

**Wyoming Alternative School  
Accountability Framework:**

**Recommendations from the Alternative  
Accountability Advisory Committee**

**A Report Submitted to the Wyoming Department of  
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## Introduction

This report provided by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment) to the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) serves the following purposes:

- Documenting the process used and recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Group - hereafter termed the Alternative Accountability Advisory Committee (AAAC) for the WY Alternative School Accountability Framework (ASAF).
- Highlighting the rationale behind the AAAC's design recommendations.
- Explaining the recommended components and indicators in the model and providing some design illustrations to show how the recommendations could be operationalized.
- Describing required next steps and the activities/resources necessary to support them.

Wyoming Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 87 calls for revisions to the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) to include the establishment of a separate alternative school accountability system. The impetus for the proposed revision came largely out of concerns about the appropriateness of the general accountability model for making valid inferences about the performance of alternative schools— schools that often differ from traditional schools with respect to the type and number of students served, the degree of flexibility necessary to support success, school climate, and the schools' specified mission and goals. Such characteristics are consistent with the state's definition of alternative schools as “models that offer educational programs to students with educational needs, which the district finds are not appropriately met by other schools in the district.”<sup>1</sup>

In response to the call for revisions, WDE formed the AAAC to serve as a technical advisory group working in conjunction with the WDE “to develop a valid and reliable accountability model” that conforms to the principles and purposes of WAEA. The advisory group was charged with producing recommendations for the model no later than October 15, 2015.

WDE recognized that this work required going beyond evaluating and modifying the general accountability system to establishing a new system with valid indicators of alternative school performance, one that would both provide the foundation for an overall school rating and facilitate the attainment of alternative school goals. To meet this objective, the WDE contracted with the Center for Assessment to develop and implement a process in partnership with WDE staff that would guide AAAC members in establishing a coherent, comprehensive accountability framework

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<sup>1</sup> From W.S. 21-13-309(m)(v)(B):

through articulation of following:

1. Goals of the accountability system and the intended uses of system results
2. Features characterizing high quality alternative schools
3. Important indicators of alternative school performance
4. Key design principles and priorities that inform the manner in which indicators should be defined, measured and combined.

In addition to facilitating the AAAC's work with WDE staff, the Center for Assessment agreed to develop this report to document the process used to gather input from AAAC members and the resulting recommendations. This report begins with an overview of the AAAC's role and provides a summary of the set of topics and different approaches used to gather input and recommendations from all members. Following the summary of the process, we document the Theory of Action underlying the design of the system (e.g., goals, intended uses, desired outcomes) and the design principles articulated by the AAAC. Subsequently, we capture the AAAC's recommendations related to key indicators and measures and how they should be prioritized, combined and reported within the context of the system. To illustrate possible approaches for implementing the AAAC's recommendations, we provide options for consideration throughout the document. We also provide guidance regarding a process to operationalize the model.

### **The Role of the AAAC**

To begin the process of establishing a new alternative school accountability model, the WDE convened a technical advisory group termed the Alternative Accountability Advisory Committee (AAAC). The committee is comprised of 10 educational leaders representing a variety of roles and perspectives, including five alternative school principals and two superintendents with alternative schools in their districts. The complete list of AAAC members is located in Appendix A.

At the start of each meeting, AAAC members were reminded of their charge, specifically to:

- determine design priorities for Wyoming's alternative school accountability system and document them in an accountability framework; and
- understand and articulate policy priorities and translate them into specific design recommendations by October 15, 2015

The AAAC was asked to discuss ideas broadly and identify shared values. In the case of disagreement, which was very infrequent, this report notes the range of views expressed. Ultimately, the committee served as an advisory group with the power to make recommendations and inform design decisions based on identified policy priorities. The AAAC understands that these recommendations will be reviewed by the Wyoming Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability and other groups, and may be accepted or revised to inform state accountability policy.

From May to September of 2015, the AAAC convened once a month for a total of 5 meetings. Table 1 presents an outline of topics addressed at each meeting.

**Table 1. Topics Addressed in AAAC Meetings**

Meeting Date/ Location	Topics Addressed
May 14-15, 2015  Casper, WY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of Wyoming alternative schools</li> <li>• Design of the current WY school accountability model</li> <li>• Elements of accountability systems</li> <li>• State examples of alternative school accountability models</li> <li>• Distinguishing characteristics of WY’s alternative schools</li> <li>• Goals, priorities and design considerations for the alternative school model</li> </ul>
June 18, 2015  Casper, WY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed theory of action for the alternative school model</li> <li>• School climate</li> <li>• Current procedures for calculating academic growth using student growth percentiles (SGPs)</li> <li>• Potential indicators of post-secondary readiness</li> </ul>
July 15, 2015  Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements and examples of school climate surveys</li> <li>• Establishing an index of attainment</li> <li>• Considerations related to the definition and inclusion of trans-academic skills</li> </ul>
August 14, 2015  Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an indicator of student engagement</li> <li>• Indicator categories and performance designations</li> <li>• Prioritization and aggregation of indicator measures</li> </ul>
September 21, 2015  Casper, WY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial draft of accountability framework</li> <li>• Weighting and prioritizing indicators</li> <li>• Consequences and supports</li> <li>• Next steps</li> </ul>

In May and June, AAAC members worked on achieving consensus on elements of the theory of action and key policy priorities that would drive the design of the system. They identified potential indicators and associated measures for inclusion in the model, and outlined design features required to support the intended use of results. In July and August, the members clarified their initial recommendations by discussing the intent and rationale of each proposed indicator, potential measures of those indicators, and different procedures for aggregating and reporting results. Throughout each discussion, the committee was reminded to consider the overarching goals of the system and the AAAC’s consensus hypothesis as to how those goals would most

likely be obtained (i.e., as reflected in the theory of action.)

One of the initial procedures used to facilitate these discussions, as shown in Table 2, included having AAAC members list features they believed best distinguished a high quality/effective alternative school. This activity supported the identification of important measures of school performance that either a) did not exist in the traditional model, or b) existed but were not operationalized in manner perceived as appropriate for alternative schools. Based on these discussions, the AAAC proposed the inclusion of two new indicator categories, school climate and student engagement, and suggested modifications to the manner in which some traditional components (e.g., student achievement and readiness) were defined.

For example, while the metrics used to represent student achievement and growth will likely remain the same, the AAAC recommended that the standards representing ‘expected’ or ‘met target’ performance within the context of the model be re-examined for student achievement. Similarly, while Hathaway, graduation rate and credit earning are still considered important “readiness” indicators, additional outcome measures such as post-secondary credit earning and attainment of a certification or credential were also flagged for inclusion. Finally, for all proposed indicators, the AAAC voiced concerns about the impact of small N-size and student demographics on overall school performance. It was recommended that procedures be carefully operationalized to ensure that schools were not inadvertently put at a disadvantage due to either of these two factors.

Subsequent work will be necessary to inform final design decisions and to establish performance standards by a Professional Judgment Panel (PJP). These standards will be used to determine overall school ratings for state and federal accountability. In addition, we recommend further investigation on promising approaches for providing effective consequence and supports that should be associated with different profiles (i.e., across indicators) of school ratings. We stress that consequences and supports are a vital component of comprehensive accountability systems; however, a full treatment of this topic is beyond the charge of the AAAC.

### **Process Used to Solicit Input and Recommendations**

To welcome and encourage a diversity of opinions, both small and large group discussions were used to develop recommendations. For each AAAC meeting, the Center for Assessment in partnership with WDE presented different design options and considerations in reference to the set of topics noted in Table 1. AAAC members were then asked to provide their feedback and recommendations through facilitated discussions, activities and (occasionally) standardized feedback forms. Table 2 presents the procedures and discussions used to gather input from AAAC members at each meeting.

