

Minutes
AIMS Task Force
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

The AIMS Task Force held a meeting at the Rio Salado Conference Center, 2323 W. 14th Street, Tempe, Arizona. The meeting was called to order at 9:37 AM

Members Present:

Dr. Jim Zaharis
Dr. Deborah Gonzalez
Dr. Charles Santa Cruz
Dr. Joe O'Reilly
Dr. Alan Storm
Ms. Melinda Jensen
Dr. Chuck Essigs

Members Absent:

1. Call to order Dr. Zaharis
2. Roll call Mr. Yanez
3. Consideration to approve minutes Dr. Zaharis
 - January 14, 2009
Motion by Dr. Storm to approve the January 14, 2009 minutes.
Second by Dr. O'Reilly.
Motion passes
Dr. Essigs did not attend the January 14th meeting and recused himself from voting.
 - January 28, 2009
Motion by Dr. Gonzalez motioned to approve the January 28th minutes.
Second by Dr. Essigs.
Motion Passes
4. Presentation and discussion regarding the use of college placement tests in state assessment systems

Dr. Zaharis said that the Task Force has come to the end of the input phase and he also stated that the topic of the presentation was the use of college placement and the assessment systems in the nation.

Dr. Garcia introduced two ASU students that would be presenting and stated that the topic of the presentation would be used of college placement tests and the state assessment systems. Dr. Garcia stated that the initial question was how other states were using college placement assessments for high stakes purposes. He explained that states use these assessments much like what the Task Force members have conceptualized-as more of a service to the students; not a high stakes test.

Dr. Garcia said Stacey Long-Genovese presented the policy details per state.

Ms. Long-Genovese stated that states have several things in common. She noted that some offer the ACT assessment free of charge. Most of the states that have the ACT available for students do not use the assessment results as part of students' graduation requirements. The assessment is mostly to motivate students to attend college. States are also collaborating with community colleges and university systems. Students in the state of

Colorado are required to take the assessment. Other states students can choose to take the assessment. It was also found that the ACT could be used as part of the 11th grade assessment exam. Some states have intergraded portions of the ACT to their exams. Another commonality is that early assessments are administered in 8th grade. Some states use the Explore and Plan method which is used to assess college readiness.

Mr. Eman Yarrow presented the Maine assessment model:

- Test Preparation
 - PSAT
 - Access enhanced online score report
 - Prepare for the SAT with a customized study plan, based on PSAT/NMSQT results.
 - View a starter list of colleges determined by home state and indicated choice of major
 - Connect to detailed profiles of colleges, majors, and careers
- Test Administration
 - Trained Test Administrators
 - First Saturday of May
 - Most academic preparation time prior to testing
 - Typically outside of the snow and flue seasons
 - No scheduling conflicts
- Test Payment
 - Test Payment
 - Discounted rate
 - State pays College Board directly
 - State reimburses schools travel expenses
 - College board pays honoraria to schools

Dr. Garcia stated that the Maine Department of Education administers the test in May on a Saturday. Dr. Garcia said there is further information on the logistics of this state in the packet provided to the Task Force members. Dr. Garcia provided statistics for the southwestern states and the variations of an increase of students taking the ACT exam in some states and a significant decrease in other states. These statistics can be used to anticipate similar trends in Arizona if the ACT exam was to be used as a requirement for students.

Dr. Essigs asked what the national average was for students taking the ACT and Dr. Garcia stated that there is a slight increase compared to the percentage in Arizona. Dr. Garcia said the statistics for the northeastern states are different because these states do not have the community college system they have more University systems and the participation rates are higher.

Dr. Garcia asked what the members would like to be provided in terms of the final stage of the input phase; he stated that specific ideas can now be articulated and with the approval of the members he can start working with the students to put together the concrete ideas and how these ideas may work for the students in Arizona.

Dr. Zaharis stated that a presentation on 3rd and 8th grade promotion would be helpful. Dr. Garcia said that information will be provided at a future meeting.

Dr. Zaharis asked the members if they had any other input or questions related to the information presented at the past meetings or the present meeting or further information they would like to request. The members did not have further questions or comments.

Dr. Zaharis continued with the discussion of the interest on the ACT, SAT or any other measure of college career readiness. Dr. Zaharis stated he would like to take the last 45 minutes of the meeting to discuss the specifics of the ideas the members will want to have as part of the final report.

Dr. Garcia stated that the purpose of the presentation was not to focus on the ACT or the SAT exams but to inform how other states are using alternative ways to assess college and career readiness.

