ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
THOUGHT LEADERS' DISCUSSION
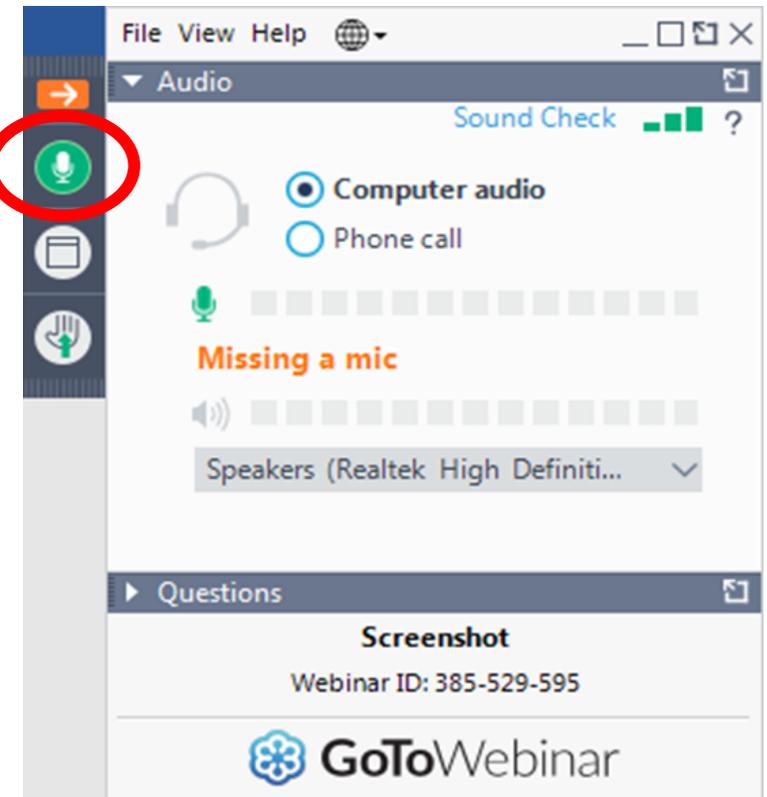
AYPF American Youth Policy Forum

LOGISTICS

- GoToWebinar Technical Assistance: 1-800-263-6317; AYPF's office number: 202-775-9731

- **AYPF will mute/unmute ALL virtual attendees for group discussion/Q&A**

- Click the green mic button to self mute/unmute your line. Please note that AYPF staff will be unable to unmute those who are self muted.
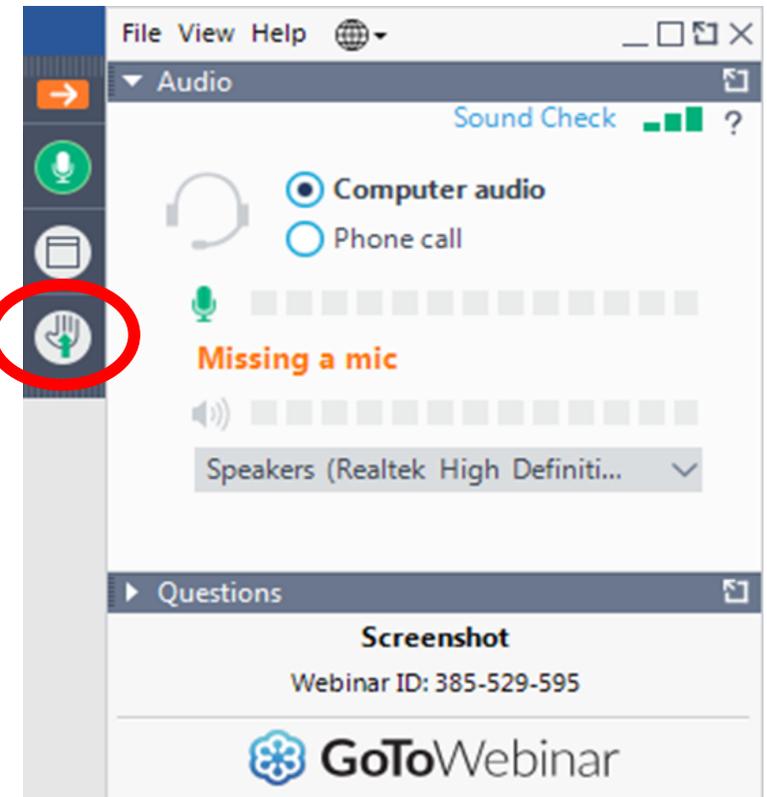
LOGISTICS

▪ You may submit questions during the discussion through the questions box on the control panel.