**Table 2. Inventory of procedures/discussions used to collect input from the AAAC**

Meeting Date	Methods
May 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual reflection followed by small group activity to identify:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- elements of the current accountability system that do/do not work well for alternative schools</li> <li>- features characterizing high quality alternative schools and measures that might be used to quantify those features. (See Appendix B)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Large group discussion with the goal of gauging consensus on topics reference above</li> <li>○ Individual reflection followed by large group discussion of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the importance of comparability within alternative schools, across years; between alternative schools; and between alternative and traditional schools</li> <li>- indicators that must/must not be included in the alternative school model</li> <li>- constraints or group values that should drive design decisions (e.g., flexibility, comparability, transparency, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Presentation of a draft theory of action (TOA) for the WY Alternative School Accountability model</li> <li>○ Large group discussion and feedback regarding the appropriateness of each TOA element (goals, uses, intended outcomes, design principles) and any missing or misrepresented elements</li> <li>○ Overview of the procedures used to calculate student growth (i.e., student growth percentiles)</li> <li>○ Sharing of approaches for conceptualizing school climate and college/career readiness using different state accountability models as exemplars</li> <li>○ Large group discussion organized to elicit the AAAC’s priorities related to school climate and readiness</li> </ul>

July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sharing of the components of a teacher-focused school climate survey (e.g., Advanced Ed.)<sup>2</sup> and provision of sample items/questions for discussion</li> <li>○ Large group discussion regarding adequacy of survey measures as representing overall school climate</li> <li>○ Illustration of how an attainment index might be calculated using Hathaway, graduation rate and other desired outcomes</li> <li>○ Group discussion/brainstorm about the definition of trans-academic skills and key elements to represent in the model</li> </ul>
August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proposed options for incorporating student engagement as an indicator in the model</li> <li>○ Facilitated group discussion targeted at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluating member reaction to and perceived feasibility of the proposed student engagement model</li> <li>• getting feedback on alternative options for this indicator</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Presentation of the proposed reporting structure for the current model side by side with the traditional model</li> <li>○ Facilitated group discussion to collect feedback regarding the proposed reporting structure and how indicators should be prioritized and combined</li> </ul>
September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitated discussion of each element of the draft framework report</li> <li>○ Structured activity to collect information from each AAAC member about how the different indicators and categories should be prioritized in the model (See Appendix C)</li> <li>○ Facilitated group discussion to determine degree of consensus regarding prioritization</li> <li>○ Group discussion around potential consequences/supports for the alternative model</li> </ul>

For each of the major areas requiring careful consideration, the Center structured and facilitated different discussions and activities with AAAC members to ensure that targeted, actionable feedback could be obtained. Due to the use of webinars in July and August, the type of interactions and activities possible were slightly constrained, but panelists were still given ample opportunity to reflect and provide feedback on displayed material. In addition, to ensure the comments provided by the group were accurately represented in the framework, each meeting started by reiterating common thinking and outlining proposed revisions to the system based on

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<sup>2</sup> The specific survey reviewed was a version of the Advanced Education School Climate Survey for Teachers. See: <http://www.advanc-ed.org/services/surveys>

previous group discussion. Therefore, AAAC members were given multiple opportunities to review, question and expand upon prior recommendations.

During each of the AAAC meetings, the Center for Assessment captured meeting notes to document recommendations reflecting majority perspectives shared across the group, and highlight areas where one or two members dissented. The meeting notes served as a running record from May through September to ensure that all members agreed with the set of key recommendations reached and that all critical decision points and issues had been adequately framed. In this report, the recommendations and issues reflected include all updates and edits provided by WDE or AAAC members. In the next section, we address the theory of action and design principles established by the AAAC to guide their discussions and anchor their recommendations throughout the framework development process.

### **Theory of Action and Design Principles**

A theory of action (TOA) is a coherent argument or plan that clearly indicates how the design of an accountability system will provide for the attainment of specified goals. A comprehensive TOA for an education accountability system outlines goals of the system, the manner in which results are intended to be used, and the hypothesized mechanism by which desired results will be achieved. It also specifies the outcomes that should be observed if the system is working as intended and the indicators that will be used to evaluate their attainment. Finally, a well formulated theory of action supports coherence across multiple accountability initiatives by ensuring that design components work with, rather than against, one another. For these reasons, the AAAC devoted considerable time to develop and establish consensus on the theory of action early in the process.

*Goals* articulate, at a high level, what the system is intended to accomplish or afford and are the driving force behind most design decisions. Based on discussions with AAAC, the primary goals of the WY educational accountability system for alternative schools are outlined in the first column of Table 3. The hypothesized mechanism by which each goal will be achieved is also provided. This latter information is critical because it outlines the AAAC's beliefs regarding the activities, interactions and supports most likely to bring about change and therefore important to prioritize in the design of the system.

**Table 3. Goals and Proposed Mechanism for Change**

Goals of the Accountability System	Mechanism by which Goals will be Attained
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the development and provision of a school climate characterized by flexibility, an engaged community and personalized support.</li> <li>• Establish a set of indicators that help schools evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs.</li> <li>• Encourage the development of programs, initiatives, and collaborations that serve to increase student opportunities for success.</li> </ul>
Establish a valid measure of school performance that accounts for contextual factors unique to alternative schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for a reasonable degree of flexibility with respect to the manner in which indicators are selected, operationalized and calculated for a given alternative school (i.e., enough to allow for valid inferences, but not too much to restrict the ability to make any comparisons among alternative schools).</li> </ul>
Increase credibility and support for WY’s alternative schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish transparency around the procedures used to evaluate student and school performance for purposes of accountability and their rationale.</li> </ul>

*Intended uses* are the ways in which the data and/or information resulting from the system are expected to be used. To be relevant and defensible, each intended use should align to one or more of the goals outlined for the system. Although information resulting from WY’s alternative accountability system may support a variety of locally defined uses, the AAAC agreed that the design of the system and associated reporting structure should support the following priority uses for all alternative schools:

- inform local decisions related to the quality of new programs or initiatives
- allow for comparisons between and among alternative schools within and across years (with respect to some indicators of school performance) with the goal of identifying areas of weakness or variability
- report changes/improvements in alternative school performance over years

*Desired outcomes* are the observable, measurable changes you want to occur as a result of system implementation. Outcomes serve to answer the question “What results do I expect to see if the system is working as intended?” and therefore support system evaluation.

Based on advisory group discussion some of the outcomes that would be expected to occur if the accountability system was having the desired impact are outlined below.

- Increased graduation rates (4 year and extended) and/or earning an indicator of completion (e.g., GED or equivalent)
- High rates of attendance
- Gains in achievement, as measured using the state selected academic assessment or national assessments such as ACT.
- Increased rates of academic growth
- More students leaving high-school with a credential or post-secondary credit.
- Increased students applying to and attending post-secondary institutions (e.g., 2-year and 4-year universities).
- Feedback from alternative school leaders that the accountability system provides a valid measure of their school's performance and useful information that informs planning and program evaluation
- Strong relationships between school performance as measured by accountability system indicators and other measures of student success
- Student engagement in activities that promote learning and holistic development beyond academic outcomes (e.g. participation in work or service initiatives)
- Improved perceptions of school climate for learning and development

It is important to note that the attainment of one or more of these outcomes is not singularly sufficient to support claims that the accountability system is working as intended. Such claims require the collection of additional evidence that shows that changes or initiatives put in place as a result of the accountability system actually provide for the desired outputs. These types of issues will arise in future discussions focused on articulating how the utility of the accountability system (once defined) should be evaluated.

