Webinar Transcript - Trends and Opportunities in Accountability for Alternative Education
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An AYPF and Civic Enterprises Webinar

Hello, and welcome to today's webinar, Trends and Opportunities in Accountability for Alternative Education, sponsored by American Youth Policy Forum . I am with the American Youth Policy Forum. In case you're not familiar with AYPF, we are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington DC focused on education, workforce development, and youth development issues. We bring together stakeholders to discuss and frame policy with the goal of improving young people's lives. To learn more about our events and resources, please visit our website at www.aypf.org.

>> Before we get started, I want to provide a few logistical notes. In the event of any technical difficulties, you may dial 1-800-263-6317 to reach GoToWebinar's technical support line also, if you happen to lose connectivity, please log back into the webinar. Life captioning of this webinar is accessible by simple click of the link and will appear in a separate window. Please check the checkbox to the right of your screen for that but -- link. Participants can adjust placement and size of the window as well as the speed and color of captioning.

>> If at any point during the webinar, you may type questions into the questions box to the right of the screen and we will do our best to answer as many as we can. This webinar will be recorded and posted on AYPF's website . When you exit the webinar, you will receive a brief survey and we encourage you to send us feedback as it helps improve our programming.

>> Today's webinar is part one of a three-part series on tools for promoting the education success for at risk and systems involved youth. In order to successfully transition to post secondary education, young people need assistance and support to succeed in school and that prepare them for life's next step. This three-part webinar series cosponsored by AYPF, Civic Enterprises, the justice center for the Council of

>> -- Education loss and, southern poverty Law Center and the American Bar Association center on children and the law, will highlight a number of recent tools for state leaders to help them of the education success of at-risk and systems involved youth. This first webinar will focus on a new brief by civic Enterprises and AYPF entitled measuring success: accountability for alternative education. We will explore what alternative accountability looks like in the state of Wyoming. The second webinar, improving education quality in juvenile justice facilities will take place on March 27 and focus on a new brief by the Council of state government justice centers and the American youth policy form entitled leveraging the every child succeeds acts to improve outcome for youth in the juvenile justice facilities. Please you got the checkbox -- checkbox. The third webinar will focus on the center for youth justice education. The blueprint for change: effective reforms implementing ESSA.

>> For those of you on social media, AYPF will be live tweeting today's event that we encourage you to join the conversation on Twitter. Please follow us at @AYPF Tweets and we will be using the hashtag the other handles for this webinar also listed. We encourage you to follow them as well. Without further ado, I would like to introduce today's presenters. First, we will hear from Dr. Jennifer DePaoli , senior

research and policy advisor at Civic Enterprises. Next, we will hear from Dr. Julie Magee, director of accountability at the Wyoming Department of Education. Finally, we will hear from our own Jesse Kannam, policy research assistant at the American youth policy for. Following each presenter, we will pause briefly to take questions, so be sure to send questions via the box and we will close the webinar with an extended Q&A discussion.

>> So, Jen, please start us off.

>> Thank you, so as she said, I am with civic Enterprises and every year, we put out the building and grad nation report which reports to the nation on high school graduation rates. That is really our starting point joining with AYP F to understand accountability for alternative education, and as she said, we put out measuring success briefs, so this will go over what is in that and hopefully, if you are interested, you can go and look at the brief to get a deeper dive of what we found, states are looking at, in terms of accountability for alternative education. So, the next slide, as I said, over the past few years, grad nation started looking at schools that will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act. So schools will qualify if they have 100 or more students and a graduation rate of 67% or less. What we found is alternative high schools are vastly overrepresented in low graduation rate high schools. What we also looked at was the fact that the rapid growth of this sector has led to mixed purpose of the school and quality. Really, inadequate systems understand how the schools are doing. And, how we should be holding them accountable.

>> So, we started this brief from two key points. First, all students should have a pathway to secondary credential, repaired for post secondary education careers, and life. Number two, this question of what is the general purpose of accountability and its role in ensuring quality and continuous improvement of educational institutions.

