**Slide 1: ABE State Performance Accountability Framework**

Welcome to today’s webinar. I’m Cheryl Russo; and I’m here with my colleagues: Dana Varzan-Parker and Brian Newquist. We also have Jen Cabral in the room driving the webinar, uploading documents as needed, and monitoring the chat box. Thanks, Jen!

This is the second of two webinars offered in December on the new ABE performance standards. Please note that this webinar is being recorded and will be posted online.

If you have any questions during the webinar, please type them in the chat box. We’ll have about 30 minutes at the end of the webinar to answer some of your questions. Any unanswered questions will be answered through the online Q&A posted on the ACLS website. Throughout today’s webinar, we’ll be pausing for *clarification* questions.

Please note that the framework that we are presenting today is a **draft**. There will be an **open comment period next month**, at which time, you’ll have the opportunity to comment on aspects of the framework. ACLS will be piloting the framework for the rest of FY17 and in FY18, and, based on the results of the pilot and comments received from the field, changes may be made to the framework.

If at any point during this webinar, you are having technical difficulties, please contact your own tech person. Depending on your own comfort level with webinars, feel free to adjust the screens to full screen; however, please know that you’ll lose the chat box if you adjust the screen to full screen. There will be screens that, on our end, we’ll enlarge so that you can see the text better.

**Slide 2: Objectives of Today’s Session**

Here are today’s objectives. By the end of this webinar, you will be able:

1. Describe the new ACLS performance accountability system
2. List the components of the measurable skills gains (MSG) standard
3. Understand how MSG individual program targets will be calculated and assigned
4. Describe the MSG reference period

**Slide 3: ACLS Shift Focus**

As you have heard from our administrator, ACLS is moving away from compliance toward more flexibility and innovation, and away from process standards toward outcome standards. You will see in the framework that we are about to present, there is a bigger focus on outcomes. We will no longer have process standards such as attendance and average attended hours. We will still track attendance, Average Attended Hours, and Pre/Post testing in SMARTT as a way to learn about programs and their practices *in relation* to outcomes.

In our previous accountability system, our student outcomes remained flat. We are confident that this new system will move the needle and improve student outcomes.

**Slide 4: Guiding Principles**

ACLS sought to develop a system that is focused on results, aligned with the federal WIOA measures, drives improvement, and is fair. By *fair* we mean that **all programs** will have equal chances to show improvement in this new system.

Let’s pause here for a moment for any clarification questions. Please type your questions in the chat box.

**Slide 5: A Little Bit of History…**

A little bit of history…

As you know, in 2014 WIOA was signed into law. In the fall of 2015, ACLS convened a task force of five ABE directors and four ACLS staff with the following charge:

1. Decide which WIOA measures to recommend replicating in a state accountability system
2. Decide which of the previous state standards to recommend replicating in the system
3. Prioritize the recommended standards.

The work of the taskforce informed the framework that we are presenting to you today.

Dana will now tell you a bit about Measuring Progress under WIOA.

**Slide 6: Measuring Progress under WIOA The Big Picture**

In order to understand the proposed state framework, it is important to know that this framework derives from the six federal WIOA measures. For the purpose of today’s webinar, we will briefly touch upon the federal MSG so that you understand how MA is held accountable on the federal level.

Under WIOA, states’ student academic progress is measured through a measure called Measurable Skills Gains-MSG.

There are five ways to measure this type of progress, but only two apply to adult education:

1. Educational Functioning Level gains-with three ways it can be achieved through- and
2. Receipt of a secondary credential.

**Slide 7: The Big Picture: Federal MSG**

Here is a visual of what we have just explained in the previous slide. The blue boxes apply to Adult education.

As you can see in this chart, Measurable Skills Gains is achieved through Educational Functioning Level gains and receipt of secondary diploma or equivalent.

In the federal MSG, EFL can be achieved through one of the following means:

1. pre/post testing
2. completion of Carnegie units and
3. enrollment into postsecondary education/training after exit.

This was a brief overview to the federal MSG.

We will now move on to introduce and describe the state accountability framework.

Before we do so, let’s pause here for any clarification questions. Please type your questions in the chat box.

**Slide 8: The State Picture MA ABE Accountability Framework**

In the state accountability framework we have designed, we are proposing 1 academic standard and 3 employment measures.

