

Revisions to the Alternative Schools Accountability Framework: Recommendations from the Wyoming Technical Advisory Group for the Alternative School Model

October 1, 2018

Introduction

This report is produced by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment) working closely with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the Wyoming Alternative School Accountability system and leadership from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE). The report expands upon the Wyoming Alternative School Framework submitted to the Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability on October 15, 2015 and the proposed revisions to that framework submitted on July 1, 2016 and September 11, 2017. In total, these reports document the ongoing and planned maturation of the model based upon information gathered throughout the pilot and review process.

During the 2017-2018 school year, all components of the proposed alternative school framework were piloted in alternative schools. The purpose of this report is to document recommendations resulting from the TAG's work in the summer and fall of 2018 to evaluate and revise the alternative school accountability framework based on data and feedback resulting from the 2017-2018 pilot. This includes evaluation and refinement of the business rules and data collection procedures summarized in the draft version of the *2018 Wyoming School Performance Rating Model Implementation Handbook*. This report has been prepared in fulfillment of the WDE's legislative charge. In particular, this report describes:

- the TAG's final recommendations for calculating and reporting model indicators, highlighting key changes and their rationale;
- a methodology for weighting and aggregating results to establish an overall school rating;
- recommended performance expectations for each indicator and overall school-level performance descriptors;
- how the model will be used to determine the performance of alternative middle schools; and
- a set recommended resources to help stakeholders understand the purpose of the alternative school model and accurately interpret/use the model results.

Process & Goals

The TAG convened a total of five times between July and September of 2018, including two in-person meetings in Wyoming. Consistent with previous years, the TAG includes educational leaders representing a variety of roles and perspectives, including alternative school principals and superintendents. The committee also includes representatives from the WDE and consultants. The TAG included returning members and new participants. The addition of new TAG members serves to broaden the stakeholders involved in the process and further validate the reasonableness of the proposed system design. Members of the 2018 TAG are provided in Appendix A.

During each of the meetings, the Center for Assessment facilitated discussion and documented recommendations reflecting perspectives shared across the group. The committee operated by consensus to make decisions. Unless specifically noted, there are no recommendations reflected in the report for which the TAG failed to reach full consensus.

As in previous years, the TAG structured their recommendations in consideration of the goals, intended uses, and theory of action established in the initial phases of development. The overarching goals for the alternative school accountability model—as documented in the original October, 2015 framework report¹—are replicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Goals of the Alternative School Accountability Model

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Incentivize and support attainment of broad skills and appropriate credentials to promote success in a variety of post-secondary pursuits such as college and careers.2. Establish a valid measure of school performance that accounts for contextual factors unique to alternative schools.3. Increase credibility and support for Wyoming’s alternative schools
--

Discussions around how the model should be revised and extended were made in consideration of these goals and with the intent to provide school leaders with reliable information that would inform school improvement and evaluation efforts.

Most notably, this document includes proposed revisions to many of the calculations and procedures outlined in previous reports and their rationale. It also provides the TAG’s expectations for performance on each indicator and overall as a means of informing discussions by the PJP during standard setting. In total, these recommendations represent the TAG’s thinking based on the review of two years of pilot data and a clear understanding of goals of the alternative school model and how they are most likely to be achieved.

System Components

In this section, we review the major recommendations from the TAG related to design and composition of the accountability model framework. It is important to note that, while the indicators and measures underlying the framework are primarily the same, in some cases the procedures for calculating indicator results have changed. In addition, consistent with the traditional model, the TAG recommended that results be combined across indicators using a weighted index model, rather than a series of decisions tables as proposed in previous versions of this report. These changes reflect the TAG’s vision and priorities for the alternative school framework, including transparency, clarity and where appropriate, consistency with the traditional school model. They also account for factors specific to the administration of the new Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress (WY-TOPP).

¹ The original report, is located at the following link: https://1ddlxtt2jowkvs672myo6z14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Alternative-School-Accountability-Framework-Original_October-2015.pdf

The components of the framework covered in this report are:

- **Academic Performance:** the extent to which students meet identified performance standards and demonstrate appropriate annual academic growth as measured by performance on the state assessment
- **Post-Secondary Preparation:** the extent to which students 1) graduate from high schools or earn an equivalency credential 2) earn course credit and 3) demonstrate outcomes that position the student for success in college or career
- **School Quality/ Climate:** the extent to which students report that the school achieves and improves with respect to creating a safe, positive environment that promotes collaboration and is conducive to learning and growth
- **Engagement/ Student Success Plan:** the extent to which students participate in a range of activities that promote holistic development of life skills associated with post-secondary success

Figure 1 portrays the proposed components and indicators of the alternative school accountability framework. Consistent with the model defined in fall of 2017, academic performance, post-secondary preparation, school quality/climate and engagement are the factors driving a school's overall performance rating.