>> So, we started from this for pillar look at what it means to have an accountability system, especially for alternative education. Our brief aims to adjust for key opportunities states have and and outside of SF to understand and improve alternative education. I will go through this as we move forward. The first one is, defining alternative education. There is no current federal definition of alternative education. There is one for the purposes of data collection by the national Center of education statistics and they simply state that in alternative school is a public elementary or secondary school that addresses the needs of students that typically cannot be met at a regular school, provides nontraditional education, serves as an adjunct to a regular school, or falls outside the categories of regular special education or vocational special education. In some ways, the federal definition is defining it, by not defining it.

>> One thing we think is important is that states, when looking at how to hold alternative settings accountable, needed to have a clear definition of what alternative education is going to be. These are some of the considerations we think are very important for states to take into consideration when setting the definition. The student population the schools will be intended to serve, the educational setting types. Are they going to be independent institutions? Will they be programs within schools? Will they be both? The length of time students typically spend within various alternative settings. In some cases you have schools where students are supposed to go full time and that is where they will graduate from others will be places where they go for a semester or a quarter, depending on why they are there. The instructional and environmental characteristics of this, is it a type of online program? Is there

flexibility in the scheduling? All of those types of instructional environmental -- environmental characteristics. When you're looking at those things and setting the definition, the most important thing is that it is codified properly. Once the codification happens, it is easier to start holding schools accountable because you know what the schools are that you are holding accountable.

>> The second thing that we look at in the brief is the different types of accountability systems, that states are looking at in order to hold these schools accountable. So, we break it down by looking at the three different types of systems that we have seen. A single system, a single system with modifications, and a completely separate system. We look at this in terms of ESSA. A single system would be a state that is basically saying they will hold alternative settings and traditional settings the same regardless. For identification and accountability purposes, under ESSA, there will be no difference in how alternative schools are treated. Some states are going with what we call the single system with modifications. One example of that would be an alternative school or program is considered the same as traditional schools in the state ESSA plan, but the plan -- state has included differentiated measures or identification process for accountability. One example would be Idaho. Idaho will have one system of accountability, but when identifying the bottom five percent of schools, they are going to identify traditional -- bottom 5% of traditional and the bottom 5% of alternative schools separately. That should help in some ways of making sure that there is not in overrepresentation of alternative schools. Some states have also chosen to create separate state systems to differentiate alternative settings. Visit outside of their ESSA plan. A state like Wyoming which you will hear about, is something we would consider to be this type a single system with modification where, within their ESSA plant, they will be treated the same but within the state they are creating a different system to differentiate alternative settings. Finally, separate systems. Alternative settings will be identified and held two different measures of accountability than traditional schools. Colorado is an example. Although, their ESSA plan has not been approved, we will see what happens moving forward there. That would be a system where alternative schools are identified and held two different measures. Like I said, if you want more information on what to some of these look like, you can see that in the British. We will move onto the next -- in the brief. So we will move on.

>> The next thing we look at is measures, and supplies a large scale to all states in terms of every state needs to do these things. But, how they do them can look very different. So, regardless of a states approach to developing accountability systems, there is significant opportunity within ESSA's requirements to be responsive to alternative education. States are required to set measures of academic achievement, graduation rates, English language proficiency, and include one quality of student success. These indicators provide a level of flexibility. For example, states must measure proficiency in reading, language arts, and mathematics. They may also choose to measure student growth over time which can be beneficial to alternative settings who often have students who are well behind grade level but are making significant progress to catch up. ESSA also requires states to report for your graduation rates, but we see a lot of flexibility in the fact that ESSA are allowing states to report federally extended graduation rates. We think that will be helpful in terms of high schools that have students who come in behind and need time to make up. Finally, the school quality and success indicator are the non--- or the non-academic indicator must provide a way for states to meaningfully differentiate school performance. It offers a lot of flexibility. As you can see, the two that we have seen

the most are chronic absenteeism and school climate measures. That is a place we can provide a lot of flexibility and get a bigger picture of what is going on in alternative settings.

