of individual students in each school and each corporation with their prior performance and not the performance of other schools and school corporations. Mr. Redelman responded that there is not a consensus on this issue. He read Indiana Code section 20-31-8-5.4, which states the new standards of assessing school performance must be based on a measurement of individual student academic performance and growth to proficiency and cannot be based on a measurement of student growth or performance compared to peers.

- Mr. Redelman stated that the background behind this statutory language included concerns around the previous accountability system. Namely, that the accountability system wasn't holding students accountable for making improvement and growth towards Indiana's academic standards (proficiency); rather, students were being put into groups and compared to peers instead. Mr. Redelman stated that Indiana was using a peer comparison system called student growth percentiles.

- Mr. Redelman commented on the viewpoint that proficiency isn't defined in the statute, and therefore the Board must define it in accordance with the system presented. He stated that that is not consistent with common understanding. He stated the Department has put out documents that defined proficiency as a pass or pass plus on the ISTEP. Mr. Redelman said there is nothing in the law that requires that student growth be measured to a criterion. Rather, the law requires growth be measured to proficiency. He stated it is the Panel's opinion, and the widespread understanding of the General Assembly when they adopted this statute, that proficiency means meeting the standards that the Board has set, not a criterion based target that will vary from student to student. Mr. Redelman went on to say there is a contrary point of view on this issue.

- Dr. Yager stated he disagreed with Mr. Redelman that there wasn't a consensus. He said the majority of people on the Panel agreed with Mr. Redelman's view.

Superintendent Ritz commented that data must be used at some point in order to determine where it is that students should meet their criteria. She stated that student growth percentiles are a source of information. Superintendent Ritz stated that they are used now and will be used going forward. She said there must be a starting place, and then students are measure individually from there. Superintendent Ritz said there has to be a norm referenced base, but then students would be measured individually.

- Dr. Freitas asked Mr. Redelman to elaborate a bit regarding criteria as an indicator for the performance part of the assessment system. Mr. Redelman responded that there are two components, proficiency (pass/fail) and growth. He said the growth side is what was addressed in law. He went on to say there isn't a measure of proficiency in the growth model. Dr. Michele Walker explained that the performance side is where students either make or do not make the cut scores on the assessment set by the Board. Superintendent Ritz added that that also serves as a measure of proficiency in the growth calculation.

- Mr. Tony Walker stated that it appeared as if the Panel recommended model did use peer to peer evaluation. He said even though the peer groups have been divided up and are smaller, it's still peer to peer review. Dr. Jim Snapp responded that the law says students should be measured by growth to proficiency. He said the student either makes it or they don't; every student can make it or no students can make it. Dr. Snapp said it's a concern that the approved model is more complex than it needs to be. He stated another concern is that the model was described as the least discriminatory for low performing schools. Dr. Snapp said there are better options out there.

- Mr. Walker asked if the target criterion uses the performance baselines of other students. Deb Dailey, Director of Accountability at the Department, responded that the target information did take into evaluation other students to establish the targets. Upon further inquiry from Mr. Walker, Ms. Dailey said the targets take into evaluation just those students assigned to the same category based on performance. Ms. Dailey explained there are eight categories. Mr. Walker asked if a student could meet growth targets year after year without being up to academic standards. Ms. Dailey explained that students remaining static do get some points not as many as those showing growth year to year. She said there is a reward for moving towards proficiency.

- Mr. Elsener asked how the Panel's recommendation could be made better. Dr. Snapp said the recommendation presented cannot be made better in his opinion. He said there were other options out there that were better. Dr. Snapp said a better

option would be not to use student growth percentiles and would be a simpler model people could understand.