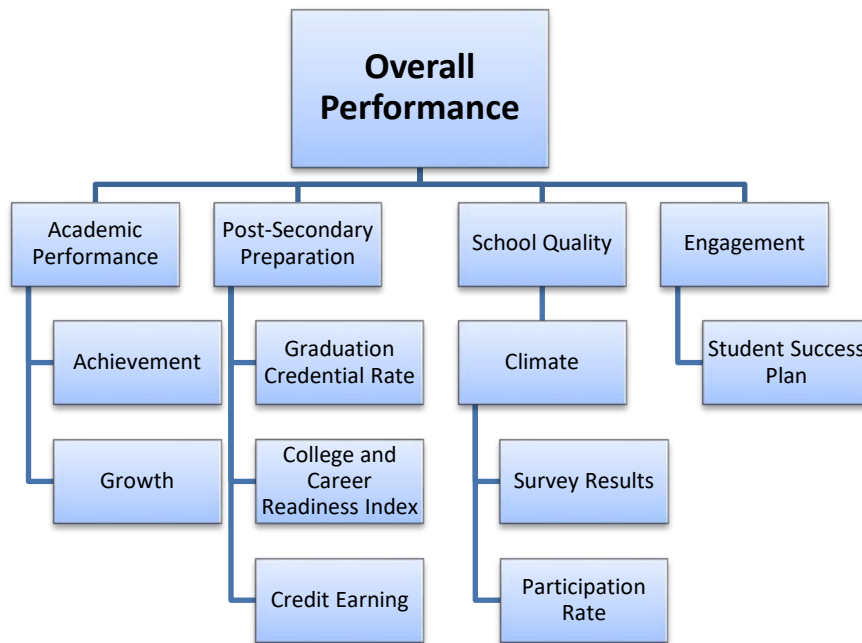


Figure 1. Revised Alternative School Accountability Framework

It is important to note that this representation is slightly different from the figure provided in the TAG's September 2017 report. The figure was revised to better reflect the TAG's decision to

aggregate results using a weighted index rather than a decision-matrix approach. In addition, in the previous model school engagement and participation in the climate survey were used to determine a school's eligibility for an overall rating of Exceeds Expectations through a Student Support Commendation. In the revised framework, participation in the school climate survey is only considered when determining a school's overall school climate rating. This will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

The remainder of this report discusses each indicator in turn, focusing on the TAG's recommendations and associated rationale. Procedures for establishing an overall index will also be discussed including the TAG's proposed weights for each indicator. Throughout the document specific attention will be given to recommendations that differ from those outlined in previous reports.

Academic Performance

Achievement

For the 2016-2017 pilot administration the TAG used an achievement index to report a school's overall academic achievement due to concerns around the appropriateness of traditional percent proficient measures. At the time, the TAG indicated that the decision to use an achievement index in lieu of percent proficiency would be revisited once 2017-2018 WY-TOPP data was available for consideration. After reviewing the 2017-2018 results, the TAG continued to express concerns around the use of percent proficiency as an indicator of alternative school achievement. By ignoring differences in the percentage of students achieving each performance level (Below Basic, Basic, etc.) percent proficiency results in a constrained distribution that does not serve to effectively differentiate the performance of alternative schools.

Accordingly, the TAG developed an achievement index, which awards points for each performance level as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Performance Categories for the Achievement Index

Performance Level	Score
Below Basic	0
Basic	50
Proficient	100
Advanced	150

A school's achievement index is calculated as the average achievement score earned over all full-academic-year students and tests.

It is important to note that this achievement index differs from the index used to calculate and report results based on the 2016-2017 pilot². The previous index utilized the performance of all

² See the *Wyoming Alternative School Accountability Pilot 2017 School Performance Rating Model Implementation Handbook* for a detailed summary of the procedures used to calculate the school achievement index for reporting in 2016-2017.

students in the state to establish a unique set of score ranges and performance levels (i.e., Level 1-Level5). These ranges were then used to “score” alternative student performance on each test with each level providing for a greater number of points (i.e., from 0 to 100 in 25 point increments). The TAG found the previous index problematic due to its complexity and inability to spread out the performance of alternative schools. Specifically, since the score ranges used to assign points to students were defined based on the performance of all students in the state, the range of observed alternative school performance did not differ greatly from that obtained using the percent proficiency metric. (Most students scored in the Level 1 or 2 ranges.) In addition, the TAG was concerned that the development of unique score ranges and performance levels for each test made it appear as if alternative school students were being held to a different set of performance standards, when this was not the case.