>> Finally, states will have to identify the lowest performing schools for continuous improvement and supports. So, we think this is an interesting thing because we don't want to see schools in alternative settings be overrepresented. We do not think that is fair to traditional schools or, it is not giving us a true representation of what is going on in these schools. So, we know that without some level of flexibility and truly understanding how alternative schools and programs are faring, they will be identified at high rates. You can see, according to our Tuesday -- 2016 analysis, when you look at the schools identified, it was 12% of all high schools and 60% of alternative schools. A vast overrepresentation and we would like to see that avoided. We think that looking at some other things like I just mentioned it might help with making sure that we have a more accurate representation of what alternative settings look like. Lastly, we want to point out that in terms of intervention, it is important to consider the differences and the needs of alternative schools and what is going on in those schools in terms of selecting interventions, although, we know little research has been done to this level of specificity. We also want to point out, and we think it is important, when estates are looking at systems of continuous improvement, actual interventions that help in alternative settings may also benefit traditional schools and we think it is important that they not be overlooked when determining what is working in terms of making sure that students are engaged and on track and getting what they need out of school. If you like more, I am sure we will have some Q&A and also, please check out the brief, we have more in there than I was able to go over.

>> Sorry about that, are you able to hear me? Great, I think I am back on. Thank you so much Jen, that was a fantastic presentation. I want to encourage the audience members to submit your questions into the questions box. We have a few coming through, but we would like you to continue submitting those to us to answer now and at a later point in the webinar as well. One question and that we have that came in, is around, what can we learn from alternative schools when it comes to informing accountability for all academic settings? How can strategies related to accountability and alternative education and form accountability for all sessions?

>> That is a good question and what I was trying to go over, we know that high quality alternative settings are doing a good job of engaging students and re-engaging students who are off-track to begin with. There is a lot to learn in terms of what programs, what efforts need to be made, what kinds of connections need to maybe eight -- needed to be made to make sure they are on track. Because so many alternative programs are now in the re-engagement space, what can traditional schools learn from the students in those spaces, what can they take away that can actually help keep them on track in the first place? I think there is a lot that can be learned from alternative settings. And, what is not working? We know there is a lot of schools and programs that are popping up across certain states that are not re-engaging students and are not offering a high quality learning experience. What can we do to make sure that those ones are ones that we try to get away from and go after what are the high-quality ones that a lot of states have a great models of.

>> Great, fantastic. Another question we have that came in is, what is the best way for districts to identify best practices related to alternative education, given limited research in this area, can you speak to that?

>> That is a good question. This is where when it comes down to is because there is not such a great research base, it's finding the networks that already exist that work. Like rapsa is a great forum for people in that field who come together in October or November and they tried to do the best to try to figure out what is going on in the space and speak to it. There are other things that are coming up. There are re-engagement forums that come up with. It is about trying to find these networks that have come together in this field that can provide interesting examples and models of what is going on. That would be my best advice right now. And, the lack of formal studies of what works in the settings.

>> Great, thank you so much, that was a fantastic presentation, I think we are going to move on to keep things moving, but just a reminder to the audience, please continue to type your questions into the questions box and for anyone who joined late, check your chat box because we have been chatting out various resources that have been mentioned it also, a recording of this webinar will be available on AYPF's website in 48 hours. Julie, taken away.

>> Good afternoon, my name is Julie and I am the director of the Wyoming Department of education. This is how we are handling alternative education in our state. We have 21 alternative schools in our state, we are a small state. An alternative school is defined as any school that is able to offer an educational program to students with educational needs that cannot be met through a traditional high school. This does exclude charter schools, they are treated separately and differently in our state. In 2015, our state legislator actually developed us to develop a framework for alternative school accountability and we have presented the legislator throughout the entire process ever since then, so we are going on three years of providing continual updates about the work we have been doing. The goal of this legislation was to create a model that would meaningfully differentiate alternative schools with other alternative schools, rather than comparing them to traditional high school's.

>> So, the alternative school accountability framework in our state is comprised of four indicators and they are listed here. The last two that you see, climates and engagement, or a significant departure from our traditional model, these two items are not part of our traditional model. So, later on, I will explain how these come together to produce a score. We put together what was called a technical advisory group, this is a committee of alternative school principals and district superintendents that have alternative schools and their districts, as well as department staff like myself and two technical experts from the center for assessment to help us create this model.