- Ms. Claire Fiddian-Green commented that there are a lot of misunderstandings regarding student growth percentiles. She stated that student growth percentiles are used in Indiana in an unorthodox manner, as Dr. Betebenner said in one of his reports. Ms. Fiddian-Green referred to a memo from prior Board counsel Dr. Michelle McKeown, which stated that the way Indiana uses student growth percentiles does not force students into the low, typical, and high categories. She explained that individual targets are established for students for one year, looking at their current performance and comparing it with their peer group from the past. Ms. Fiddian-Green stated that student growth percentiles is a tool that can be used in different ways. Ms. Fiddian-Green stated that during Panel discussions it became apparent that doing something simpler would exclude some students.

- Dr. E. Ric Frataccia commented that he disagreed with Ms. Fiddian-Green. He opined that the current typical growth model is a bad thing for schools and students. He said the issue is that the current categorical model didn't offer a lot of growth between categories. Dr. Frataccia said the recommended model allows students to be rewarded more for high growth. He said fairness would be looking at how a student does from year to year, not how the student did compared to peers.

- Mr. Redelman stated the issue is how to reward movement towards proficiency for students who may be far behind. Schools should be incentivized to have these kids grow, he said. Mr. Redelman said at the same time you want a system where kids at the higher end have incentive to continue to grow at a high level. He explained that one solution that had been discussed was the creation of sub-benchmarks, in which schools with children behind would be rewarded for students that reach the next benchmark. Mr. Redelman also said there was discussion of a trajectory growth model.

- Superintendent Ritz explained that the two models Mr. Redelman described had issues according to the experts. Regarding the categorical model, the correlation between performance and categorical growth was too high; it didn't show much difference than just looking at performance alone. She said the experts also expressed concern regarding targeted growth combined with categorical model. The correlation was lower so there would be more growth, but it didn't not reflect performance as well. Superintendent Ritz said the conversations lead to option D that include student growth percentiles.

- Mr. Elsener inquired if the Panel looked at other states and asked what effect utilizing model D will have on grades. Superintendent Ritz responded that each of the models were run to see what the data looks like. Superintendent Ritz said by measuring student's individual growth, there would be more B's and C's and fewer A's, and F's. Ms. Fiddian-Green said the recommended model was not compared to other states in detail but that Dr. Betebenner provided some information from other states regarding the transition. Ms. Dailey stated that other states do use student growth percentiles in different ways.
- Mr. Walker inquired about why points would be awarded when there is no growth. Ms. Dailey responded that there is definitely an opportunity to review this. She stated these students are awarded points for not sliding back down; they are getting partial points. Keith Gambill opined that there is one year of growth in Pass 1 from third grade to Pass 1 in fourth grade. He said the word static really isn't the right word here.

**-- RECESS --**

- Mr. Redelman reiterated that it is important to realize that students can still show one year's growth even though they don't move a category. He stated that these students may not be meeting standards though. The values do not ensure the students are making a year's actual growth he stated. He said it has no relationship to proficiency; he said points could be awarded continually to students who never meet standards. To the contrary, he continued that students at the higher end could be making more than a year's worth of growth but, because the student is compared to others, they may get dinged for it.
- Mr. Elsener stated he would be interested in seeing more data around option D. Superintendent Ritz stated there are calculations around observed growth and that they would move on to discuss that. Ms. Dailey explained the calculations that had been provided to the Board. She discussed how point values are established, and explained that points are assigned from -2 to 2. Ms. Dailey then explained prior year status. She said Indiana currently has three categories, Not Pass, Pass and Pass Plus, but that these would be further divided into eight total categories. She explained there would be three categories for Not Pass, two for Pass and three categories for Pass Plus under option D.
- Ms. Dailey also outlined observed growth target ranges. More specifically, she explained that the observed growth target ranges are a key component for

establishing points with the values table. The target ranges create a threshold for which points are to be assigned, she stated. She went on to state that in review of student distribution charts for the categorical status improvement, it was found that between 85% and 90% of the students fell within one of three outcomes: static, improved one category, or declined one category. This diagonal of the categorical status improvement table became the focus to the observed growth option. Three movement classifications were created to categorize the type of category movement present within each band, she said.