The new achievement index awards points to students based on the existing state-defined performance levels for each WY-TOPP test making it clear and transparent. Unlike the percent proficiency metric, which is based upon a dichotomous meets/not meets determination, the achievement index awards points based on a student's demonstrated achievement level. This not only differentiates performance among alternative schools better than the other measures considered, it also motivates schools to move *all* students from one level to the next – not only those who are close to proficiency. Given the large number of students scoring in the Below Basic range on the state test (about 55%, on average, across alternative schools), the TAG believed that awarding points for Basic performance was both appropriate and necessary to establish a more accurate picture of school performance. Similarly, to incentivize and celebrate high achievement a score of 150 points – 50 beyond that awarded for Proficient performance – is associated with the Advanced level.

Performance Expectations:

To establish performance expectations for academic achievement the TAG reviewed the distribution of school performance on the academic achievement index. They considered the performance profile underlying different index values and discussed which profiles should be considered meeting or exceeding expectations. This discussion resulted in two clear priorities that influenced the performance expectations for academic achievement as well as the other indicators in the model:

- *standards for school performance must be rigorous enough to motivate schools to improve, but not so rigorous as to be unattainable; and*
- *the standards must provide for some degree of differentiation among schools*

The TAG indicated that establishing standards that fail to differentiate would be counterproductive and contradict the TAG's goals for the alternative school accountability model. Based on these priorities and the data reviewed, the TAG provided the following expectations for meeting and exceeding the target for academic achievement:

Meets Target: Approximately 50% of the student test scores included in a school’s achievement index calculation should be associated with a performance level of Basic or higher, as reflected in an *achievement index score range of 25 to 30*.

Exceeds Target: Approximately 50% of the test scores included in a school’s achievement index calculation should be associated with a performance level of Proficient or higher, as reflected in an *achievement index score range of 45 to 50*.

Growth

The TAG confirmed its previous recommendation that Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) should be used to measure growth because it is a technically strong approach and mirrors the method used in the accountability model for all other Wyoming schools. In addition, after discussion and review of school growth data from the 2017-2018 WY-TOPP administration, the TAG indicated that performance expectations for alternative school growth (i.e., the standards defining what it means to Meet and Exceed Expectations) should not differ from those defined for traditional schools. Specifically, the TAG believed that the distribution of mean school performance for alternative schools was similar enough to that observed for traditional schools to support the use of consistent standards. In addition, the TAG suggested that improving growth was one of the places that alternative schools should excel given the individualized focus and structure of the alternative school environment. Consequently, there was no reason that the standards established for traditional schools should not also apply to alternative schools.

While the TAG understands that the traditional school PJP will ultimately determine the mean SGP values associated with meeting and exceeding the targets, given the priorities defined in the previous section, they provided the following general recommendations for consideration.

Meets Target: Mean growth score of 40, which signifies that, on average, students at the school are growing at a rate approaching the average of their academic peers

Exceeds Target: Mean growth score of 50, which signifies that on average students are growing at a rate at or higher than their academic peers

Post-Secondary Preparation

The category of post-secondary preparation is designed to incentivize and reward a broad range of accomplishments and skills associated with preparing students for success after high school. This category encompasses graduation credential rate, college and career readiness, and credit earning which are described in this section.

Graduation Credential Rate

A primary goal for students served in Wyoming’s alternative schools is successful completion of high school and earning a diploma. Many students enter alternative schools with a substantial credit deficit, which makes graduation a challenging but no less important goal for many students. Because of the importance of graduation, the TAG believes that earning a graduation credential should be an influential component of the accountability model.

Consistent with the proposal outlined in the September 2017 report, the TAC recommends that the graduation credential rate be calculated based on:

- the four-year on-time graduation cohort
- all extended-year graduates (5,6, and 7 year graduates) and
- students earning an equivalency certificate

Students falling into one of these categories are included in the numerator and all students, including non-completers who did not either take or pass a graduation equivalency exam, are included in the denominator for graduation credential rate calculations.

The graduation credential rate is a lagged indicator, so results from the 2016-2017 school year were reviewed by TAG. These results confirmed the appropriateness of the previously proposed model and informed decisions regarding appropriate expectations for alternative school performance as outlined below.

Performance Expectations

The TAG provided the following expectations for meeting and exceeding the target.

Meets Target: The TAG suggested 67% as an appropriate standard for Meeting the target because this is the criterion high schools must meet in order to avoid identification for Comprehensive Support and Improvement under ESSA. Also, this represents 4 of 6 students earning a graduation credential.

Exceeds Target: A rate of 83% was suggested as the standard for Exceeds because it represents the rate at which 5 out of 6 students receive a graduation credential.

Given the current distribution of school performance associated with this indicator, the TAG believes these standards represent rigorous yet attainable expectations that serve to effectively and meaningfully differentiate schools.

It is important to note that, given the large number of alternative school students that move out of state, the TAG is also interested in exploring whether GED's earned by previous students can be tracked and potentially included in school graduation credential rates. This is something WDE is evaluating for future discussion.