>> This is a visual of the framework that was on the previous slide. A couple of things I wanted to point out, you will see student climate is on there twice. Was to the left of the dashed line and once to the right. School climate and to the left of the dashed line is the average of the survey scores that a school receives from his students, so we take each question and each category of questions and we average them together to produce a score. To the right of the line, that is a commendation that rewards prejudice -- participation, so if schools have a participation rate of at least 90%, they can receive the highest rating we have four ratings in our state and the highest is exceeds expectations. We need to go back one, I am sorry. Thank you.

>> Under our model, the first indicators acted -- academic performance, that is a accommodation of achievement a growth peer coaches income from student scores on our states test. They will use the same status as every other traditional high school in our state. The cut scores that we use to determine the targets score for achievement might be different. We will not know until after this school year. What we do is we take the performance of the schools, the alternative high schools, and we develop cut scores that are appropriate for alternative high schools, rather than using the same cut scores that we use for traditional high school York growth is based on the growth of students relative to their academic peers. Students who performed at the 80th percentile last year, how much did they grow this year when you compare them to other students who performed at the 80th percentile? We give more weight to growth than achievement. Post secondary preparation is an indicator that has a few sub- indicators with the first being graduation credential. Schools actually gets credit whether the student graduates from high school with a diploma or, if they get a high school equivalency certificate, such as a GED. We give them equal credit and we have an extended graduation rate in our state and we use the extended graduation rate in our traditional models, so we reward schools for sixth and seventh year garage that my graduates. We add them back into the cohort. The graduation credential is weighted more heavily than any of the other sub indicators under post secondary readiness. Credit earning is a way that we can progress or track the progress of students towards an on-time graduation. We track those credits and at night, 10th, and 11th grade. Schools receive credit for the percentage of students that are on track to graduate.

>> This is the last seven Decatur under post secondary preparation, college and career readiness. There are three options. When you read from left to right, each option gets more and more vigorous. The top line refers to a scholarship program that we have in our state called the Hathaway scholarship program there could have four different levels at each level is tied to more money which is of course tied to more Regulus -- rigorous curriculum requirements. Students were able to complete the requirement at level I, that is not quite as rigorous as level II and so on. As you read from left to right, it is more rigorous. The way that this would factor into the model in terms of the score is a school would be rewarded for at the level of the highest observed outcome. If you have a student that completed the Hathaway curriculum at a level I but God and A.C.T. at a level II but it A.C.T. concentrator at a level I, the total score would be a level II.

>> For climate indicators, students take a 24 question survey where they talk to us about their perceptions of their experiences and their alternative school. So, we have taken those questions and we have come up with three overarching themes. What is their perception of staff support and respect? Student support and respect, and high expectations? The first one is, do that but to what extent do students believe that staff is reporting their learning and demonstrating respect for students and staff? Then, to what extent do students respect each other? And to what extent are students appropriately challenged with meaningful academic work? That is what we are trying to get out. There is one open-ended question and in order to receive a score at all, there needs to be a participation rate in the school of at least 85%. A school that falls below cannot receive a score. Part of that is because we have really small enrollments and most of our alternative schools.

>> Engagement is our final indicator in our model and engagement is addressed by what we call student success plan. It is a form, a fillable form, and each student is assigned to a mentor in their school, and

adult mentor, whoever's assigned to them, and they go through a form at least twice a year to talk about the student's goals and interests, including an attendance goal that is a huge part of engagement. Academic history, attendance rate history, and what their plans are after they leave high school and what types of activities they can engage in now to get ready for life after high school. This is something that is relatively new. Last year, we did not require alternative schools to do this because it was our first pilot your. This year, all schools will be required to participate in this. It will be interesting to see how this shakes out. Then, what the schools do, they sent to us the department's statement of assurance saying that they met these requirements and met with their students twice a year, and went over the for. This is formally reviewed as an artifact during their accreditation visits which happened once every five years.

>> For implementation timeline, we are in our last pilot year, schools do not receive a school performance rating, they received their data. This summer, the technical advisory group will get the performance data for the last two years and set cut scores for each of those indicators that we talked about and we will hopefully be fully implementing this in the next school year. It has been favorably received by our student legislator, and it passed the first read in education committee last week to finalize this to allow us to make this fully operational. We are very fortunate.

