

Agency of Education and RBA ESSA and EQS

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Different logics about how to help schools improve

EQS/EQR – focused on continuous improvement by all schools, belief that the “next level of work” is different in different schools

ESSA – focused on identifying and fixing “low performers” and helping them to “measure up”

- Requires VT AOE to identify lowest 5% of schools “Comprehensive Support”
- Requires VT AOE to identify schools with large equity gaps for “Targeted Supports”



In Education, the term Accountability has a specific meaning that goes beyond the publishing of data. It involves describing the way in which performance data leads to intervention.

In Vermont, we look to EQS/EQR – which is focused on continuous improvement by all schools, belief that the “next level of work” is different in different schools

However, under ESSA – the focus is on identifying and fixing “low performers” and helping them to “measure up”

1. The federal law requires the Agency of Education to identify, label and publically name the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools “Comprehensive Support”
2. The federal law also requires the Agency of Education to identify, label and publically name schools that are in need of “Targeted Supports” for student groups that are underperforming.

There is an inherent conflict between these two philosophies- one is focused on everyone committing to be better every day and every year; the other is focused on a deep look at a subset of schools with the others free of such attention and oversight.



On January 11, the House Education Committee heard testimony from Chris Case and Patrick Halladay regarding the development of the ESSA state plan and from Josh Souliere regarding Education Quality Standards. The ESSA work is an extension of that effort.

In January 2014, the Agency of Education embarked on a development cycle of public input to create a local, Vermont inspired process that would allow us to meet the requirements of program and quality review set forth in statute and in the Education Quality Standards.

For Reference:

§ 165. Education quality standards; equal educational opportunities; independent school meeting education quality standards

...

(b) Every two years, the Secretary shall determine whether students in each Vermont public school are provided educational opportunities substantially equal to those provided in other public schools. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the education quality standards listed in subsection (a) of this section or that the school is making insufficient progress in improving student performance in relation to the standards for student performance set forth in subdivision 164(9) of this title, he or she shall describe in writing actions that a district must take in order to meet either or both sets of standards and shall provide technical assistance to the school...

Annual Snapshot Review

- ✓ **Vermont**- data collection by level in all SU/SDs
- ✓ **Only Numbers**- Can do math with the data
- ✓ **Collected by AOE**- either currently or will be collected through SLDS
- ✓ **Stable** Collection-for the foreseeable future we would still collect it
- ✓ **≈Annual** Collection window that is at least an annual reporting



To accomplish the goal, the Secretary looked at resources available and determined that an annual collection of data aligned to core priorities could occur for every school in the state provided that it met key criteria. These criteria are essentially the same as the criteria for NCLB at the time. We felt it was important to have quantitative data but the public input sessions suggested this was insufficient for driving improvement.

Integrated Field Review



- ✓ **Local** data will vary by SU/SD and schools- local assessments, programs and opportunities are at the center.
- ✓ **Format varies**- could be local quantitative data or qualitative data
- ✓ **Observed/Heard during visits**- we must be in the schools to know it
- ✓ **Flexible**-Overtime how SU/SDs demonstrate this will change
- ✓ **≈Triennial Observations**

Far more valuable to school systems was the opportunity to show their good work to others. Again, looking at available resources, we believe that we can visit each Supervisory Union/District every three years. The field reviews were designed to pilot in 2015-16 and we had over 20 school systems sign up to help us test and pilot these qualitative reviews.

ESSA Passed

And we had to
stop in our
tracks-
re-assess and
re-group.



We had to stop our work mid-stream; only $\frac{1}{2}$ the field review pilots were done and action on the Snapshot was delayed.

The Every Student Succeeds Act is complicated- when first drafted it included over 1000 pages of amendments to existing law. Eventually, the United States Department of Education released proposed regulations on the 20 some odd pages related to accountability with over 300 pages of explanatory text. Final regulations were just adopted and may not survive in the transition at the federal level.

Fortunately, this should have limited impact on Vermont. We have adhered closely to the statute itself rather than being bound by regulations alone. A key first step in understanding how Vermont will merge Results Based Accountability and federal and state accountability is to look at the required measures.

