

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



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RECOMMENDATION SUBMITTAL

DATE: February 13, 2014

TO: Catherine Payne, Vice Chairperson and Interim Chairperson

FROM: Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Performance and Accountability Committee

AGENDA ITEM: Action on School-Specific Measures Within Academic Performance
Framework Regarding Assigned Weights and Tiered Weighting System

I. DESCRIPTION

That the Performance and Accountability Committee (“Committee”) make a recommendation to the Commission to establish an appropriate weight for the School-Specific Measures within the Academic Performance Framework.

II. AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §302D-2, “[a]ny charter school holding a charter to operate under Part IV, subpart D, of chapter 302A, as that subpart existed before July 11, 2006, and any charter school holding a charter to operate under chapter 302B as it existed before June 19, 2012, shall be considered a charter school for the purposes of this chapter under a charter contract with the commission unless the charter contract is revoked, transferred to another authorizer, or not renewed, or the charter school voluntarily closes.”

Section 4.1.1 of the State Public School Charter Contract provides that “the School’s academic performance under this Contract shall be evaluated based on the School’s record of performance according to the State accountability system as may be amended from time to time consistent with State and federal requirements and shall give due consideration to the School’s performance based on any Commission-approved school-specific indicators adopted by the School.”

III. BACKGROUND

At the December 5, 2013 Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, a weight range of 0-40% was recommended for School-Specific Measures and forwarded to the Performance and Accountability Committee. This was based in part on research finding that Idaho was the state that, at 40%, weighted school-specific academic performance measures the most heavily of any authorizer staff was able to identify.

The Committee assisted in developing a list of “Guiding Statements” for use in developing the Academic Performance Framework. The Guiding Statements were revised and presented to the full Commission and approved at its December 12, 2013 general business meeting. The recommendation within this submittal stems from Guiding Statement #3 which states:

“The state accountability system as approved and adopted for public schools statewide will provide a basis for assessing the record of performance for Hawaii’s charter schools. Supplementing the state accountability system is an opportunity to enhance validity and reliability of the assessment of academic performance consistent with available methodology and data.

Charter schools are, first and foremost, public schools. Charter school academic performance should be transparent and accountable to both the Commission and the public. Therefore, the state accountability system will serve as an important indicator of charter school academic accountability.”

IV. DECISION MAKING STATEMENT

While staff did not intend for the Committee to use Idaho’s practice as the guiding example, staff has continued to research Idaho’s use of a 40% School-Specific Measure. There are two important features of Idaho’s assignment of a weight of 40% worth noting.

First, the School-Specific Measure is mandatory in Idaho, not optional as the Commission has determined. This was an attempt by the authorizer in Idaho to provide consistency among the measures for the schools it evaluates. All Idaho School-Specific Measures are approved after a long and detailed dialogue between the school and authorizer. Further, Idaho’s authorizer requires a submission of a minimum of three (maximum of seven) School-Specific Measures; this means that no single measure is worth 40%. Conversely, we have directed the schools to start with the development of one School-Specific Measures on a pilot basis and potentially develop additional School-Specific Measures at a later time.

Second—and critically—the Idaho’s School-Specific Measures was utilized in such a way that the School-Specific Measures could not trump the state’s accountability system. For an Idaho charter school to be elevated in their reporting system, the school must first meet a minimum performance level as measured by the state system. Within this model, a school cannot be scored as a “Meeting,

or Exceeding Standard” school under the authorizer’s framework without meeting minimum state accountability requirements.¹

Because the Strive HI Performance System (“Strive HI”) is a proportionally-based system, no minimum level of performance is set. This is an important consideration for the Commission when finalizing the Academic Performance Framework. Should the Commission determine that a minimum level of performance in Strive HI is warranted, a further discussion of determining that minimum will need to be prioritized.

In addition to the greater need to establish a minimum performance level for a highly weighted School-Specific Measure, the utilization of a 40% weighted School-Specific Measure creates two specific problems: (1) the performance of a school as measured by Strive HI can become obscured, and (2) comparability between schools becomes problematic. The charts below illustrate this dilemma.