>> I just wanted to touch on the difference between ESSA and ASA. The bullet list at the top, those are the indicators that are included in our high school list of indicators and our approved ESSA plan you can see there are a few things there that are not part of the alternative school accountability model. We recognize that ESSA requires all of these things. What we will do is come alternative schools will be identified for comprehensive or targeted support. Based on these indicators that you see here. However, for our state accountability, they will receive a score based on the indicators we talked about. Including climate and engagement, because we feel that the system that we have in place for alternative school accountabilities better meets the needs and priorities of the schools in our state. With that, I will take any questions. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you so much Julie, that was very helpful. We have a few questions coming in. The first is, around climate. Wondering if you have any recommendations of school climate surveys that alternative schools are using?

>> In our state, we designed the survey for them, so he -- all of the alternative schools in our state using the same server that we borrowed from surveys that were required under advanced accreditation. We used it to use them for our state accreditation. We borrowed ideas from them, but crafted the questions to better meet what we were trying to get out with alternative schools. So, we looked around, but we created our own. I would be happy to share that if anybody needed that or wanted that.

>> That would be great, and we are happy to throw that up on our website. Another question we have for you is, regarding how alternative education settings are defined in the state of Wyoming. Someone asked, in Wyoming, what specific student needs were defined whether or not a student can be served in a traditional setting or an alternative setting?

>> The law does not speak to that. We do not have a law that says a student must exude these characteristics to be considered an alternative school. We are a local control state, so a lot of those

things are left up to the judgment of the individual districts. But, some of it is not necessarily academic, perhaps at their emotional needs are better met in an alternative school because it is smaller, it is more intimate. The kids had to have, for what we see, stronger connections with each other and their teachers than traditional schools, but we leave these decisions up to this -- up to the district. Smacking of the question we have is regarding CT pathways. Any barriers or challenges regarding students and alternative education schools making sure they have pathways to career or technical education that you have to work through?

>> Not really, that was not a concern that we heard. Our technical advisory group is made up primarily of principals and superintendents who work in these alternative schools and in these indicators were in part created by them and so, they have strong healthy partnerships. Either with the traditional schools in the district or, seven community colleges in our state. A lot of the schools have partnerships with them to complete the pathways. They saw this as an opportunity for students to have another way to score well on indicator. I have not heard any challenges in terms of, do we have alternative schools that are unable to provide this type of opportunity to students, that has not been a concern that I heard.

>> Okay, great, thank you very much, we will have more time to answer questions at the end and I am going to turn it over to Jesse Kannam to start us off.

>> Hello everyone. Today I will be presenting preliminary findings and an additional analysis from our recently conducted 50 states scan. This scan has been an evolving project over the past few years as a wife PF has continued to build connections. I would like to thank the AYPF leaders who have contributed to this. In particular, Danny Gillis whose hard work makes this possible.

>> And in effort to better understand education Lancer -- landscape across the country, we conducted surveys across the states regarding the implementation of AYPF and. Given that , this scan provides a baseline for where states are to date and provides insight onto how approaches to defining alternative settings and holding them accountable may change in the coming years. The scan was primarily conducted through a review of state education agency websites and publicly available state legislation and regulation. It should be noted that the information on say education website may not always be updated to reflect the current state of affairs in any given state. As will be described later, given that alternative education functions differently from state to state, often times, information regarding the practices can be found in various places. Based on the information available, AYPF investigated three areas which Jen also discussed in her section earlier. Definition, accountability system, and accountability measures. I will discuss each in the coming slides. We present these national trends today in the hopes of advancing the conversation about how alternative education and accountability for the settings function across the country. While this conversation is nuanced and there is a lot to digest, this presentation presents a brief outline of our initial findings in a more detailed document with our findings is forthcoming in the next two months. -- Few months. We started by investigating if the state had a definition and how it was codified. As explained earlier, definition and codification are important to ensure state capture the purpose, needs and progress of education institutions that differ from traditional settings. As you can see, 46 states have defined alternative education in some way. Of those 46, 33 do it through legislation and 13 through other mechanisms like state regulation, listing it on a state education agency website, or within documents such as accountability manuals.