Dr. O'Reilly questioned whether the state would be able to afford the cost of using a college placement exam.

Ms. Roberta Alley stated that Colorado's cost per student is \$30. She added that the test is administered on a single day and there is a makeup day. She stated that 57,000 11th graders were tested at the last administration.

Dr. Zaharis thanked Ms. Alley for providing the information and bringing the members update for a state with a universal application.

Dr. Garcia asked for clarification from Dr. O'Reilly on considering a voluntary exam due to the budget constraints; he asked if Dr. O'Reilly would be in favor of a mandatory assessment if there were no budget constraints.

Dr. O'Reilly stated that he believes there might be other options such as working with districts to make sure that skills that are not measured through a multiple choice test can be assessed.

Dr. Zaharis reviewed what the Task Force has come to agreement with. Dr. Zaharis stated that short term recommendations should be budget neutral and/or make recommendations that will address the current budget constraints.

Dr. O'Reilly stated that he has concerns about only evaluating college readiness during students' junior year. He noted that this could be too late.

Task Force members requested information on the cost for the NRT.

Dr. Gonzalez supported the idea of having a NRT test for students, but she is not comfortable with administering the test only once at a freshman level. Ms. Jensen suggested that the test should be offered to students their sophomore year in high school.

Dr. Balentine shared that there is a legislative proposal that would allow a certain score on a college placement exam to substitute for passing the AIMS test. She said that there is some potential that given a proper threshold ACT or SAT requirement could reduce some cost from the AIMS administration.

The Task Force members discussed what assessments they would like to consider starting at the 8th grade level through high school graduation:

8th ECAPS

9th College potential (state paid replace NRT mandatory)

10th AIMS 4 admin. /limit writing

11th College placement (state subsidized voluntary/strongly encouraged)

- Off the shelf
- Augmented

- Collaborative
- End of Course
Career Readiness (voluntary)
- CTE Program Requirements
- Other test (i.e. work keys, RI)

Ms. Jensen stated that she was concerned with eliminating or limiting the writing portion.

Mr. Yanez stated that the NRT must be administered at least once per year to all students in grades 2 through 12.

Dr. Zaharis stated that in Arizona schools there are a variety of models for each grade level there for administering a college or career readiness test at one year rather than the other can make a big difference in the outcome. Dr. Zaharis recommended substituting the Terra Nova test with an NRT test to be administered at the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade. Ms. Jensen added that the grade level discussion depends on the type of test; with an ACT or SAT type of test it would have to be administered at a higher grade. Dr. O'Reilly added that the test selection will also determine the cost.

Dr. Garcia recommended that a test administration at the 9th grade level may be mandatory and a second administration at the 11th grade level could be optional.

Task Force members had a general discussion regarding the possibility of limiting the writing test administrations.

Mr. Yanez stated that writing is mandatory according to state statute in four grade levels; currently it is administered in seven grade levels.

Ms. Cheryl Lebo stated that the department is currently considering areas where the cost could be reduced for the writing assessment. Dr. Zaharis asked if the department could provide the task force recommendations to grade writing and reduce the cost once the department had the information.

Dr. Essigs left at 11:05am

Dr. Gonzales said a college placement test could be used as part of the writing assessment requirements.

Dr. Santa Cruz asked what the training involved to score writing assessments. Ms. Alley stated that the training is very intense per trait.

Dr. Zaharis stated that the information on the 3rd and 8th grade assessments will be presented on 25th of March.

Dr. Garcia will provide members with various options and the ASU team will work with the department. Dr. Karen Nicodemus will also present to the Task Force on the 11th.

Dr. Storm suggested that the March 25th meeting be held in Tucson; Dr. Zaharis stated that the meeting on March 25th will need to be rescheduled.

Mr. Yanez stated he will find another date close to March 25th that will work for all the members and the meeting will be held in Tucson.

- Ms. Kris Zavoli, College Board, Director of State Government Relations. Ms. Zavoli stated that the ACT volume for the class of 2008 was 11,000 and the College Board was 21,000. At the 10th grade level in the state of Arizona the volume went from 13,000 to 18,000 students in a two year period. Ms. Zavoli provided further information regarding the College Board test and stated that they will be supporting the National Math Science Initiative.
- Mr. Kevin Brackney, Superintendent of Show Low USD. Mr. Brackney suggested setting aside 5 days at the end of the school year for testing. This would require having a statewide ending date for the school year.

6. Adjournment
11:51AM