Weighted Measures (Chart

Schools receive points on each measure, from 1 to 100, based on performance on each measure:					
Exceeds standard - 76-100 points					
Meets standard - 51-75 points					
Below standard - 26- 50 points					
Falls far below standard - 0-25 points					
Measure	1. Standard Goals: API (0-100)	2. Standard Goals: Subgroup Performance (0-100)	3. Standard Goals: Comparison (0-100)	4. Optional Goals: School-Specific Academic (0-100)	Total Overall Score (1 to 100)
Points awarded to school for measure (Example)	10	30	30	100	
Sample Weights #1	30%	35%	35%	0%	24
Sample Weights #2	24%	28%	28%	20%	39.2
A) Sample Weights #3	18%	21%	21%	40%	54.4

Chart A above shows a distribution of weighting scenarios. The Overall Scores in the chart represent the scoring of a single school, the associated weights, and the effect of choosing zero, 20%, or 40% weighting for a School-Specific Measure. This chart assumes a very low performance for this school among the first three weighted indicators. Points are awarded based on the school’s performance on each of the indicators.

There are two noticeable effects in this distribution. First, notice the drastic reduction of the weights for Indicators 1-3 when applying a weight of 40% to the school specific measure. The single measure, or the combination of measures for the school specific category, doubles the weight of any other measure in the Academic Performance Framework. Second, with the application of a 0% School-Specific Measure (the school opted-out of the School-Specific Measure), the overall score changes by 30.4 percentage points. This drastic swing is problematic because it creates

¹Idaho’s Performance Framework, available at: http://chartercommission.idaho.gov/Performance%20Certificate/Performance_Certificate.asp. Accessed November 25, 2013.

inconsistency in the scoring of schools and makes an objective evaluation of the academic performance of this school is difficult to produce.

Decision Making and Comparative Issues—Decision Making Between Schools

Schools receive points on each measure, from 1 to 100, based on performance on each measure:

Exceeds standard - 76-100 points			
Meets standard - 51-75 points			
Below standard - 26- 50 points			
Falls far below standard - 0-25 points			

(Chart B) Aloha Academy

Measure	1. Standard Goals: API	2. Standard Goals: Subgroup Performance	3. Standard Goals: Comparison	4. Optional Goals: School-Specific Academic	Total Overall Score (1 to 100)
Points awarded to school for measure	60	60	60	0	
Aloha Academy	30%	35%	35%	0%	60

(Chart C) Akamai Charter School

Measure	1. Standard Goals: API	2. Standard Goals: Subgroup Performance	3. Standard Goals: Comparison	4. Optional Goals: School-Specific Academic	Total Overall Score (1 to 100)
school for measure (Example)	20	40	40	100	
Akamai Charter School	20%	20%	20%	40%	60

Comparability and decision making become complicated when there are drastic variances in the assigned weights within the framework, as illustrated by Charts B and C.

Notice that Aloha Academy and Akamai Charter School received the same overall score of 60. Both receive a rating of “Meets Standard.” Notice also that Aloha Academy utilized a 40% School-Specific Measure and Akamai Charter opted not to employ a School-Specific Measure. The use of a single, 40% weighted, School-Specific Measure effectively trumped the Below Standard performance of Akamai Charter in the Subgroup Performance and Comparison indicators. Further, the impact of the School-Specific Measure is magnified when you consider that a single measure has out-weighted a combination of measures within the Subgroup and Comparison indicators. If a decision were to be made between these two schools and the deciding factor was superior academic performance based on the Academic Performance Framework result, deciding which school is the better academic performer is not clear. Justifying and reporting Akamai Charter School as a high academic performing school in the same manner as Aloha Academy is problematic.

For the two reasons mentioned above, the Performance and Accountability Committee recommends a cap of 25% assigned weight for a single, or combination of School-Specific Measure(s) within the Academic Performance Framework. The cap of 25% prevents the scenario illustrated in Chart A where the Commission reporting would need to justify the passing score for a low performing school.

Additionally, the Committee has directed staff to explore by way of feedback from schools and other stakeholders, a determination of a minimum performance measure. This method ensures that state accountability is not replaced by the weight of a School-Specific Measure.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Motion to the Commission:

“Moved that the Commission adopt a maximum assigned weight of 25% for School-Specific Measures within the Academic Performance Framework.”

AND

“Moved that staff determine a minimum state accountability requirement. Only schools meeting this minimum requirement will be eligible for approval of Tier 2 Measures (25% Tier Measures).”