ESSA Required Measures

Indicator	(C) Accountability Question
1 st Indicator	How well are students performing in ELA/reading and mathematics in 3 rd -8 th grade and once in high school?
2 nd Indicator	How much have students grown in either ELA/reading or math (elementary required)?
3 rd Indicator	How well are English Learners gaining English proficiency?
4 th Indicator	Are students graduating within 4 years (high school required)?
“5 th Indicator”	<p><i>(v)(I) For all public schools in the State, not less than one indicator of school quality or student success that –</i></p> <p><i>(aa) allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance;</i></p> <p><i>(bb) is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide (with the same indicator or indicators used for each grade span, as such term is determined by the State); and</i></p> <p><i>(cc) may include one or more of the measures described in subclause (II).</i></p>








In federal accountability, the unit of analysis is always inferred to be at three levels-

- 1) the school
- 2) the Local Education Agency (LEA) which in Vermont is our Supervisory District and Supervisory Unions and
- 3) the state.

As such, the measures must operate at both “Population Level” for the state and the “Performance level” for the schools and Supervisory Unions.

The items to be measured are stated in clear, every day language and describe the “ends” that we hope to see for our students.

Proposed Snapshot Display






Criteria	All Students		Equity Index	
	Current	Year-to-Year	Current	Year-to-Year
 Academic Proficiency				
 Personalized Learning				
 Safe, School Climate				
 High Quality Staffing				
 Financial Efficiencies				

As a state,

1. We care about all of these things,
2. We want to set the agenda,
3. We don't want to reduce them to a single score,
4. We want to look at outcomes and inputs

When we began our ESSA work, we took the data from our Education Quality Review Process and determined that there were core items we would include in our Accountability system. But they included items which didn't meet the federal criteria- they were inputs, they measured the local commitments to staffing, funding and a variety of equity based values that simply weren't "ends" and couldn't be used. In addition, the federal requirements established a weighting formula that would have made the other items almost meaningless in a composite score.

Proposed Snapshot Display

Criteria	All Students		Equity Index	
	Current	Year-to-Year Change	Current	Year-to-Year Change
 Academic Proficiency	<p>What we can do is leverage the State work to meet the federal requirements if we double purpose the Academic Proficiency Criteria.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are all outcomes 2. They can be disaggregated 3. They meet technical criteria for assessment 			
 Personalized Learning				
 Safe, School Climate				
 High Quality Staffing				
 Financial Efficiencies				

We re-evaluated the requirements and realized that if we used only the top criteria for federal accountability, we could meet the requirements of ESSA and keep our local metrics as they were conceived by our stakeholders.

I will walk through each of the composite measures that create the Academic Proficiency Rating.

Proposed Measures

(B) Category	(C) Accountability Question	ESSA Required?
Standards	1) How well are students performing in ELA/reading in 3 rd -9 th ? Current Performance	Yes 1 st Indicator
	Growth Performance	2 nd Indicator
	2) How well are students performing in mathematics in 3 rd -9 th ? Current Performance	Yes 1 st Indicator
	Growth Performance	2 nd Indicator
	3) How well are students performing in science? 5,8,11	No 5 th Indicator
	4) How well are students performing in physical education? (grades to be determined)	No 5 th Indicator

1. Standards are approved by the Vermont Board of Education for core academic areas listed in EQS 2120.5
2. Assessments are approved by the Vermont Board of Education.
3. To balance out the emphasis on ELA and Math, we have added 2 other assessments
 - a) Science: Must assess but it is our option to include in the accountability determination
 - b) Physical Education: We are including it to ensure that schools maintain commitment to PE, recess, health and nutrition.



Proposed Measures

(B) Category	(C) Accountability Question	ESSA Required?
English Language Proficiency	5) How well are English Learners gaining English proficiency?	Yes 3 rd Indicator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting annual interim targets- are students learning a sufficient amount of English each year so that they will meet the long-term proficiency goal? • Meeting long term proficiency rates- are students becoming English proficient in the time allotted to their learning? 	Required Required

1. Standards are approved by the Vermont Board of Education.
2. Assessments are approved by the Vermont Board of Education.
3. While not explicitly mentioned in EQS, the reference to the PLP (2120.4) and MTSS (2121.5) suggest the commitment of the Board of Education to support each student in developing the skills needed for academic success, among them is learning English.
4. Depending on the student's starting level, they will have 1-5 years to become proficient. Interim targets are set for each student each year.