The academic standard is also called Measurable Skills Gains-MSG. We have modeled this standard after the federal MSG but with some differences which we will explain in the course of this webinar.

The non-academic standards are the three employment measures which, as of now, we are carrying down ad litteram from the federal WIOA employment measures.

These measures are:

1. Employment in the second quarter after exit
2. Employment in the fourth quarter after exit
3. Median income in the second quarter after exit.

To this date, however, we have completed the design of the MSG standard and are in the process of creating standards from the three employment measures I just described.

We need to collect 2 years of baseline data from programs in order to have the information needed to create specific employment standards.

We are now going to move on to explain in more detail what the MA MSG standard looks like and ways programs can achieve outcomes under this new standard.

**Slide 9: MA Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) Standard**

Under this new standard, programs would be ranked based on how close they come to meeting or exceeding their MSG target through the achievement of one of the following:

1. EFL completion
2. HSE credential obtainment
3. enrollment into postsecondary education/training after exit

As you can see, we are moving away from the meaningful learner gain standard that we have had in place for the last 10 years as the main academic standard.

With the previous accountability system, we had an NRS EFL standard that was worth one point out of the 25 points total a program could get.

Unlike the meaningful learner gain standard where students had to gain a certain amount of points from pre- to post-test (e.g. 33 for BEST Plus 2.0), with the EFL completion, students would have to complete one or more NRS levels in order for programs to count this as an MSG outcome.

As you know, the NRS divides educational functioning into six levels for each ABE and ESL.

So, for example for an ESOL student at the beginning literacy level to make EFL gain, that student would need to gain enough points in the post test to move them to the next level-low beginning literacy-or higher. It could be any number of points depending where in the NRS range of the ESL beginning literacy the student pre-tested.

The closer the student’s pre-test score is at the end of the range, the fewer points the students would need to gain in the post-test in order to cross into the next NRS range/level.

Although EFL Completion has been a standard on its own in the past accountability framework and the field is familiar with NRS, we will offer further webinars in the course of FY17 specifically on NRS levels to ensure that there is clear understanding of how these levels work and how students can move through them.

Before we move on to the next section, we are going to pause now for any clarification questions.

In the next section, my colleague Brian will explain how programs will receive their specific MSG targets.

**Slide 10:** **Weighted Targets**

Programs would annually receive a *target* calculated using a formula that incorporates:

1. the number of students who pretest into each of the National Reporting Systems (NRS) levels they serve, and
2. based on historical data, the degree of difficulty of completing a level.

As mentioned in the previous slide: testing out of an EFL, obtaining a HSE credential, and enrolling in PSE after their program exit are three ways students can earn MSGs.

Performance would be actual completion percentage relative to the target. For example, if your target is 58% and your actual performance is 58%, then you met your MSG target. If you go above, you exceed the target, if you fall below, you won’t meet your target.

The accountability system is not based on points anymore. Programs will be ranked according to benchmarks which my colleague Cheryl will explain later in the course of our webinar.

**Slide 11: MA Statewide Completion Rates (5 yrs)**

Each year Massachusetts reports to the Office of Career and technical Education (OCTAE) the number of students who pretested into each NRS level and the number who completed an Educational Function Level during that year on a posttest. In the table that you see in this slide, the combined number of students from across FY11-FY15 who pretested into each NRS level and the number of measurable skill gains achieved from students in those levels, again combined from the five years of data.

[Showing the table now]: In the first column, you see the NRS levels determined by the pre-test scores (these are the 12 that Dana mentioned earlier – 6 are for ESOL and 6 are for ABE).

These are not SMARTT class levels. For instance, in your ABE level 1 you could have students that pretested in the NRS ABE Beginning Literacy and NRS Beginning ABE.

Notice that the information from the second column (number of students) and third column (Number MSG) form the basis for the percentages shown in the fourth columns.

These historical data show that certain levels are more difficult to complete than others. Look at the chart and make note of the levels that have low percentages.

For example, ABE Beginning Literacy is more difficult to complete compared to High ASE level. This is because ABE Beginning Literacy shows a smaller percentage of students from that level who completed an MSG (28% vs. 45% for High ASE).

**Slide 12:** **Poll #1**

We are going to take a few minutes now to take a short poll in order to check for your understanding of the material we have presented so far. A poll will appear on the screen. Please take a few minutes to read the questions and submit your answers. At the end, you and we will be able to see what percentage of the audience got the right answers.