**Indicators** are scores, measures or ratings that serve to inform decisions about the extent to which a specified set of desired outcomes have been achieved. Based on the goals and outcomes previously discussed, a variety of indicators were identified for potential inclusion in the alternative accountability system, including:

- Graduation/completion rate: the percentage of students graduating from high-school in 4, 5 or 6 years and/or obtaining a GED or equivalent indicator of completion
- Career/Industry certification
- Course credits, including post-secondary
- Attendance rate: the number of days a student attends school divided by the number of days the student is enrolled
- Attendance rate improvement: difference between the prior year's attendance rate and the current year's attendance rate for a matched cohort of students
- Academic Achievement: the percentage of student meeting state-defined performance standards on the state-selected academic assessment (i.e., as reflected in the general accountability model)

- Academic growth: measure of how much students improved on the state selected assessment in reading and math compared to other Wyoming students in the same grade who started at the same level during the reported school year
- Participation rate: student participation rate on all tests used for accountability
- Hathaway eligibility level
- Ninth and tenth grade credit earning
- School climate surveys
- Evidence of student engagement

These indicators were selected for consideration because the AAAC believes that: a) they reflect valid, important indicators of school quality; b) their inclusion will motivate actions (by schools/teachers/students) that ultimately increase a student’s likelihood for success; and c) they are reasonable (i.e., fair) features to hold alternative school teachers and leaders accountable for if operationalized appropriately.

As confirmation of the statements outlined above, the means by which each indicator is intended to support the goals of the system and the assumptions underlying that belief should be able to be clearly articulated. This serves to ensure system coherence by requiring thoughtful consideration of the role of each indicator (independently and as a set), as well as any inputs or resources that might be necessary to meet the assumptions associated with each.

To illustrate, a proposed role and set of assumptions for the first three indicators are outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4. Specified Role of each Indicator & Associated Assumptions**

Indicator	Role in supporting goals	Assumptions	Potential Supports
Graduation rate – 4 year and extended completion rate	Motivates schools to support persistence to graduation.	Schools know how to provide for opportunities and a climate that serves to influence the likelihood of persistence to graduation.	Resources/tools providing strategies for establishing a positive school climate.
Career/ Industry certification	Inspires schools to provide students with more opportunities or support to obtain a career/industry certification.	Schools have the resources to provide more opportunities than they already do.  Teachers and administrators know enough about available certification opportunities to provide their students with guidance and support.	Provide teachers/administrators with professional development about courses that provide for certification/licensure and how students take advantage of them

Course credits, including post-secondary	Motivates schools to continue to encourage students to take and complete credit-bearing high school and post-secondary courses.	Schools keep accurate records related to a school credit and course completion.	An online data system that tracks student credit earning for high school.
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Once a final set of indicators has been identified, the AAAC, working with WDE, is encouraged to articulate the intended role of each indicator and any underlying assumptions so that the resources and tools necessary for success are identified in advance. This activity also serves to help stakeholders think preemptively about the evidence that will need to be collected to support system evaluation.

### Design Principles

Another set of important guiding decisions to inform the development of the framework is the design principles. If the goals represent the intended destination on a roadmap, the design principles guide the nature and manner of the route. The principles listed below were established by the AAAC and are intended to make clear the features and conditions that will characterize a framework that successfully supports the theory of action outlined in the previous section. The design principles also serve as another key element to evaluating whether the system is working as intended.

- Comparability**  
AAAC members agreed that, while some components of the alternative school accountability system should be comparable with the general system, most of the indicators would need to be distinct with respect to measures and expectations given the unique goals and composition of alternative schools. One indicator the AAAC did believe should be consistent with that of the general model was growth, which is calculated using a student growth percentile (SGPs).
- Flexibility:**  
While the AAAC agreed that some indicators, or elements of indicators, would need to be flexible to support the level of personalization expected and desired from alternative schools, it was suggested that most of the indicators be operationalized in a standardized fashion to facilitate comparisons between and among alternative schools. For example, despite access differences to the curriculum necessary to support Hathaway, most members agreed that the attainment of this outcome was an important indicator to include in decisions related to readiness. On the other hand it was suggested that certain elements and requirements associated with student engagement may need to be locally defined.
- Equal Opportunity for Success**  
The AAAC noted that the accountability system must be designed such that all alternative

schools have an equal opportunity for success, regardless of school size or the population served. For example, if the resulting model shows that the alternative schools in the most economically disadvantaged communities receive the lowest ratings, this may be more likely an artifact of a poorly designed model than a true indication of school quality.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, if schools with extremely small N-counts do not receive ratings for most indicators or obtain overall school results that are inconsistent with observed student performance, the model design may be flawed. For this reason, the resulting model must be evaluated to determine if the full range of outcomes are available to all alternative schools.

- **Includes Broad Range of Components**

From the first discussion in May the group agreed that the model must include, at least the following indicators: academic performance, especially growth; post-secondary readiness, credit earning, attendance, and school climate.

- **Consistency with the General Model**

From the outset, the AAAC stressed the importance of developing an alternative school model that provided for rigorous, meaningful expectations for all students. That is, while the group agreed that components of the alternative school model should be uniquely defined to align with the AAAC's goals and theory of action, the overall design could not result in a system that softened or relaxed the requirements necessary to meet expectations for school quality. This was a key tenet expressed by the advisory group throughout the framework design process.

In service to this belief, the group generally agreed that when appropriate and reasonable, the alternative school model should be operationalized and reported in a similar manner to that of the general model. Specifically, for those indicators and categories common across models (e.g., growth, academic performance), the procedures used to combine results within and across categories (e.g., decision matrix, index, etc.) should be consistent unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

### **System Components**

The AAC determined that the alternative school accountability framework should be centered on four components. These components are:

- **Academic Performance:** the extent to which students meet identified performance standards and demonstrate appropriate annual academic growth
- **Readiness:** the extent to which students earn course credit and attain outcomes that position

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<sup>3</sup> In other words, this finding would raise a flag and should instigate deeper investigate work that may include on- site reviews to determine whether there are other factors that may be contributing to systematic low performance or whether this rating is potentially warranted.

the student for success in college or career

- **Engagement:** the extent to which students attend school regularly and participate in a range of activities that promote holistic development of life skills associated with post-secondary success
- **School Climate:** the extent to which parents, teachers, and 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

## **Academic Performance**

### *Achievement*

The AAAC acknowledged that academic achievement should be included in the alternative school model and should be based on the same assessments used in the traditional model. This is currently the ACT, but may change given that assessment system decisions are presently under review. This maintains a focus on promoting a high level of student achievement and is consistent with the design principles established by the AAAC.

Academic achievement is currently defined by percent meeting established performance standards on the ACT in the content areas of reading, math, science, and ELA/Writing. Because it is important to produce an achievement indicator that recognizes and distinguishes degrees of performance for students who may be below the proficient standard used in the traditional accountability model, the AAAC recommends setting different achievement standards for alternative schools. These standards should be established by a Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) and will determine the basis for the “Meets” and “Exceeds” performance standards on each test.

Furthermore, the AAAC recommends that alternative schools should be provided with the option to administer the selected state test to a student one year later than dictated in the general model. If deferment in testing is requested, a school must be able to provide evidence that a student did not have adequate exposure to the core content prior to the scheduled administration year.

### *Growth*

The AAAC affirmed that academic growth should have substantial influence in the alternative school accountability model. This decision emerged in recognition of the fact that status (i.e., proficiency) is often strongly connected to the population of students that a school serves, whereas growth better reflects the contributions that teachers and leaders make to student learning, particularly for students served in alternative schools.

Furthermore, the AAAC recommended that the approach used for growth in the alternative school

model should mirror that which is planned for the general model. Not only will this be more operationally feasible, but it will permit an apples-to-apples comparison on this indicator across models.

Because the alternative model will be based on the approach used in the full model, the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is recommended. Briefly, SGPs are regression based measures of growth that works by conditioning current achievement on prior achievement and describing performance relative to other students with identical prior achievement histories. This provides a familiar basis to interpret performance – the percentile, which indicates the probability of that outcome given the student’s starting point. This can be used to gauge whether or not the student’s growth was atypically high or low.