Proposed Measures

(B) Category	(C) Accountability Question	ESSA Required?
Graduation Rate	6) Are students staying in school until they graduate?	Yes 4 th Indicator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year rate-What percent of students are graduating within 4 years of starting 9th grade? • 6-year rate-What percent of students are graduating within 6 years of starting 9th grade? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Required</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Optional</p>

1. EQS 2120.7- Board of Education has determined that a student is ready to graduate when they have met the criteria of content proficiency in each area specified in 2120.5
2. EQS 2120.8- Local School Boards set graduation policy and may not give credits based only on time in class, must include proficiencies.
3. We have included the 6-year rate to maintain our commitment to a student graduating when they are proficient rather than an arbitrary time period.



Proposed Measures

(B) Category	(C) Accountability Question	ESSA Required?
College and Career Readiness	7) How well did seniors perform on career and college ready assessments? -Percent of students meeting or exceeding career and college ready assessment on any national test of their choice.	No 5 th Indicator
	8) Are alumni pursuing a career and college ready outcome within 16 months of graduation? -Percent of students engaged in career, post-secondary education/training, or military/	No 5 th Indicator

1. Supports flexible pathways and towards career and college readiness as described in Act 77 and EQS 2120.2.
2. Assessments will be selected by the student, through the PLP, from a menu of options linked to different pathways.

All Proposed Measures

(B) Category	(C) Accountability Question	ESSA Required?
Standards	1) How well are students performing in ELA/reading in 3 rd -9 th grade?	Yes 1 st Indicator 2 nd Indicator
	2) How well are students performing in mathematics in 3 rd -9 th grade?	Yes 1 st Indicator 2 nd Indicator
	3) How well are students performing in science? 5,8,11	Reporting Only 5 th Indicator
	4) How well are students performing in physical education? (grades to be determined)	No 5 th Indicator
English Language Proficiency	5) How well are English Learners gaining English proficiency?	Yes 3 rd Indicator
Graduation Rate	6) Are students staying in school until they graduate?	Yes 4 th Indicator
College and Career Readiness	7) How well did seniors perform on career and college ready assessments?	No 5 th Indicator
	8) Are alumni pursuing a career and college ready outcome within 16 months of graduation?	No 5 th Indicator






















Proposed Levels

Level	Proposed Term	Proposed Iconography
1	Off-Target	
2	Near Target	
3	On-Target	
4	Bull's Eye	

ESSA requires that all measures and the system as a whole have at least three levels of performance. Vermont has opted for an iconography that aligns with our proficiency based language- however, it is unlikely that this imagery would be what we use in the end. We have an RFP out currently for a vendor to develop the platform and tools.

Also, it is important to know that ESSA requires a report card for each school on these measures as does state law. It is our hope that the snapshot can meet the requirement for all schools and Supervisory Districts and Unions and thereby reduce duplicative efforts for them.

Proposed Snapshot Display

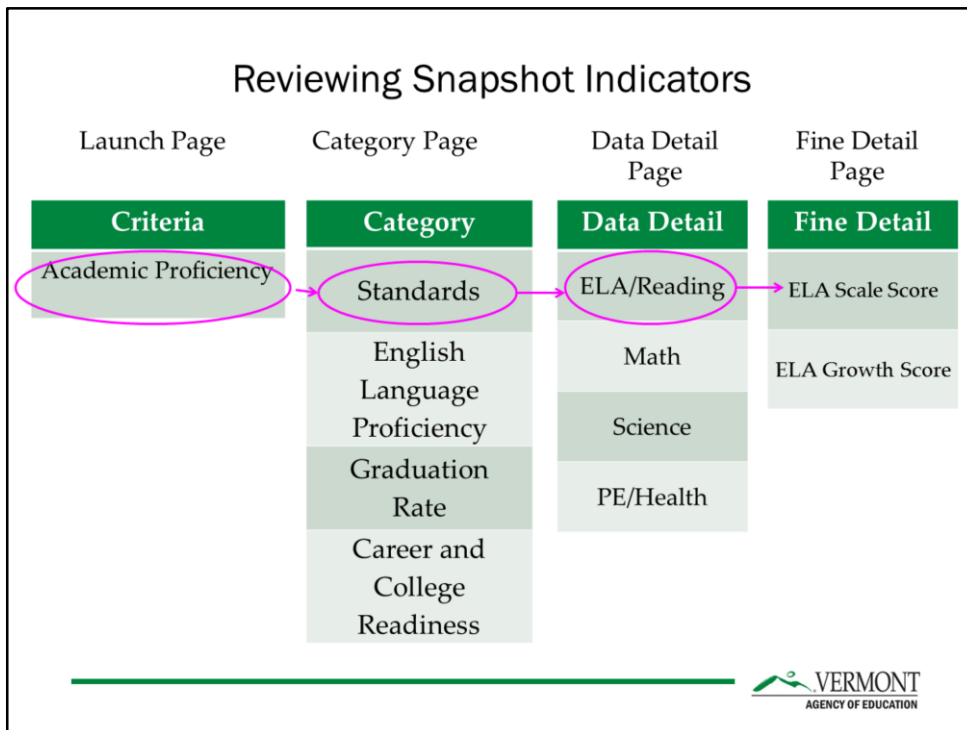
Criteria	All Students		Equity Index	
	Current	Year-to-Year Change	Current	Year-to-Year Change
 Academic Proficiency				
 Personalized Learning				
 Safe, School Climate				
 High Quality Staffing			N/A	N/A
 Financial Efficiencies			N/A	N/A