>> We explored how alternative settings are held accountable. Federal state and public accountability mechanisms can be used to hold settings accountable and we look at these collectively to explore how and if states hold the settings accountable to ensure quality and support and continuous improvement. The research, we found accountability for these settings fits within two key categories. One, that accountability is the same for traditional and alternative settings, and two, accountability systems include modifications for alternative settings. As we will see, most states have modifications that accountability for alternative settings. These modifications very greatly and and some states, the modification may be the inclusion of a different measure our differences and weight associated with the given measure. And other states, these modifications include distinct, separate, or parallel frameworks in which alternative settings are evaluated amongst each other. You can see that we found 16 states have the same system for traditional and alternative settings and that 25 states included modifications for alternative settings. I also want to note that at each table, you will see an end to size. This is how many states we can make a determination about. In the case of determining accountability structure, there were some states we felt we could not make a determination given in the information available. We are reporting findings from 41 states. Discussing what measures are used for alternative settings is important to the conversation. AYPF explored measures of academic performance, graduation rate, inclusion of other credentials such as GD or technical certificates, and student engagement measures such as attendance, re-engagement, student voice and school climate.

>> Of the 37 states we can report on, we found that 34 included a measure of academic achievement. Statewide and standardized assessments are the comment that make the most common way to investigate achievement. Due to the fact that alternative settings are designed to serve students who are already behind academic benchmarks, measures of growth allow for measurement of progress and can allow states to more meaningfully differentiate between high and low quality settings. We found that out of 34 states, 17 used growth as a measure, for six states, it was optional, and 11 did not use growth as a measure. This table displays the number of states that are using for years and extended your education rates -- graduation rates as measures for their accountability settings. Using extended graduation rate and for your graduation rates, it allows states to acknowledge the four-year graduation rate timeline well also wreck -- recognizing that students have various trajectories. Using extended your rates can acknowledge a school or programs work or progress to support a student to that credential. On this slide are a few key takeaways from this. First, there is a wide variety of definition of alternative education across states. While most states define alternative education in some way, some definitions are vague and short while others provide a more detailed outline of what alternative education looks like in the state, such as the population served or the instructional method used. Earlier, Janet described the various ways in which states are approaching education under ESSA and Julie described Wyoming's progress. The scan indicates that some states have been using the same system and that many have been visiting various levels of modifications. States are leveraging accountability mechanisms at various levels to develop innovative systems and measures that reflect quality and success in alternative settings. A few words on ESSA. From our work, we see that a ESSA has been a motivating factor for some states to start considering these issues and for others, it has been a lever of potential support for already existing work. Acknowledging under ESSA that states must create divisions that meaningfully identify traditional schools, it helps states identify between low and high quality settings. We also see that as a provides the opportunity to use flexible methods. For example, the weight assigned to each

measure. The scan process also demonstrated inclusion and accountability systems were alternative settings can often be affected by the size of the setting and the classification as a school or program. Another interesting finding was the manifestation of local control and some states. While the state divided a framework, decisions about certain measures or the structure of programs in schools would be left to localities and districts to decide. The research has made clear that many states acknowledge the importance of accountability and the complexities of alternative education and are in the process of reconsidering their current state of affairs. Some states indicated on the website memos, they are in the process of convening stakeholder groups and workgroups to tackle these issues. The scan demonstrated areas for further inquiry. One area would be the examination into the state where there was not enough information or clarity to make a determination about their accountability structure. This lack of integration could indicate an absence or lack of accountability for alternative settings. Another area for further inquiry wasn't the fact that many alternative schools are charters that can have their own mechanisms of accountability in addition to state, federal and public accountability to this could be explored in future project. A last area for deeper study, as mentioned above, are the factors that affect inclusion in federal and state accountability such as the classification of a score program and his eyes.

>> To close, I want to highlight resources and next steps. As mentioned, a written publication on the finding from the 50 states scan is forthcoming. Additionally, AYPF is currently conducting a scan of Allstate plans, reviewing the plans once approved for alternative education and accountability for the settings. Finally, AYPF recently launched an alternative resource page to serve as a hub for resources related to this topic. The policy brief that Jen described can be found on this page along with a few other featured resources displayed.