College and Career Readiness Index

College and career readiness (CCR) comprise student accomplishments with respect to Hathaway eligibility and other readiness indicators covering a range of skills and demonstrations associated with readiness for college, career, and /or the military. This component of the framework is intended to be correspondent with the definition of readiness adopted for the traditional school model, but adapted and implemented in a manner thought to be appropriate for alternative schools.

The model the TAG developed for CCR in 2017 involves creating an index based on three levels, which reflect increasingly prized outcomes for a range of accomplishments. The first level is thought to be a baseline or core accomplishment, the second level is a more advanced accomplishment, and the third level is a more ambitious goal, reflecting a highly-valued outcome

for students. The TAG feels strongly that the alternative school system should be anchored in ambitious goals that reflect high expectations for all students.

The TAG evaluated the distribution of performance from 2016-2017 for this lagged indicator to inform decision-making. The data suggest model developed in 2017 is generally working well to differentiate performance on important outcomes. However, the TAG expressed an interest in pursuing a more detailed review of data for each category of accomplishment.

The TAG made two key decisions about the CCR index at the August meeting. The first was to affirm the business rule for which students are included in the index calculations. It was recommended that the indicator include all graduates in the prior year. Consistent with other indicators, look-backs are used when necessary to reach the minimum n-size of 10.

Second, the TAG recommended some revisions to the index. The revisions elaborate the criteria for the fifth row of the index table, shown, as amended, in Table 3. The changes are as follows:

- Level 1, previously unspecified, now includes credit for internship or work-study. Credit must be verified on the student transcript.
- Level 2, previously indicated simply an ASVAB readiness score, now awards two points of credit for:
 - An ASVAB score that qualifies for all four branches of service
 - Earning one to three non-remedial college credits via dual enrollment or AP/IB
- Level 3, previously awarded credit for earning at least one non-remedial college credit, now requires four or more non-remedial course credits to access three points in the index.

These changes were made for several reasons. First, it provides more opportunity for schools to access at least one level in the index, instead of getting a zero, which would have a substantial impact on score. Second, it addresses work-study and internships, which are important experiences for post-secondary preparation. Third, the revisions provide more balance and coherence across all levels of the index. Finally, the modification at level 3 sets a more appropriately ambitious target to achieve the highest point category.

Table 3. College and Career Readiness (CCR) Index

No Points	Level 1 – 10 points	Level 2 – 20 points	Level 3 – 30 points
Student did not complete a qualifying Hathaway curriculum	Complete Hathaway provisional curriculum	Complete Hathaway opportunity curriculum	Complete Hathaway honors/ performance curriculum
ACT < 17	ACT 17-18	ACT 19-20	ACT 21 +
No evidence of pathway completion	Pathway concentrator	Pathway completion (if this can be determined)	Attaining a qualifying score on a CTE pathway exam or earning an industry credential
No evidence of qualifying Work Keys performance	Work Keys: NCRC Bronze (9-11) At least a Level 3 on each exam.	Work Keys: NCRC Silver (12-14). At least a Level 4 on each exam	Work Keys: NCRC Gold (15 or up) At least a Level 5 on each exam
No evidence of qualifying credit earning or ASVAB performance	Credit earned for internship or work study (verified by transcript)	ASVAB Military Readiness Score that qualifies for all four branches of service OR earn 1-3 non-remedial college course credits via dual/concurrent enrollment or AP/IB	Earn four (4) or more non-remedial college course credit via dual/concurrent enrollment or AP/IB

Under this illustrative model a student’s CCR index score would be the points associated with the highest observed outcome level for that student. For example a CTE pathway concentrator (Level 1) who completed the Hathaway opportunity curriculum (Level 2) and earned a total score of 11 across levels on the Work Keys (Level 1) would receive a score of 2, because completion of the opportunity curriculum represents the highest leveled outcome for this student. A school’s CCR index would be the average across all students’ CCR scores.

Performance Expectations

Prior to establishing performance expectations for the CCR index the TAG discussed the rigor associated with each possible outcome in Table 3; reflecting upon both the student effort and school support/resources required for it to be achieved. Based on this discussion and a review of school performance data the TAG provided the following expectations for meeting and exceeding the target:

<p>Meets Target: The TAG proposed an average index score of 15 as the target for meets, as this is achieved when half of the students earn level 2.0 and half earn level 1.0.</p> <p>Exceeds Target: The TAG proposed an average index score of 20 for exceeds, as this is achieved when all students score level 2.0.</p>
--

Credit Earning

Credit earning is designed to reward students for successfully completing courses, which is essential to meeting diploma eligibility requirements. Credit earning also serves the valuable

function in the alternative accountability model of providing ‘along-the-way’ information about student progress toward a successful outcome, in contrast with graduation credential rate and college and career readiness, which are ‘post-hoc’ measures computed for exiting students.