**Slide 13: Poll #2**

Poll no. 2 should appear on your screen now. Please take a few minutes to read the questions and submit your answers. At the end, you and we will be able to see what percentage of the audience got the right answers.

**Slide 14: MSG Bonus Credit**

Because we know that some students not only move from level to level but also achieve a HSE credential or enroll in college, programs have the opportunity to garner bonus credit that is factored into the MSG standard as a way to move closer to their target %. This incentivizes additional outcomes.

A program is eligible for bonus credit that is factored into the MSG standard (i.e., .1 of one MSG) for the following:

* + **MSGs earned beyond the initial MSG outcome:** For example, if the initial MSG outcome is one EFL completion, but the student also gets her HSE credential, then the HSE credential becomes the bonus credit for the program. Another example is: if a student gets his HSE credential, and then enrolls in PSE/training after their exit from the program, then the PSE/training enrollment becomes the bonus credit for the program.
  + **Completion of more than one EFL in one or more assessment area (e.g., reading and math):** For example, if a student tests in both MAPT math and reading, and math is the primary assessment, and the student makes an EFL in math, but also makes an EFL in reading, then the reading EFL completion becomes the bonus credit for the program. This is the same for ESOL assessments and EFL completions from those assessments.

**Slide 15: MSG Reference Period**

The MSG reference period is the time at which credit is awarded for outcome achievement.

The reference period for the three ways to earn a measurable skill gain varies: EFL must be achieved during the FY; HSE obtainment must be achieved by Dec. 31 following the end of the Fiscal Year and PSE/T enrollment must be between the exit date and Dec. 31 following the end of the Fiscal Year.

Let’s pause here for clarification questions. We’ll give you a minute to type your question in the chat box.

**Slide 16: Poll #3**

Let’s take a minute to check in with you on your understanding of what we have presented so far.

Please read the question in the poll and choose the correct answer. We’ll give you a minute, and then we’ll share the answer and the results of the poll.

**Slide 17: Benchmarks and Targets**

Instead of awarding points to programs for past performance, programs will be ranked according to how close they come to meeting or exceeding their MSG target. The benchmarks on this slide correspond to the MSG target percents.

Excellent: 135% of Program Target or Higher

Advanced: 120–134% of Program Target

Above Target: 110–119% of Program Target

Meets Standard: 100–109% of Program Target

Needs Improvement: 90–99% of Program Target

Remedial Action: Below 90% of Program Target

Targeted intervention will be available for programs that fall into the two lowest benchmarks: needs improvement and remedial action.

We will now show you how programs would have fared had we had this standard –the MSG standard -- in FY15. We’ll now take a minute to pull up the Excel spreadsheet. You should soon see an Excel spreadsheet on your screen.

We have changed the real program names in this document, so that you can focus only on the data for now. After this, we’ll show you an Excel spreadsheet with real program names also using FY15 data. Brian will now walk you through the information on the spreadsheets.

Show Ghost Town data spreadsheet.

Then show real program data spreadsheet.

Let’s pause here for clarification questions. We’ll give you a minute to type your question in the chat box.

**Slide 18: Takeaways**

In closing, here are the takeaways from today’s webinar:

* There is a focus on outcomes, not processes.
* Under the measurable skill gains standard:

1. Every program will receive a target
2. MSG outcomes can be achieved in any of the following ways:

* EFL completion
* HSE credential obtainment
* PSE/Training enrollment after exit

1. Bonus credit is factored onto the MSG standard and gives programs a fraction of credit for outcomes achieved beyond the initial MSG.

We will be piloting the framework for the rest if FY17 and all of FY18 and will be adjusting it based on results of the pilot.

**Slide 19: Next Steps**

Ok, our next steps in this process are as follows:

* EFL webinars throughout FY17
* Open comment period
* Regular check-ins with the field for feedback on the system throughout FY17
* Two years (FY17 and FY18) to pilot and adjust the MSG standard and to gather baseline data to inform the creation of employment standards

**Slide 19: Thank you!**

This concludes our webinar. Thank you for hanging in there!

We now have some time for questions from the chat box. Please take a minute to write a question in the chat box. We’ll answer as many as we can.

Any questions that we cannot answer today will be answered under Hot Topics on our webpage. Thank you.