- Ms. Dailey continued that the option D modified values table is an expansion of the previous option C, in which students received a full point for either actual positive category movement or observed growth, showing a student was on target achieve a positive category movement within the next year. In transitioning to observed growth option D, the actual outcome of category movement was incorporated into the value table through analysis of the observed growth, she stated. Ms. Dailey said the mean observed growth for each movement classification was analyzed to establish target ranges that represent actual category movement or trajectory-to-category movement.

- Ms. Dailey explained two strategies used to create target growth ranges. She outlined the first as target ranges that are constant within each proficiency category Did Not Pass, Pass and Pass Plus and point values are adjusted per prior year status category to reflect growth expectations. For this option, she said, the target ranges were established based on the median growth observed in each proficiency category.

- Ms. Dailey then moved on to the next strategy. She explained that target ranges are specific to each status category and point values are constant for each proficiency category Did Not Pass, Pass and Pass Plus. Ms. Dailey explained that in this option the target ranges were established based of the median growth observed in each proficiency category for students not changing statuses through categorical status improvement.

- Superintendent Ritz informed the Board that all of the information presented had been provided to the Board. She directed Ms. Dailey to discuss some data from charts provided to the Board. Ms. Dailey highlighted relevant portions of the graphs. With regard to the chart showing the first iteration of cut scores, she stated that the Did Not Pass 3 to Pass Plus 1 categories included most of the students in Indiana. Ms. Dailey then moved on to the next set of graphs outlining student growth distribution across status categories. She summarized that 60% of students show

movement across categories. Superintendent Ritz stated it was the goal of the Panel to show growth for all students.

- Mr. Walker inquired about a school with mostly Pass Plus students. He said these schools will not be getting many growth points and asked if this is why there is a decrease in the number of A schools with the use of option D. Ms. Dailey stated they have accommodated for that, so these schools aren't showing no growth. Dr. Michele Walker explained that this is the reason the categorical model couldn't be used. She went on to explain with option D model, observed growth, or growth within categories, is measured. Mr. Walker stated he hoped that schools with students at the higher end would not be capped. Superintendent Ritz responded there wouldn't be a cap, and that individual student growth would be measured.

- Mrs. Sarah O'Brien asked how this change can be explained to people so everyone understands that schools with high achieving students are not penalized. Superintendent Ritz responded that the new system is now a 100 point system based on individual student growth rather than a four point system. She stated each student would be earning points for their school.

- Ms. Whicker explained that Indiana doesn't expect the same results, so the same results will not occur. She pointed out the new assessment is more rigorous and so are the standards and that these factors will affect the ultimate grades. Mr. Keith Gambill opined that with high performing schools, growth is looked at as a separate indicator along with performance. Superintendent Ritz clarified that the distribution doesn't mean that that's the number schools that will go from an A to a B. She explained the data is just a comparison of the distributions of the grades under the old and new models, not a school by school comparison.

- Mr. Steve Baker added that Mr. Walker's point is well taken. He said he has a concern for a school that was an A under the old model but not the new model. He stated that the issue is the higher performing schools have an opportunity to receive fewer points, even though they may not be getting penalty points. Mr. Baker added that another issue is that it is very hard to compare growth to peers, as Indiana does now, to individual growth in the new system to determine how things will change. Lastly, he commented that the model must be as simple and transparent as possible. However, he said once you add growth, simplicity goes out the window. Mr. Baker said that this model is very fair even though not as simple.

- Ms. Jessica Dunn Feeser expressed concern regarding schools that were A schools that won't be under the new model, as well as schools that are currently F schools that are not F schools under this new system. She stated it's important we

acknowledge schools that are failing so Indiana can help support them when they need it.