Credit earning is computed as the percent of students earning one-fourth of the credits required to graduate during that school year. This indicator is calculated for students enrolled in grades 9, 10, and 11. The TAG recommends that students included in credit earning calculations are those that in their first year of enrollment in the specified grade and who were in attendance at least from October 1 until 10 days from the end of the school year. By so doing, schools will be accountable for those students who have been served for the majority of the academic year.

Because credit earning is a lagged indicator, the TAG reviewed results from the 2016-2017 school year to evaluate the model recommendations. The TAG members agree that the indicator provides useful information that effectively differentiates school performance.

Performance Expectations

The TAG determined that having performance thresholds for credit earning consistent with graduation credential rate would be appropriate and defensible given the relationship between these indicators (i.e., students must earn credits in order to graduate from high school). In addition, the current distribution of school performance suggests that the proposed expectations will serve to effectively differentiate schools.

Meets Target: The TAG suggested 67% as an appropriate standard for Meeting the target as this is consistent with the threshold for graduation credential rate and it is important for these indicators to be closely related. 67% is achieved when 4 of 6 students meet credit earning expectations.

Exceeds Target: A rate of 83% was suggested as the standard for Exceeds because it is consistent with the Exceeds target range for graduation credential rate, representing approximately 5 out of 6 students at the school earning course credit.

School Climate

The school climate survey includes 24 items aligned to one of three reportable domains:

1. Staff Support and Respect (12 items): To what extent do students perceive staff as supporting student learning and demonstrating respect for students and other staff members?
2. Student Support and Respect (6 items): To what extent do students perceive other students as supporting student learning and respectful of one another?
3. High Expectations (6 items): To what extent are students appropriately challenged with meaningful academic work?

A list of all 24 items on the 2017-2018 school climate survey is presented in Appendix B. Schools are required to administer the survey once in fall and then again in spring. This allows for changes in performance to be monitored, and account for changes to the student population (i.e. due to transfers in/out of the system).

Scoring and Reporting

For each item on the climate survey, students are asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the statement provided from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). For each student a domain score is calculated as the average rating associated with the items in a given domain rounded to two decimal places, and a total climate score is calculated as the average of the three domain scores. For a given administration (i.e., fall or spring), a school's overall climate score is calculated as the mean total score for all students in the school that completed a survey rounded to the second decimal place.

In previous discussions the TAG suggested that improvement from fall to spring, or from one year to the next should be considered in determining a school's overall climate rating. However, due to the high mobility rate within alternative schools, the TAG determined that change in performance would not be a reliable indicator of a school's impact on improving school climate. In addition data from the 2017-2018 fall and spring administrations suggested that average school ratings did not change significantly from one administration to the next.

Ultimately the TAG recommended that the fall and spring climate scores contribute equally to a school's overall school climate rating due to the transient student population. This would allow for perspectives of students at the beginning and end of the year to contribute to a school's climate results. Therefore, an annual climate score, calculated as the average of the fall and spring overall scores will be generated for each school. This score, in conjunction with participate rate on the fall and spring administrations will be used to determine a school's overall climate rating for WAEA.

Since an overall climate score of 3.0 or greater indicates that students are, on average, providing favorable ratings the TAG indicated that this should be the goal for all schools. Data from the 2017-2018 school year suggest that this goal is both reasonable and attainable. The average annual school climate score for 2017-2018 was 3.09 for the 19 schools having sufficient N-counts. That said, there were several schools that either did not meet this criterion or demonstrated low rates of participation.

Participation

Since efforts to improve school climate rely upon the collection and consideration of high quality, reliable data the TAG recommended that participation rate play a key role in determining a school's overall school climate rating. Ideally, each alternative school would administer the survey to all of their students, but the TAG understands that, for a variety of reasons, this might not be possible. Based on participation data from the 2017-2018 pilot, the TAG agreed that a combined participation rate of 85% across the two administrations is a rigorous but necessary expectation for all schools. The combined participation rate is calculated as the percentage of all students who were eligible to participate in the Fall and Spring administrations that actually completed a school climate survey.

Performance Expectations

The TAG provided the following expectations for meeting and exceeding the target.

Does not meet target: A school does not meet the combined 85% participation rate across the fall and spring administrations OR has an annual school climate score that is below 2.75.

Meets Target: A school meets the combined 85% participation rate across the fall and spring administrations AND has an annual school climate score of 2.75 or greater.

Exceeds Expectations: A school meets the combined 85% participation rate across the fall and spring administrations AND has an annual school climate score of 3.0 or greater.

These expectations reflect the TAG's belief that reliable school climate data is necessary to support improvement and that meeting a combined participation rate of 85% across administrations is a rigorous yet attainable standard for all alternative schools. In addition, since an annual school climate score of 2.75 would indicate that students, on average, provided less than favorable school climate ratings, this was identified as a minimum threshold for meeting the standard. Furthermore, the TAG felt that meeting both performance and participation rate expectations was a high bar demonstrating a school that prioritized collecting and using school climate data.