To replicate the growth approach of the general model, student growth will likely be computed in mathematics and reading for grades ten and eleven. The current plan for 2016 is for ACT Aspire to be administered in grades nine and ten, which could be used as priors for the ACT in grade eleven. A transformation of the ACT scale will be applied to better facilitate growth computations. Prior research by the WDE affirms that this approach can produce model results with favorable technical properties.

It should be emphasized that the specific plan for operationalization will depend on the availability of assessments, and will change when/if the state assessments change. This is a particularly important caveat given the ongoing work of the Assessment Task Force.

At the school level, growth is expressed as a median growth percentile (MGP). It is expected that alternative schools will use the same MGP standard for earning points in the model as is used for traditional schools to determine if growth is below target, meets target, or exceeds target.

## **Readiness**

Consistent with the general Wyoming School Performance Rating Model, AAAC members affirmed that promoting college and career readiness is a central priority for alternative schools. The AAAC resolved that the readiness component should account for progress in earning credits toward graduation and an attainment indicator, to measure the extent to which students graduate and earn accomplishments associated with post-secondary success.

## *Credit Earning*

Because credit earning is essential to students enrolled in alternative schools, it is desirable to include it in grades nine and ten, if possible. For a given student, it was recommended that credit earning be calculated as the number of credits earned divided by the number of credits attempted. The AAAC emphasized that detailed decision rules should be established to determine inclusion criteria (e.g., how long must a student be enrolled to ‘count’?) as well as the time frame for calculating percentages (e.g. semester or year). These decision rules should be informed by a review of available impact data.

This method differs from the approach in the general model, which assigns points based on the percent of students who earn one fourth of the required credits in ninth grade. The approach proposed for alternative schools more fully accounts for the full range of credit earning and likely will be more sensitive to detect improvements for students with credit deficits. Moreover, AAAC members advised that many students transfer into alternative schools in grade ten, so ninth grade credits for these students are not influenced by the receiving alternative school. Cut scores associated with performance thresholds would be set by the professional judgment panel (PJP).

*Attainment*

The alternative school accountability system should also measure the extent to which students earn valued outcomes when they exit the school. These outcomes include:

- Graduation (includes extended time graduation)
- Hathaway scholarship eligibility
- High School Equivalency Certification (HSEC)
- Post-secondary credit while in high-school (e.g. dual enrollment, AP/IB)
- Career industry certification

Because these outcomes can occur in different combinations and are not mutually exclusive, a promising approach for operationalizing this category is a two tiered attainment index. This method, illustrated in Table 5, assigns base points for a primary outcome and awards additional points for earning other prized accomplishments. Importantly, the categories and values are shown for illustration purposes only. The actual values should be set by the PJP.

**Table 5. Illustration of Attainment Index**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Additional Outcome (5pts per- 20pts max)</b>	<b>‘Bonus’ Value</b>
Graduation	100	Hathaway Opportunity Eligibility or Greater	20
Transfer to Qualifying Post Secondary Program	80	Hathaway Provisional Eligibility	10
High School Equivalency Certification	60	Post- Secondary Credit (Each)	5
Dropout	0	Career/ Industry Certification (Each)	5

Every student who is enrolled for a requisite period of time at an alternative school and who has an exit code that corresponds to the included categories would be assigned the associated points from the left and right column, as applicable. The school’s final index point value is simply the average of all points for all students. If an exit code is not included (e.g. student transfers to another school), that

record is simply omitted from the graduation rate calculation.

### **Engagement**

Student engagement is a novel and distinctive component developed by the advisory committee. This category represents an attempt to gather evidence to support the claim that students are fully participating in experiences that support the acquisition of skills that positively influence holistic development and success. The AAAC acknowledged that it takes more than just academic skills to help students succeed. Therefore, schools should be incented and rewarded for showing progress in this area.

### *Attendance*

The first indicator category of engagement is attendance. This is a straightforward measure of the number of days a student attends school divided by the number of days the student is enrolled.

The AAAC also recommends including attendance rate improvement in the model. Improvement is calculated by subtracting the prior year's attendance rate from the current year's attendance rate for a matched cohort of students.

These two measures can be combined via a disjunctive decision table as illustrated in Table 6 below. The schools would get the better of rate or improvement (columns one or two), which would lead to the performance level designation shown in column three. The values displayed in the table below are simply illustrative. The actual values for the meets and exceeds cut scores should be based on data collected over multiple prior years to determine a range that is attainable but challenging. These data should be examined by the PJP to set the recommended standards.

**Table 6. Illustration of Decision Table for Attendance.**

<b>Attendance Rate</b>	<b>Rate Improvement</b>	<b>Level</b>
Less than 85%	Decline of more than 3%	Below Expectations
86% to 90%	Improvement or Decline less than or equal to 3%	Meets Expectations
91% and above	Improvement of more than 3%	Exceeds Expectations

Due to concerns about data accuracy, the AAAC recommended that a pilot year be implemented to collect and evaluate data prior to using attendance results for accountability purposes. This data should be used to inform standard setting by the PJP and the specification of business rules indicating who should be included in attendance rate calculations for a given school.

### *Student Success Plan*

The second component of student engagement is the Student Success Plan (SSP). An 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.

The AAAC considered different types of evidence that may be included in the plan such as:

- Regular meetings with a teacher, mentor, or counselor
- Membership in select school clubs or activities
- Work, volunteer service, internship, and/or leadership experience in a qualifying setting outside of school
- The completion of job or college application
- Participation in a job interview

In addition, the committee discussed how such a plan might be implemented and different levels of standardization that could or should be put into place. These levels lie along a continuum from extremely flexible to fully standardized. For example, a flexible approach might involve schools establishing their own SSP rules/guidelines and self-reporting accomplishment to the state. A more standardized approach might involve schools using common templates or profiles of student expectations for the SSP. Under a standardized approach, schools would provide evidence of compliance and school attainment to be evaluated at the end of each year.

The AAAC indicated that many of the types of practices outlined as reflecting quality engagement were already considered by alternative schools; however, a procedure for collecting and tracking these engagements was not in place. It was suggested that the idea and proposed implementation of an SSP was reminiscent of developing an IEP, and that providing schools with flexibility to meet the needs of every student was important to ensuring the plan's success.

Ultimately, the AAAC recommends a pilot of the SSP component of engagement that would involve the following phases:

1. Convene a broad-based committee of educators and leaders to develop a model template for the SSP and guidelines for implementation.
2. Conduct a volunteer pilot of the SSP for alternative schools that elect to participate. During the pilot year, participating schools would implement the model SSP and keep a record of aspects that were successful and areas that should be improved. The SSP would not influence accountability outcomes during this pilot year.
3. Reconvene the committee following the pilot and refine the model based on feedback.
4. The improved SSP plan would be implemented in the alternative school model in year two.

During this year, schools would be required to develop an SSP for each student and track the extent to which students met the requirements of the SSP. However, school accountability ratings would only be based on fidelity of implementation and not on student outcomes.

5. After reviewing the first full implementation, the results will be reviewed and a determination will be made regarding whether student outcomes should influence accountability results in subsequent years (e.g. percent of students meeting goals). If it is determined to include student outcomes, thresholds for performance will be established by the PJP.

## **School Climate**

From the outset of AAAC meetings, school leaders advised that a crucial and distinguishing characteristic of effective alternative schools is the creation of a safe and positive school learning environment. To that end, the AAAC identified indicators for the model that would provide evidence of the extent to which parents, teachers, and students believe the school has established, or is improving in meeting, key school climate outcomes.