- Dr. Freitas asked about adjusting the percentage weight assigned to growth versus the percentage placed on performance. Ms. Dailey responded that the issue had been discussed robustly but that factors can be adjusted. Dr. Freitas commented that the system should not be manipulated to get a certain number of A's etc. Rather, he stated it should accurately reflect what's going on in the schools. Superintendent Ritz commented that the Panel weighed the options and chose the 50/50 weighting. Mr. Robert Lugo responded that one issue is that when comparing growth there is a comparison between communities and schools. He stated this can be akin to comparing apples and oranges. Mr. Lugo said measuring growth is vital because it allows for analysis of how students are performing. It measures how well the schools are educating those students, he added. Consequently, he expressed concern about weighting performance higher and growth less. Mr. Lugo said the question of whether there are more or less A's etc. is irrelevant if the model is a good one that is accurate. Superintendent Ritz stated that the new model is exciting because it shows schools that are behind on performance but headed in the right direction. She stated this model is about the improvement of schools. Superintendent Ritz also added that the federal government requires supports for lower performing schools regardless of the letter grades because the federal government defines lower performing schools based on a percentage.

- Mr. Albert asked if there was any consideration of school size or configuration. Superintendent Ritz responded that the new model is created not to have a configuration issue, except for K-2 because there is no assessment data for those students.

- Mr. Elsener stated he appreciates growth to ensure all children learn. He stated the grades must be accurate. He said a lot of Board members have spent a lot of time in chronically failing schools and those students face a dismal future if those schools are not turned around. Mr. Elsener expressed the importance of alarms going off when intervention is necessary. He stated the question is how to award growth without issuing grades that fail to accurately reflect what is happening in poorly performing schools.

- Mr. Steve Baker opined that with any model accuracy is vital. He said the complexity is necessary to ensure accuracy. Dr. Freitas asked the Panel if the model will produce accurate grades. Dr. Snapp responded the Panel does not know for sure. He said we have more rigorous standards and a more rigorous assessment. With all the factors to consider it's not possible to know for certain how things will play out.

- Mr. Derek Redelman stated that when looking at where students fell on the categorical improvement charts, the most common outcome for the next year for students is where they started. He pointed out that the one main exception in both math and English is the highest level of Did Not Pass, right below the bar. He said this means our system right now focuses on children on the cusp, not on all students. Mr. Redelman said changing the incentives will change the results.

- Dr. Michele said the Panel picked model D because Indiana wasn't seeing growth for all students. She said option D looks at like data to set reasonable targets for students. Ms. Claire Fiddian-Green clarified that Mr. Redelman's point (clustering around the middle) isn't necessarily the result of incentives, but that it's the science behind developing assessments. Dr. Walker agreed with Ms. Fiddian-Green and added that assessments are built around the cut scores.

- Ms. Fiddian-Green commented on student growth percentiles. She stated that Dr. Briggs and Dr. Betebenner informed the Panel on some important issues. She stated one of the things they learned was about the evolution of growth measure in Indiana starting in 2005 based on federal guidance, and the desire that it reflect performance and reward growth among low performing students. Dr. Betebenner also informed the Panel concerning how far reaching the data from the growth model is. Ms. Fiddian-Green pointed out that Dr. Betebenner said a strict categorical model had a high model bias that would hurt schools with a high percentage of low performing students and reward schools with a high percentage of high performing students on the state assessment. In addition, she pointed out that this model would cause a break in the current system and that that would not be consistent with the federal waiver.

- Ms. Fiddian-Green explained why she voted no. She stated her concern with option D is that it's not there yet. She stated she would not be comfortable voting that the work is complete. In addition, regarding the baseline data, Ms. Fiddian-Green pointed out it could take four years to get reliable data. She said Dr. Betebenner has provided options for a transition but said she didn't feel as if that issue had been sufficiently vetted. Ms. Fiddian-Green also stated that additional information from the experts, Dr. Briggs and Dr. Betebenner is forthcoming and would be important to consider. Ms. Fiddian-Green mentioned the timeline concerns and the Board expressed consensus that they will continue to discuss the issue and make a decision.

## XI.  BOARD OPERATIONS

The Board operations item was not discussed.

**XII.     ADJOURNMENT**

Superintendent Ritz invited a motion to adjourn and Board voted to adjourn the meeting.