Student Success Plan

The Student Success Plan (SSP) can be broadly conceptualized as a student-specific plan or set of objectives to accumulate evidence of positive engagement within and across school years. Schools can use templates and materials designed by the state to document and support student participation the SSP process³ or utilize existing programs and procedures provided the priority elements represented in WDE's model template are addressed.

In 2017-2018, all alternative schools participated in the student success plan and received credit. Credit is awarded when compliance is affirmed by having the principal 'sign-off' that standards were met. Schools are also required to make available artifacts demonstrating compliance upon request. At the August 2018 meeting, the TAG affirmed that the SSP component should continue to be operationalized as previously established.

The only change to SSP recommended by the TAG relates to how it influences the final school classification. This change was necessary given the decision to move to an index score in lieu of decision tables, which is detailed in the next section. SSP will continue to be a dichotomous indicator scored as met or not met. Any school that does not meet standards for SSP will have its final overall performance rating reduced by one level. This communicates the importance the TAG places on the SSP as a valuable tool to help support student achievement.

³ The administration guidance and a template for the SSP are included as Appendix C of the July 2016 Framework report.

Recommended Procedure for Establishing an Overall School Rating

Overall Index Score

In previous versions of the alternative school accountability framework, the TAG recommended an overall aggregation and reporting system based on a decision matrix. However, during the summer 2018 meetings, the TAG decided to recommend a different approach. The new approach combines performance levels in a compensatory index, in a manner that is very similar to the general model.

The correspondence with the aggregation method use for the general model is not accidental, but neither is it the sole rationale. The TAG has consistently investigated all decisions associated with the general model with the view that consistency is desirable, but only when it is appropriate and defensible. The TAG's agreed that the index based system could be implemented in a manner that supported the relationship among variables in the alternative model and the inferences about school performance that are most important. However, the TAG adopted a unique weighting system, in addition to the conjunctive criterion of SSP compliance, described in the previous section.

Any school that does not meet standards for SSP will have the final performance rating reduced by one level. This communicates the importance the TAG places on the SSP as a valuable tool to help support student achievement.

Table 4 describes the weights recommended by the TAG for the alternative school accountability system index and the rationale for these decisions.

Table 4. Index Weights and Rationale.

Indicator	Weight	Rationale
Achievement	20%	Academic achievement is important and proficiency is the goal. This indicator has been operationalized to incentivize increasing proficiency for all students no matter where they are on the ability distribution.
Growth	25%	Students will often enroll in alternative schools with an academic deficiency to bridge. In some cases, students are very far behind. High growth is necessary to support students in meeting the expectations necessary to graduation and ultimately, be successful in college and careers.
Graduation Credential Rate	25%	Graduation or attainment of graduation equivalent is the desired end goal for all students as attainment of a diploma or GED serves as a required gateway to college and careers.
Credit Earning	5%	Credit earning is tied to graduation rate. A school will not graduate students if they have a low rate of credit earning. Since these indicators are not independent the TAG limited the weight of credit earning so the cumulative weight would be reasonable
College Career	15%	This is the only indicator that looks at the extent to

Readiness		which the school prepared graduates for success after high school. Therefore, it is important to have a relatively high degree of influence in the system.
Climate	10%	A positive climate is necessary to obtain high performance in other indicator areas. Schools must collect and evaluate survey result to understand where they are need to improve, therefore high participation on both the fall and spring administrations is necessary to receive a rating of 2 or 3 on this indicator. Given the significant role of participation in scoring school performance on this indicator a moderate weight of 10% seemed appropriate to the TAG.

The final index is computed as the sum of the weighted performance of each indicator. Each indicator is expressed as a performance level (1, 2, or 3) which is multiplied by the associated weight. This is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Illustration of Final Index Computation.

Indicator	Weight	Earned Level for School	Adjusted
Achievement	20%	2	0.4
Growth	25%	1	0.25
Graduation Credential Rate	25%	2	0.5
Credit Earning	5%	3	0.15
College and Career Readiness	15%	2	0.3
Climate	10%	1	0.1
Composite Score			1.7

Overall Performance Level

The TAG developed School Performance Level Descriptors (SPLDs) for each performance level. These SPLDs describe the overall performance expectations required to earn each level. It’s important to stress that these expectations were based on a profile of an archetypal school that the TAG felt characterized the performance required to achieve each level; it is not the only qualifying profile. *Rather, the performance profiles described in the SPLD serves as the rationale for the recommended index score required for each level.*

Table 6 indicates the minimum index score required to achieve each level based on an examination of the performance profile for each SPLD applying the weights in Table 5. This information is provided as guidance to the PJP to help ensure the performance expectations reflect the design priorities of the TAG.