The AAAC began their investigation of school climate by reviewing the definition provided by the National School Climate Center:

*School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.<sup>4</sup>*

This review included a discussion of the 12 dimensions of school climate outlined by the National School Climate Center. Additionally, to put the discussion in context, the committee reviewed examples from two states that incorporate school climate indicators into their accountability systems: Utah and Georgia. These activities served to help the AAAC identify and prioritize the elements of climate that were most valued for Wyoming alternative schools.

Ultimately, the AAAC suggested that the parent, teacher, and student school climate measures produced by AdvancED as part of the current accreditation process represented a promising source of evidence for the alternative school accountability system. The conclusion was affirmed following a review of the contents of the survey, focusing on the teacher survey in particular. The surveys cover a broad range of factors associated with climate and provide for feedback from teachers, students, and parents. Moreover, some committee members indicated that it would be practically beneficial to use an instrument with which school leaders and stakeholders are already familiar.

Two exceptions noted were questions dealing with transportation and school nutrition, which some committee members indicated were beyond the scope of what should be addressed in the accountability system.

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<sup>4</sup> The National School Climate Center. Retrieved September, 2015 from: <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/>.

In order for the surveys to be used in the alternative accountability model, it was recommended that administrations occur annually and that a minimum response rate be required. Additionally, the model should take into account both survey outcomes and improvement. For example, a decision table such as the one depicted in Table 7 could be used to determine how status and progress will be combined to produce an overall performance level rating. Importantly, both the status and progress thresholds (e.g. the performance required to meet and exceed standards) should be determined through a review of data and judgement from the PJP. Additionally, the decision table values, which reflect the performance levels associated with different combinations of status and progress, should be determined by the PJP.

**Table 7. Illustration of Decision Table for School Climate Surveys.**

		Progress		
		Below Standard	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standard
Status	Below Standard	Below	Meets	Meets
	Meets Standard	Meets	Meets	Exceeds
	Exceeds Standard	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds

Finally, a decision rule will need to be established by the PJP to resolve performance across three surveys (i.e. parent, teacher, and student). This can be accomplished by having the PJP evaluate every combination of performance on each survey and determining a final outcome.

Alternatively, a point system can be used, such as by assigning 0 points to below expectations, 1 point for meeting expectations, and 2 points for exceeding expectations. The ratings are produced by applying the decision from Table 7.

For example, Table 8 presents an example of hypothetical outcomes for one school.

**Table 8. Example of School Outcomes.**

Example Outcome	Points
Parent Survey: Exceeds	2
Teacher Survey: Meets	1
Student Survey: Meets	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

Table 9 illustrates an approach to determine the final school climate rating.

**Table 9. Illustration of Decision Rules for Final Climate Rating.**

<b>Points</b>	<b>School Climate Rating</b>
1 - 2	Below Standard
3 - 4	Meets
5 - 6	Exceeds

Again, each of these portrayals is for illustration purposes only as the specific decision rules and thresholds should be established by the PJP.

In fact, the AAAC urged that careful review of the data is critical before affirming a decision to use climate results to influence accountability outcomes. For example, one possible concern is that the use of results for accountability may corrupt their validity. For this reason, the AAAC outlined other options for including school climate in the model:

- Assessing school climate in terms of fidelity of implementation: Were surveys administered as required and the minimum participation rate achieved?
- Assessing school climate in terms of fidelity of implementation and response to results: Was the minimum participation rate achieved and a high quality plan developed in response to results?

Overall, the AAAC agreed that the information afforded by these tools was beneficial and worth collecting, regardless of the manner in which they ultimately impacted school accountability ratings. Moreover, because it will be necessary to use outcome data to inform these decisions, the AAAC recommends a pilot process before using the results for accountability purposes.

Specifically, the following phase-in process, which is consistent with what was proposed for engagement, is suggested for the school climate component.

1. Convene a committee to evaluate the school climate surveys to determine the final set of items that should contribute to the final score for teacher, student, and parent surveys.
2. Pilot the climate surveys as a ‘hold harmless’ component in year one and to set baseline for progress, should progress be included in subsequent years. Schools are asked to provide feedback to inform approaches that are thought to be effective for maximizing participation, particularly for the parent surveys.
3. Evaluate the data from the pilot to determine preliminary thresholds for participation.
4. In year two administer the climate surveys as an operational component of the model.
5. Convene a committee to study outcomes from the previous two years to determine how climate results should be included in the model. The PJP will determine the thresholds for status, progress and participation (as applicable) for each survey.

## **Design Decisions**

To meet the goals of the system and adhere to the design principles previously discussed, important design decisions must be made about desired structure of the system and how it will be established. These decisions are represented by questions such as the following:

1. How should indicators be grouped or categorized to facilitate the use and interpretation of results as intended (i.e., as reflected in the theory of action)?
2. What type or manner of information should be reported for each indicator or indicator category identified as important (i.e., a score, rating, grade, performance level, etc....)?
3. How should the different indicators (or indicator categories) be weighted or prioritized within the context of the accountability model?
4. What procedures should be used to combine results across indicators and indicator categories?

Discussions and recommendations related to each of these questions are outlined in the sections which follow.

### **Reporting of System Indicators to Support Score Use and Interpretation**

The first two questions on the list above ask for clarification about the reporting structure necessary to support the goals and priorities specified in the theory of action. To answer these questions, members must look at the range of indicators selected for inclusion in the model and determine how they should be categorized and reported to provide for coherent, useful results. This process is similar to that conducted by assessment developers in determining the content categories or strands that should be used to report student test results. In the latter case, developers look at the knowledge and skills represented by the items on a test and determine which aggregations will be the most beneficial (i.e., to student, teachers, parents) given the goals of the test and key technical characteristics such as test length, scoring procedures, and item types represented.

The reporting structure recommended by the AAAC is represented in Figure 1, below.

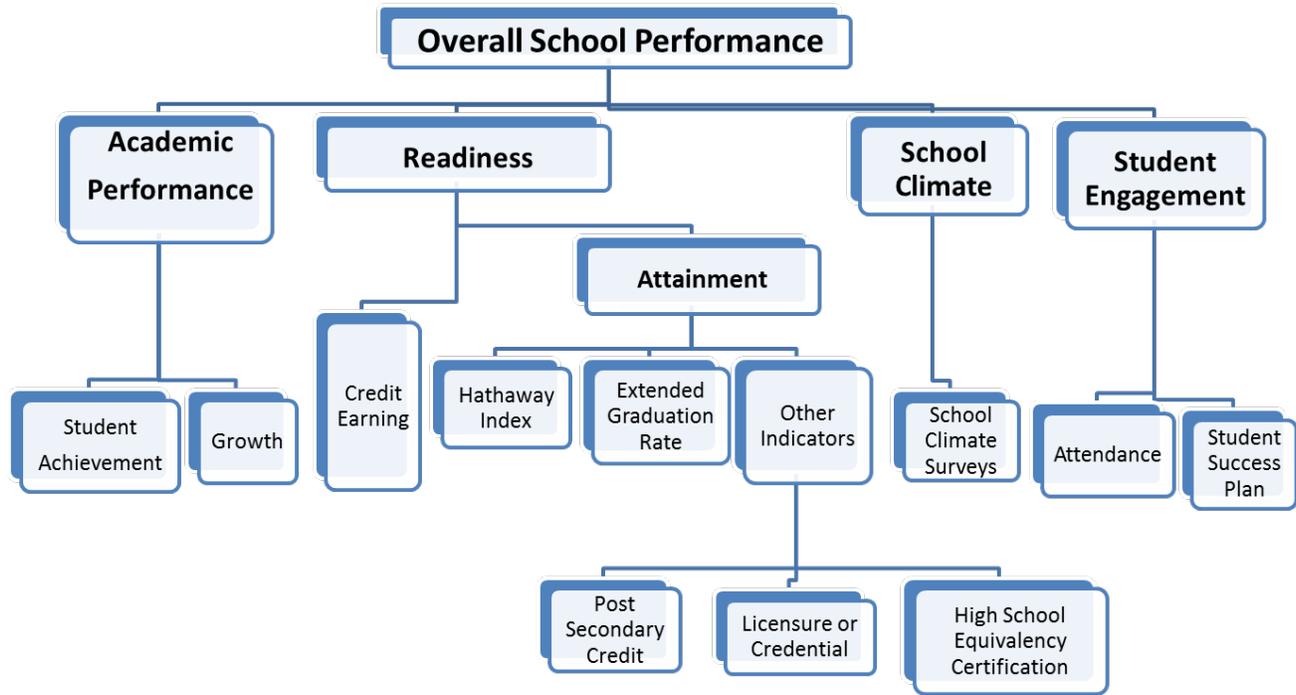


Figure 1. *Proposed Reporting Structure for the Alternative School Accountability System*