In our snapshot, we believe the launch site will provide 4 pieces of information for each criteria.

The first two columns will look specifically at data for “all students” in the school, Supervisory District/Union or the state depending on the level the filter is set to. The first column gives a data point for how the school is performing in the current year. The second lets the viewer know how much it has or hasn’t improved since last year. In this example, for academic proficiency the school was performing at “Near Target” this year (orange icon) which is an improvement over last year (yellow icon).

The last two columns examine the degree of equity in the school, Supervisory District/Union or the state by comparing how students who have been historically marginalized perform compared to students with historical privilege. For example, we would compare the performance of students eligible for free and reduced lunch to those without. Furthering the example, in academic proficiency this year the school has a great deal of difference between population groups (red icon) and made some, but not enough progress in reducing that problem since last year (orange icon).



While the main page launches to examine criteria, those who want more information can “drill down” to see ever more detailed information with the same displays at every level.

Clicking on Academic Proficiency will reveal the performance of the school, Supervisory District/Union or State on the Standards, English Language Proficiency, Graduation Rate and the Career and College Readiness measures.

Clicking on the Standards would reveal the 4 options of ELA/Reading, Math, Science, and PE/Health performance.

Clicking on ELA/Reading would then show the specific performance levels for the two indicators that generate the scores.

The actual dynamics for how the system will display information will be generated with our vendor.

Using Accountability Data to Drive Programming

- Schools and Supervisory Districts/Unions
 - Town Meeting Day and budget approval process
 - AOE Supports
 - Continuous Improvement Plan development and implementation.
 - “Needs Assessments” for federal investments
 - Comprehensive Support funds for 5% of lowest performing schools through AOE approved grant



For schools and Supervisory Districts/Unions, local decision making in response to data is handled through our town meeting day. The theory of action is that when the community understands their school’s performance on key indicators and measures, they are best equipped to determine how to shift resources in order to improve their outcomes.

However there are three specific supports that the Agency has the authority to monitor to support improved outcomes.

1. First, statute and EQS require that school systems create and implement Continuous Improvement Plans that are updated at least every two years and reviewed by the Agency. These are compared to the performance of the school system to ensure that systems are appropriately targeting areas needing improvement.
2. Second, the Agency is charged with monitoring federal investments of the Title dollars. Title 1 for students living in poverty; Title IIA for professional development; Title III for students learning English and Title IV a block grant for multiple initiatives. These Title dollars must be spent in alignment with a comprehensive needs assessment conducted by the local entity and then allocated to practices that are “evidence-based” as effective interventions. Every year, the Agency staff review the grant applications to ensure that investments meet these criteria.
3. Lastly, the Agency will be charged with monitoring the investments schools will be making if they are identified as being part of the Comprehensive Support schools (the lowest performing 5% of schools). The same criteria apply to these investments and will be made following a review by Agency staff.

Using Accountability Data to Drive Programming

- AOE
 - Work plans to support improvement
 - ≈70% of Ed Program staffing is federal fund supported
 - ≈15% of Ed Program staffing is special funds supported (licensing, tobacco, etc.)
 - ≈15% of Ed Program staffing is general fund supported



At the Agency level, our education work teams develop annual work plans to address areas of strength and weakness in state-wide efforts. In general, efforts will focus largely on improving efforts in the Academic Proficiency criteria- ELA/reading, math, science, PE/Health, English Proficiency, graduation rates and career and college ready measures- because this supports the vast majority of staffing at 70%. 15% of the Agency staff is funded through the general fund