▪ The chat feature can only be used to communicate with AYPF moderators.

▪ Click the RAISE HAND feature to indicate that you would like to be called upon to make a comment or ask a question.

AMERICAN YOUTH POLICY FORUM

- Mission of AYPF is to provide a forum to connect research, practice and policy to improve outcomes for all youth. Particular focus on older, vulnerable youth populations.

- Guiding Principles:
  - Student-Centered Learning
  - Advancement Upon Mastery
  - Multiple Pathways to Success
  - Creating Collaborative Systems that Support Youth

AGENDA

- Introductions

- Update on 50-state Scans: Danny Gillis and Jesse Kannam

- Presentation of Policy Brief: Carinne Deeds and Jen DePaoli

- Discussion of Toolkit: Chris Mazzeo

- Group Discussion

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Off the record discussion

- Listen, learn, engage

- Ask questions, share ideas

INTRODUCTIONS

American Youth Policy Forum

- Name

- Affiliation

- Relevant work or interest in this topic

A Nationwide Picture of Alternative Accountability

Danny Gillis

50 State-Scan (Pre-ESSA)

▶ Primarily conducted through research of publicly available state code and department of education resources

▶ 20 states completed thus far

▶ Areas of interest:

  ▶ Definition (Y/N)

  ▶ Programs or Schools (Either or Both)

  ▶ Accountability System (Single, Modified, Distinct)

  ▶ Measures

    ▶ Proficiency
    ▶ Growth
    ▶ Graduation Rates
    ▶ Other Credentials

    ▶ Attendance
    ▶ Reengagement
    ▶ Student Voices

Early Findings

▶ All but 5* states have a definition (out of 50 + DC)

Programs or Schools	Number of States
Programs	8
Schools	7
Both	5

Accountability System	Number of States
Single	8
Modified	8
Distinct	4

Early Findings

▶ 11/20 states are using extended year graduation rates

▶ 4/20 use school climate in some capacity

▶ Policy situation is fluid in many (all?) states

Case Study: Georgia

- Georgia and School Climate
    - Statutorily required since 2012, data collection began in 2014
        - Mix of survey and other measures
    - Required for both alternative and traditional settings
    - Climate may be particularly important for alternative settings

Case Study: Wyoming

- Wyoming's Alternative School Accountability Pilot Program
  - In 2014-15 and 2015-16, alternative schools received informational reporting, but were exempt from target level denominations and school level performance ratings

    - During 2016-17, the objective is to produce scores on as many indicators as possible

  - Places an emphasis on expanding measures used for alternative schools

  - Previously used the same accountability for traditional and alternative settings

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Overview of Project: State Scan

- Interviews with education and juvenile justice agency representatives

- Conducted by phone and email

- Questions regarding structure and accountability for education in long-term facilities serving post-adjudicated youth

Overview of Project: Issue Brief

- Written in partnership with Council of State Governments Justice Center

- Poses key questions for states to consider in drafting/editing their ESSA state plans
  - Data Collection and Sharing
  - Accountability System and Structure
  - Accountability Measures

JUSTICE ★ CENTER
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety

Key Findings

Is accountability for schools/educational programs within long-term juvenile justice facilities distinct from other types of alternative schools in the state?

Response	Number of States	Percentage of 35 states
Yes	18	51%
No	11	31%
Not sure	6	17%

Key Findings

How would you characterize the way long-term juvenile justice facilities are held accountable for the education information reported about youth served compared to public schools in the state?

Type of Accountability	Number of States	Percentage out of 35 states
Same system of accountability	13	37%
Modified system of accountability	16	46%
Distinct system of accountability	5	14%
Do not know how to classify accountability	1	3%

Key Takeaways

- Consider needs of youth in long-term juvenile justice facilities in the development of alternative accountability systems

- How do education systems, including alternative education systems, facilitate the transition of education services of youth once released and integrated back into the community?
  - ➤ Do alternative education accountability systems have the infrastructure/data-systems necessarily to facilitate an easy transition?

FORTHCOMING BRIEF:
BUILDING ROBUST SYSTEMS FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

- Goal: 90% four-year graduation rate by 2020

- Current national four-year graduation rate: 83.2% (~87% percent with 5- and 6-year)

- Alternative high schools overrepresented in low graduation rate high schools (ESSA schools)

Source: 2017 Building a Grad Nation Report

FORTHCOMING BRIEF:
BUILDING ROBUST SYSTEMS FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

All students should have a pathway to secondary credential; prepared for postsecondary education, careers, and life.