This figure shows how the different indicators selected for inclusion in the system (represented by the bottom two levels of the structure) roll up into four overarching indicator categories that will ultimately be used to inform reporting and determine the overall school performance rating. The four categories include Academic Performance, Readiness, School Climate and Student Engagement. For comparative purposes, a side by side table representing the components and indicators associated with the alternative model and the general model is provided in Appendix D of this document.

In terms of the type of information that should be reported at the overall school and indicator category level, the AAAC believes that procedures used to report school performance within the general model are appropriate for the alternative school model. Specifically, reporting overall school performance as Did Not Meet, Partially Met, Met or Exceeded Expectations; and reporting performance at each indicator category as Did Not Meet, Met, or Exceeded the target was considered reasonable.

Also consistent with the general model, the AAAC suggested that participation on the state selected assessment be incorporated into the alternative school model as a business rule rather than a stand-alone indicator. However, given the small N-counts typically associated with alternative schools, the AAAC stressed that the rule would need to be operationalized carefully, using existing school participation data as a guide.

## Prioritizing and Weighting Indicators

Figure 1 illustrates which indicators should be combined to establish each of the larger indicator categories used to facilitate the reporting of results. It does not, however, suggest how the indicators should be weighted, prioritized and combined within and across categories to establish school-based scores/ratings. To provide guidance to those charged with operationalizing the alternative school model, the AAAC was asked to engage in two activities. The first activity asked members to think about how the indicators associated with *each category* should be valued and prioritized within the context of the alternative school model. The second asked them to think about the relative weight that should be given to each *indicator category* in making an overall school performance determination.<sup>5</sup>

A few preferences that emerged from these discussions include the following:

- While both growth and achievement were generally considered to be important indicators in making determinations about academic performance; AAAC members were relatively split as to which indicator should be given more weight when combining results. Only 2 members believed these indicators should be equally weighted.
- In general, AAAC members believed that attainment should hold more weight than credit earning when making determinations about readiness.
- A majority of AAAC members stated that student surveys of school climate should be given more weight than teacher and parent surveys in making overall school climate determinations.

In discussing the relative importance of the different *indicator categories* in making an overall school performance rating, one relatively strong trend did emerge. In general, committee members believed that academic performance should hold the most weight in making inferences regarding overall school quality and school climate should hold the least weight.

The AAAC stated that these activities were extremely challenging because it was not yet clear how two of the four components in the system would ultimately be operationalized (e.g., school climate, student engagement) for inclusion in the model. Consequently, in many cases there was significant variability across members with respect to how individual indicators should be prioritized. For example, panelists were completely divided as to whether Attendance or the Student Success Plan should be given greater priority in making overall determinations about student engagement. Discussion revealed that this was due in large part to a lack of clarity as to what the Student Success Plan would ultimately look like and how it would be used to inform the accountability model. The AAAC suggested that these activities occur again once the components of the system were better defined so that more informed recommendations could be provided to support the specification of procedures for aggregating and combining results within and across categories.

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix C provides the worksheets used by AAAC members for these activities

## Combining Indicators

There are at least four approaches to combine multiple indicators to yield a single outcome: *compensatory*, *conjunctive*, *disjunctive*, and *profile* methods. These approaches reflect different beliefs about the manner in which different indicators and indicator categories components should be valued within the context of the system. Compensatory means that higher performance in one measure may offset or compensate for lower performance on another measure. Conjunctive means that acceptable performance must be achieved for every measure. Disjunctive means that performance must be acceptable on at least one measure. A profile refers to a defined pattern of performance that is judged to be satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or equivalent. A profile approach is often operationalized using a matrix to combine indicators for making judgments.

Examples of several of these approaches have been provided throughout this document to illustrate how the different components of the model might be operationalized. For example, the proposed attainment index represents a compensatory model, because the presence of one indicator (e.g., post-secondary credit) can help compensate for the absence of another (graduation) when calculating a student’s overall attainment index. On the other hand, the proposed procedure for determining an attendance rating represents a disjunctive model. A school is awarded the higher of the two performance levels associated with attendance rate vs. attendance rate improvement.

While the AAAC did not recommend a specific set of procedures for combining results across indicators and indicator categories, the group suggested that methods consistent with those represented in the general model should be applied whenever possible. For example, the general model uses a multi-level profile approach to combine student achievement, growth and equity and establish an overall academic performance rating for a school, as represented in the decision matrix shown in Table 10.

**Table 10. Accountability Decision Matrix.**

		Achievement Below	Achievement Meeting	Achievement Exceeding
Equity Below	Growth Below	BELOW	BELOW	MEETS
	Growth Meeting	BELOW	MEETS	MEETS
	Growth Exceeding	BELOW	MEETS	MEETS
Equity Meeting	Growth Below	BELOW	MEETS	MEETS
	Growth Meeting	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS
	Growth Exceeding	MEETS	MEETS	EXCEEDS
Equity Exceeding	Growth Below	BELOW	MEETS	MEETS
	Growth Meeting	MEETS	MEETS	EXCEEDS
	Growth Exceeding	MEETS	EXCEEDS	EXCEEDS

Figure 2. *Academic Performance Target Level Decision Table for Schools with Achievement, Growth and Equity Target Levels. Taken from the 2015 Wyoming School Performance Rating Model Implementation Handbook.*

While equity is not a component of the alternative school model, a similar approach that considers the ratings associated with growth and achievement in a 3x3 matrix could be used to establish an overall academic performance rating.

Similarly, the general model uses a 3x3 decision matrix to assign a final overall school-level rating in light of different profiles of school performance on academic performance and readiness. Since the proposed alternative school model consists of 4 overarching components or indicator categories (i.e., academic performance, readiness, student engagement, and school climate), a 2-stage or multi-level profile approach similar to that represented in Figure 2 might be used to combine results in this manner.

It is important to note that even in those cases where an approach consistent with that applied for the general model can be used, the PJP will still need to determine the decision rules and standards that ultimately result in the assignment of indicator and system-based ratings. Such decisions should be made in light of the recommendations summarized within the context of this document, in conjunction with any data necessary to evaluate the appropriateness/fairness of the approach for all alternative schools.

### **Implementation and Evaluation**

This report serves to document the recommendations from the AAAC to guide the development of Wyoming's new alternative school accountability system. Moving forward, we suggest the following activities to support operationalization, implementation, and evaluation of the new system.

#### **Recommended Process**

- Pending review of the AAAC's recommendations and final policy decisions about the framework, the WDE should identify and document the information and processes necessary to implement the framework, including required resources (e.g., data systems, technical support) and any constraints that may necessitate a revision to the framework.
- The AAAC or a similar group of technical and policy advisors should continue to work closely with the WDE to guide design recommendations and the development of detailed business rules in support of an operational plan.
- The ongoing work of the advisory committee should also include:
  - a review of proposed consequences and supports
  - support in the development of performance level descriptors
- Consistent with the proposal outlined in the preceding section, we recommend a phase-in process for the new accountability model, particularly for the engagement and climate components. A recommended timeline is presented as Figure 2.
- A PJP should be convened to establish performance thresholds following the first operational year of each new component.