Table 6. Recommended Cut Scores for Each Performance Level based on the SPLDs.

Overall School Performance Level	Recommend Cut Score (Minimum Required Score)
Exceeds Expectations	2.3
Meets Expectations	1.7
Partially Meets Expectations	1.4
Does Not Meet Expectations	NA

The SPLDs are provided as Appendix C.

Participation Adjustment

As with the traditional accountability model, participation in state assessments is a requirement for the alternative model. Specifically, schools must test at least 95% of all eligible students during the testing window. If a school tests fewer than 95% of the students, non-participants will be counted as below basic. For example, if a school enrolls 20 students eligible to take the state test and 1 student does not participate, there is no consequence because the school met the 95% participation rate. However, if 2 students do not participate, one additional ‘below basic’ score will be added to the school academic achievement index.

The TAG also agrees that failure to meet the 95% participation threshold should have an impact on the overall index score for the school. Specifically, the recommends that schools below 95% participation will have the overall index score reduced by .1 points. For example, if the final index score is 1.8 and the school has only tested 90% of eligible students, the overall index score would be reduced to 1.7. This adjustment communicates the importance that is placed on full participation.

Overall School Rating for Alternative Middle Schools

Wyoming has two Alternative middle schools. School A includes grades 7-12 (8-7); school B includes grades 6-8. As alternative schools, it is WDE’s intent for both schools to receive their results based solely on the alternative high school model. Due to differences in the grades served and the number of students available to inform accountability determinations, the TAG recommended the following:

School A: A weighted index score will be calculated based on all indicators in the model. Students in grades 7-8 will contribute to the achievement, growth and climate indicator. Students in 9-12 will contribute to all indicators in the model, consistent with other alternative high schools. All students in the school will be required to participate in the SSP process. WDE will revise the SSP template so that it is appropriate for students at these grades. If the school does not meet standards for the SSP its final overall performance rating will be reduced by one level

School B: Indicator scores and performance levels will be calculated for achievement, growth, and school climate. The average performance level across these indicators will be calculated and used to assign an overall school rating based on the cut-scores defined in Table 6 (or determined by the PJP). Consistent with School A, all students will be required to participate in the SSP process.

Development of Support Materials for Stakeholders

Based on discussions with stakeholders and feedback provided to WDE the TAG suggested several resources WDE might develop to support alternative school administrators understand and address likely misconceptions related to the purpose of the alternative school accountability model and the intended use of model results. The list below summarizes potential areas of confusion the TAG believes need to be addressed to garner support for the system:

1. *To address confusion related to the implications of ESSA vs. WAEA performance ratings for alternative schools* the TAG suggested a short document discussing how and why these models differ for alternative schools and the consequences associated with different levels of performance under each (i.e., what does it mean to not meet expectations under ESSA and under WAEA)?
2. *To combat claims that the alternative model is “easier” or “less rigorous” than the traditional model* the TAG suggested a brief summarizing the purpose of the alternative school model, how and why it differs from the traditional model, and the theory of action underlying the design of alternative school accountability system. Specifically, to differentiate alternative schools and provide meaningful information that informs improvement efforts based on valid indicators of school quality and student success.
3. *To ensure that results for alternative schools are not inappropriately compared to those of traditional schools* (i.e., for common indicators such as student achievement and CCR or at the overall school rating level), the TAG stressed the need for WDE to broadly and consistently communicate why this is not appropriate and make sure results are not reported or presented in a manner that suggests the two models are comparable.
4. *To help stakeholders understand how indicator scores and the overall index are calculated* the TAG recommended the development of an Alternative Accountability Model Business Rules 101 document. Essentially a shorter, less technical version of the current Implementation Handbook.
5. *To support the interpretation and use of results from the alternative school accountability model* the TAG recommended distributing the performance level descriptors for each indicator and the overall school rating (after cut scores are established). These may be the descriptors established by the TAG or a modified version based on feedback and refinements provided by the PJP. For each indicator the document should also describe how below target performance may be addressed by elements within the state system of support (i.e., those listed for all schools or customized for alternative schools).

6. *To help administrators understand and engage in activities that will help alternative schools improve, the TAG requested that the state system of support include a list of customized options (at different Tiers) specific to the unique needs of alternative schools. Options could be identified by convening a consortium of administrators/leaders from across the state focused on key issues and promising practices.*

Application of the State System of Support for Alternative Schools

To ensure alternative schools are provided with appropriate support, the TAG stressed that the type and manner of support provided to alternative schools should be based solely on a school's performance as defined by the alternative school accountability model. The TAG indicated that the school's overall performance rating in combination with the number of years a particular rating was observed should be considered in assigning a school to a tier of support (1, 2 or 3), and determining whether support activities should be required by the state. For example, the TAG suggested that an alternative school classified as Does Not Meet for 2 or more years should be Tier 3, and engage in state-defined support activities consistent with this designation. Conversely, an alternative school classified as Partially Meets for two or more years should be classified as Tier 3, but afforded the flexibility to self-select appropriate support activities. The TAG's recommendations for assigning schools to tiers and defining supports that meet the needs of alternative schools will inform customization of the Statewide System of Support.