What is the general purpose of accountability and its role in ensuring quality / continuous improvement of educational institutions (alternative settings)?

PILLARS OF A ROBUST ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. Defining Alternative Education

2. Accountability Systems

3. Measures

4. Continuous Improvement

PILLARS OF A ROBUST ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. **Defining Alternative Education**

2. Accountability Systems

3. Measures

4. Continuous Improvement

Definition based on:
- Population served
- Setting type
- Instructional/environmental characteristics

Policy mechanisms for codifying:
- Legislation
- State Department or State Board

PILLARS OF A ROBUST ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. Defining Alternative Education

2. **Accountability Systems**

3. Measures

4. Continuous Improvement

- Single

- Modified

- Separate

PILLARS OF A ROBUST ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. Defining Alternative Education

2. Accountability Systems

3. **Measures**

4. Continuous Improvement

ESSA Indicator	Possible Flexibility
Academic Achievement	Growth/Proficiency
Graduation Rates	Extended-Year Grad Rates
English Learners	?
"Non-Academic"	School Climate Chronic Absenteeism Etc.

PILLARS OF A ROBUST ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. Defining Alternative Education

2. Accountability Systems

3. Measures

4. **Continuous Improvement**

- Identification

- Intervention

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Definitions:
   - Are these the right three categories?
   - How do we navigate the programs vs. schools concepts when those classifications have different implications in state and federal accountability systems?

2. What measures, specifically in alternative education settings, can be used to be inclusive of alternative education within the English Learners (ELs) indicator?

3. How can piloting accountability measures or systems within alternative education aid in the creation of a robust research agenda to support continuous improvement in the space?

THE MOTIVATING PROBLEM: FOR STATES

- How do we hold our alternative schools and programs **accountable**?

- What **data/indicators** can help us do accountability well?

- What strategies are most **effective** in alternative school/program settings?

THE MOTIVATING PROBLEM: FOR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS/PROVIDERS

- **Will the chosen measures tell the whole story?**
  - Can traditional metrics accurately determine quality and effectiveness?

- **We don't want your cookie cutter!**
  - Alternative programs are strong because of their diversity and specificity!

- **We believe in quality too!**

TWO DESIGN CHALLENGES….

- Too much **uniformity**
  - Accountability perceived as unfair
  - Barrier to innovation and diversity in program models
  - Potential for creaming or gaming

- Too much **customization**
  - No common standards
  - No way to know if programs are effective, or ineffective
  - Few incentives for programs to improve

THREE DESIGN PRINCIPLES.....

- Accountability exists to **allocate attention**
  - Strive to avoid extremes of over and under identification

- **Common measures** are necessary to this goal
  - Choose measures that are *readily available*, *valid for their intended use*, and *usable and useful* for improvement at the site level

- Schools are best compared to their **peers**
  - Can create a culture of accountability
  - Encourages dual responsibility for neediest students

ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY: A TOOLKIT FOR STATES

Engaging stakeholders

- Who needs to be at the table?

- What is your theory of change/improvement?

- How to address persistently poor performers?

ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLKIT

Selecting Common Measures

- Quantitative measures
  - *Academic Progress:* **Student learning growth** and **progress to graduation,** such as credit attainment or "getting back on track"
  - *Successful Completion:* **Graduation rates** (1, 5 and 6 year) and a **measure of college readiness** validated for alternative settings
  - *School connection:* **School attendance** and a separate measure for **improvement in attendance** compared with the previous school year. When data are available, can also measure **student retention**
    - May need different measures for virtual schools

- Qualitative measures
  - *Climate:* **Surveys** of teachers, students, parents (if affordable)
  - Site Reviews: **Interviews, focus groups** and surveys

ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLKIT

Planning for Improvement

- Lots of models, pick one and stick with it!

- Develop evidence over time to inform practice and refresh common measures

- Don't ignore capacity development for providers

DISCUSSION

- What are the key points necessary to share with federal, state, and local stakeholders?

- What information might be missing for different stakeholders?

- How can conversations of alternative accountability address concerns of over-identification of alternative schools, while also addressing quality?

- What/where are the opportunities for building an evidence base for intervention in alternative education?

NEXT STEPS

- Feedback survey

- Summary brief of today's event

- Policy brief available this Fall