## Timeline

The proposed timeline for implementation is shown in Figure 2. This timeline reflects the process described previously to pilot new elements, principally climate and engagement, and make refinements to the model as needed based on lessons learned.

In the first year, 2015-2016, the focus is largely on finalizing model decisions and conducting retrospective analyses to inform operational decisions. We expect that academic achievement and the readiness component can be implemented in 2016-2017, during which time the engagement and climate components are piloted. In the summer of 2017, outcomes would be evaluated with impact data to refine the model as necessary. The 2017-2018 academic year would be the first year that all model components could potentially be implemented by all schools, pending the timeline for the statewide assessment transition. In the summer of 2018, information will be available to set progress targets for academic growth, engagement, and climate, as appropriate. If this timeline holds, all model decisions and performance thresholds can be finalized in the summer and fall of 2018, which will enable the first year of reporting.

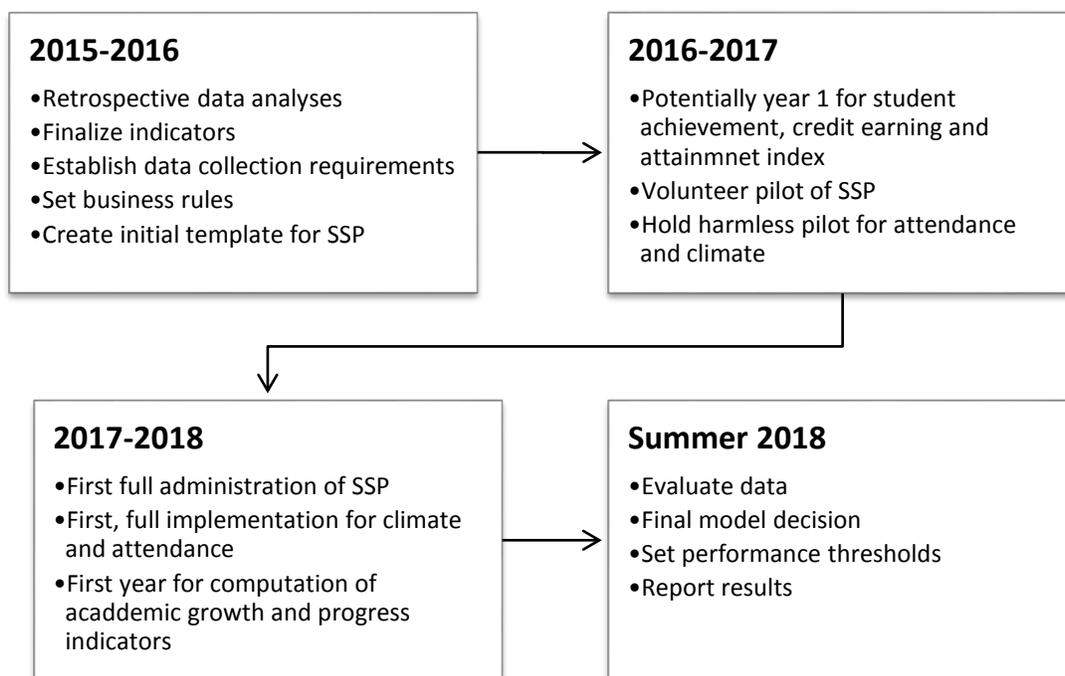


Figure 2. *Proposed Implementation Timeline.*

Given that this work requires a unique blend of policy and technical expertise, we recommend engaging the AAAC, or similar broad-based expert advisory committee, to work with the WDE to guide decision making following each phase of implementation.

## Analyses to Evaluate Efficacy

For each of the indicators, components, and the overall rating assigned to schools, there are technical

considerations which must be evaluated to see if results support the desired features and principles articulated by the AAAC. In this section, we outline suggested analyses to evaluate whether system outputs reflect the technical characteristics necessary to support the AAAC's goals and priorities.

- To mitigate concerns that the selected approach systematically advantages or disadvantages schools based on the demographics of the students served or other factors such as school size, the department should evaluate the range of scores observed across schools by key demographic factors known to impact results (e.g., enrollment size, percent FRL, or percent of racial/ethnic minorities served). This can be easily displayed as a scatterplot with score/rating earned on the y-axis and the demographic indicator (e.g. percent FRL) on the x-axis. A strong approach that conforms to the desired design principles will not reveal a strong positive correlation and will yield a full range of results, including favorable results for all schools, including those that serve a large percentage of at-risk students.
- The weights attributed to the components in the system play a critical role in determining the effective contribution of each piece to the overall rating achieved by a given school. While the AAAC provided a few preliminary recommendations regarding which indicators and categories should be prioritized in the system, additional discussion should occur after the components of the system have been piloted and are more clearly operationalized for use in the system. Once preferences are established, WDE should test out results from assigning different weights to each component to ensure that the desired focus is achieved in a manner that provides for fair, useful results.
- We further recommend evaluating the reliability of model results. Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of a measure. In this case, we are interested in how consistently results are produced for schools, groups, and indicators. There are multiple statistical approaches to evaluating the reliability of results. It is advisable to track the consistency of outcomes for various levels (e.g. schools, subgroups) within and across years as data are available. It is expected that results will be generally well correlated for similar school types within years and for the same schools across years. Dramatic shifts in either classification of schools or characteristics of the distribution will signal a lack of stability that will erode the credibility of the outcomes.
- Finally, we recommend evaluating the claims in the theory of action to determine if the mechanisms are functioning as intended and that negative consequences are minimized. Some of these threats could be examined via survey data or focus groups, while others may be explored with extant data. Importantly, ongoing initiatives to gauge the extent to which positive outcomes outweigh potential negative side effects will bolster the consequential validity of this initiative and provide a mechanism to promote continuous improvement.

## Appendix A

### Accountability Advisory Group Members

<b>Member Name:</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role</b>
Michael Maloney	Sweetwater #1	School Principal
Shawna Trujillo	Natrona #1	School Principal
Darlene Hartman-Hallam	Crook #1	School Principal
Beth Auge	Teton #1	School Principal
Teresa Chaulk	Lincoln #1	District Superintendent
Mike Helenbolt	Laramie #1	School Principal
Kathleen Milligan-Hitt	Fremont #1	District Superintendent
Suzanne Young	UW - College of Ed	Associate Dean
Kathy Scheurman	WEA	WEA
Troy Tallabas	WCCC	HSET
<b>Additional Participants</b>	<b>Organization</b>	
Brent Young	WDE	
Deb Lindsey	WDE	
Mike Flicek	Contractor - WDE	
Dianne Frazer	WDE	
Chris Domaleski	Center for Assessment	
Erika Hall	Center for Assessment	
Julie Magee	WDE	

## Appendix B

# Understanding Alternative Schools in Wyoming and Determining Prioritizing Outcomes

1. Please list two or three factors that distinguish alternative schools from 'traditional' schools.
2. What components of the traditional school accountability system do not work well for alternative schools? Why?
3. Are there any components of the traditional accountability system that do work well? Why?
4. What are two or three characteristics of a quality alternative school in your opinion? (You can define quality according to your own judgment and values, but it is generally intended to communicate an environment and practices that are conducive to promoting student development, learning, and preparation for success at the 'next step'.)
5. What are some measures or information can best communicate the characteristics of a quality school listed in #4?

# Design Principles Worksheet

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is NOT IMPORTANT and 10 is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT please rate the importance of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ ALL results from the alternative school accountability system should be directly comparable to the results from other schools in the traditional/general accountability system.