**Appendix A:
2018 Wyoming Alternative School Accountability Technical Advisory Group**

Name	Organization
Michael Maloney	School Principal, Sweetwater #1
Shawna Trujillo	School Principal, Natrona #1
Pier Trudelle	School Principal, Teton #1
Teresa Chaulk	District Superintendent, Lincoln #1
Mike Helenbolt	School Principal, Laramie #1
Gina Hughes	Laramie #1
Dave Barker	District Superintendent, Fremont #1
Jubal Yennie	District Superintendent , Albany #1
Scott Shoop	School Principal, Albany #1
Kathy Vetter	Wyoming Education Association
Tom Sachse	State Board of Education
Megan Degenfelder	WDE
Mike Flicek	Contractor - WDE
Dianne Frazer	WDE
Chris Domaleski	Center for Assessment
Erika Landl	Center for Assessment
Julie Magee	WDE
Christopher Gwerder	WDE
Sean McInerney	WDE

Appendix B:
Wyoming Alternative School Climate Survey for 2017-2018 School Year

Teachers at this school believe I can perform well on challenging academic work.
Teachers at this school set high standards for academic performance.
I trust the staff at this school.
I can find a classmate to help me with school work when I need it.
Students have to work hard to do well at this school.
Students at this school help each other even if they are not friends.
Students at this school treat property with respect.
I find the academic expectations challenging at this school.
Teachers at this school do not let students give up when the work gets hard.
There is at least one staff member at this school who knows me well and shows interest in my education and future.
Staff work hard to make sure that students stay in school.
I help other students when I see that they are struggling.
Students at this school treat staff with respect.
Students at this school treat each other with respect.
Students at this school are treated with respect by staff.
Teachers give me helpful suggestions about how I can improve my work in class.
Teachers at this school expect students to do their best all of the time.
Teachers at this school have high expectations for me.
Staff at this school treat me with respect
Staff at this school help students when they need it.
There is at least one student at this school who knows me well and whom I consider to be a friend.
Staff at this school make sure that I am planning for life after high school.
Staff at this school treat each other with respect.
Teachers explain things in a different way if students don't understand something.

**Appendix C:
School Performance Level Descriptors**

Category	School Performance Level Descriptor						
Exceeds	<p>Recognizes an exemplary school that exceeds accountability performance targets. Students meet or exceed academic expectations and demonstrate readiness for post-secondary success. The school has established a positive, supportive learning environment. Students at the school meet or exceed expectations for academic achievement, growth, AND graduation credential rate; at least one of these indicators must be exceeds. Students meet or exceed on readiness AND credit earning. Students exceed expectations for climate AND fulfill all requirements for the SSP</p>						
	Achieve-ment	Growth	Graduation Credential Rate	Readiness	Credit Earning	Climate	Student Success Plan
	<i>At least one of these must exceed AND no indicator is below meets.</i>			<i>Meets or higher required for both indicators.</i>		<i>Exceeds required.</i>	<i>Meeting requirements is required.</i>
Meets	<p>Recognizes a school that meets accountability performance targets. Students meet academic expectations or are progressing at a suitable rate. Students demonstrate readiness for post-secondary success with some exception. The school has established a positive, supportive learning environment. Minimum of meets expectations on two of the following three areas: achievement, growth, and graduation credential rate. Minimum of meets expectations on readiness index. The school's climate meets expectations.</p>						
	Achieve-ment	Growth	Graduation Credential Rate	Readiness	Credit Earning	Climate	
	<i>At least two must meet expectations.</i>			<i>Readiness meets expectations.</i>		<i>Meets required.</i>	
Partially Meets	<p>Recognizes a school that partially meets accountability performance targets. Students inconsistently meet academic expectations for performance or progress. Many students demonstrate readiness for post-secondary success, but improvement is required.</p> <p>At least one of achievement, growth, or graduation credential rate meets expectations. At least one of readiness index or credit earning meets expectations. Climate meets expectations.</p>						
	Achieve-ment	Growth	Graduation Credential Rate	Readiness	Credit Earning	Climate	
	<i>At least one meets expectations.</i>			<i>At least one meets expectations.</i>		<i>Meets required.</i>	
Does not meet	<p>Identifies a school that has not met the state's standard for performance. Students are inconsistent in achieving performance standards and/or demonstrating readiness for post-secondary success. The school has multiple areas that require significant improvement.</p>						