\_\_\_\_\_ At least SOME Results from the alternative school accountability system should be directly comparable to the results from other schools in the traditional/general accountability system.

\_\_\_\_\_ ALL results from a school within the alternative school accountability system should be directly comparable to results from another school in the alternative accountability system.

\_\_\_\_\_ At least SOME results from a school within the alternative school accountability system should be directly comparable to results from another school in the alternative accountability system.

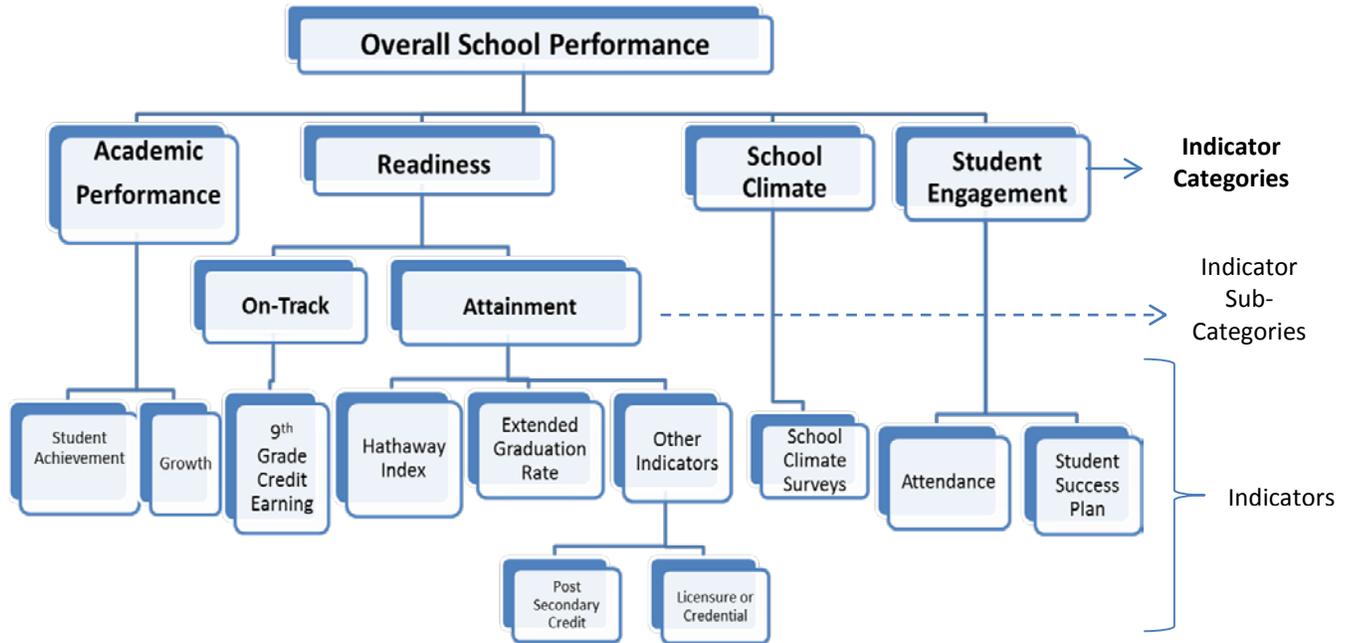
Please add any comments to clarify your ratings:

2. Are there any indicators that MUST be included in the model in your opinion? Why?
3. Are there any indicators that MUST NOT be included in the model in your opinion? Why?
4. Are there any outcomes that must be achieved or avoided to signal that the results are credible?
5. What other constraints or values should guide design decisions in your opinion (e.g. simplicity, flexibility, avoid operational burden, quick turnaround of results etc.)

## Appendix C

### Design Decisions – Weighting and Prioritizing Indicators

The figure below represents the proposed structure of the Alternative School Accountability Framework.



The components in the second level of the diagram represent the *indicator categories* that will be combined to establish a final, overall school performance rating. Each indicator category is based upon 2 or more indicators, represented in the bottom two levels of the figure.

It is important to note that the readiness indicator category is comprised of two subcategories – On-Track and Attainment. The On-track subcategory will be based on a student’s 9<sup>th</sup> (and/or possibly 10<sup>th</sup>) grade credit earning, and Attainment will be based upon an Index calculated in light of a student’s attainment of the associated indicators (e.g., Hathaway, extended graduation rate, etc....).

In addition, although not represented in the figure above, the school climate indicator category is based upon three distinct sets of school climate survey results - those from parents, teachers and students.

**Activity 1: Prioritizing Indicators within Categories**

For each **indicator category**, distribute 100 points across the associated indicators in a manner that represents the relative weight you believe each should hold in influencing the overall score/rating associated with that category. In doing so consider the factors that influence each indicator and the types of inferences you intend to make based on school performance in that indicator category. To what extent should the indicators have a differential influence on those inferences?

<b>Indicator Category</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Academic Performance</b>	Student Achievement	
	Growth	
Sum of Points		100
Rationale:		

<b>Indicator Category</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Readiness</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Credit Earning	
	Attainment Index	
Sum of Points		100
Rationale:		

<b>Indicator Category</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>School Climate</b>	Student Survey	
	Teacher Survey	
	Parent Survey	
Sum of Points		100
Rationale:		

<b>Indicator Category</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Attendance	
	Student Success Plan	
Sum of Points		100
Rationale:		

### Activity 2: Prioritizing Indicator Categories

Distribute a total of 100 points across the 4 indicator categories in a manner that represents the relative weight you believe each should hold in influencing overall ratings of school performance and quality. When distributing your points it is important to keep in mind how many, and which indicators contribute to the overall score/rating associated with that category.

Indicator Category	Points
Academic Performance	
Readiness	
School Climate	
Student Engagement	
Sum of Points	100

**Rationale:** Briefly describe the rationale for your point assignments.

**Appendix D: Comparison of the General Model and Alternative Model**

<b>General Model</b>	<b>Alternative School Model</b>	<b>Key Differences</b>
<b>Academic Performance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Achievement</li> <li>• Growth*</li> <li>• Equity</li> </ul>	<b>Academic Performance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Achievement</li> <li>• Growth*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potentially different standards for alternative schools with respect to student achievement (i.e., in terms of percentage of student required to meet proficiency on state test in order for a school to have “met” the target for this indicator.)</li> <li>- Alternative schools provide students with the option of taking the state selected assessment 1 year later than traditionally scheduled if there is clear evidence that they have not yet had access to the core content necessary for success.</li> <li>- Equity is not a component of the alternative model</li> </ul>
<b>Readiness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduation</li> <li>• Additional Readiness               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hathaway*</li> <li>▪ Tested Readiness</li> <li>▪ 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Credit Earning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Readiness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Earning: 9<sup>th</sup> &amp; 10<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>• Attainment Index               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graduation</li> <li>▪ Hathaway*</li> <li>▪ Other Outcomes: HSEC attainment; post-secondary credit earning in HS; Career industry certification</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the alternative model credit earning will be considered in both 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and will be calculated as the percentage of credits earned given those taken within a given school year.</li> <li>- Additional outcomes considered important indicators of school performance and student readiness have been added to the alternative model.</li> <li>- Tested Readiness is not an element of the alternative school model.</li> </ul>
	<b>Student Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Student Success Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This component is unique to the alternative model, and is intended to represent the extent to which students participate in a broad range of experiences/activities believed to positively influence holistic development and post-secondary success.</li> </ul>
	<b>School Climate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Results (Teacher/Student/Parent)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This component is unique to the alternative model and reflects the strong role that school climate plays in supporting the persistence, well-being and success of students.</li> </ul>

Note: In both models the impact of participation rate is defined as a business rule within the context of the system.

\*Indicators highlighted with an asterisk are defined and operationalized in the same way across the two models