>> Thank you so much Jesse for the great overview of our scan. We have about 50 minutes left and a lot of questions are coming in. I will do my best to get through as many as we can and I think we will start with one for Julie. We have a couple of questions coming in around what accountability might look like across the different types of alternative schools. Can you speak to that? Whether or not that changes and what that differentiates -- that differentiation might look like across schools.

>> The differentiation comes from the scores on each indicator and sub indicator, so it will become apparent to us as we go forth with the full implementation of the model, where the alternative schools have strengths and where they need more assistance. That is one thing I like about having a model with target levels that are set for each indicator. It is easy for us to identify the strengths and struggles for the schools. We also have a site that is set up for alternative schools. That way, the schools who are strong in different areas can a share ideas with other schools who may be struggling with getting the kids to come to school or getting them to engage in the work. That is the way that we were able to differentiate from school to school. That indicator level.

>> Thank you. Sorry for that pause. Another question we have Julie, we had a question around advice for youth parents and organizations working with at risk youth in alternative settings and how they can be better advocates for the best interests of their students. I was wondering if maybe you had any insight from the task force that you mentioned and can't speak to how any states or districts can facilitate community feedback and dialogue and the creation of alternative accountability systems.

>> We are pretty fortunate because we are a small state and so, the state Department of Education is like one big school district. We are lucky because it is easy for us to communicate with our districts and communities because we are small. I would encourage that whatever you do, it is a stakeholder driven process it is not the state coming in saying, we think we know what is best for alternative schools and this is what it will apply. That you get people who are on the front lines, as part of and that have a significant role in the work. It is not just us and technical experts telling them how it will be. In terms of getting support to do this, our legislator is active in education. It is sometimes a curse but always a blessing. We are very fortunate that way. I always encourage people on any issue to contact their local legislators and take part in the democratic process and reach out and say here are things that states are doing for alternative schools, let's look at this. Would you support a bill? It is always a great idea to encourage legislator to write in a year or two of pilot time so you can work out the issues to make sure it will work. What the model looks like today is slightly different than what we started out with a year and a half ago.

>> Thank you, it is a quick follow-up, someone asked what the U.S. Department of education response has been to alternative system of accountability model in your state as a separate accountability system, can you speak to that?

>> There has not been a response, because we are following the federal law in terms of the ESSA plan is designed to identify schools for support, either comprehensive support or targeted support or additional targeted support. We need to use the same indicators for all of the high schools to do that and we are doing that and we will do it for alternative schools. There is no departure from what the requirements are under ESSA from what we plan to do to identify schools for that level support. We can basically do whatever we want outside of that. Our traditional high school model for our state is also slightly different than what we submitted under ESSA. It does not really matter to U.S. and because we are following the requirements they laid before us to identify schools for that targeted support. In terms of how to berate schools, we are using the model that works best for Wyoming and they have not said anything.

>> Thank you, this question, I will start with Jen, but Julia would like you to diamond as well. How can states address accountability when many alternative settings are often small and by design can be exempt from federal and other points of accountability due to their size?

>> You cut out on me a little bit, but I got the gist of the question as being about the size of the schools and how that might, is it meant to be or it might cut them out of the accountability system?

>> Yes, that is correct.

>> Okay, I would say that that is an issue we have looked at, because as we know, ESSA is only requiring states to look at schools that have 100 or more students. There is concern that some schools may actually hold their programs down below that 100 city cutpoint, so that they do not need to necessarily follow within the accountability system, but for the most part, I do not think that will be a massive issue. It is a Sunday we're concerned about. Also something we have looked at, an issue that our campaign has tried to push lately, his special education. Students with disabilities. We know that they have low graduation rates. We also know that they tend to be overrepresented -- over representative in

alternative settings. There is concern that it will continue to be a push out and given the fact that certain states are setting the cut offs of how many students in a given school, and the different subgroups, it is pretty low. Excuse me, pretty high I should say. In terms of what they will look at. There is concern about that, that we may not be getting an accurate picture, but, until we start seeing exactly how this plays out, I do not have a definite answer on how significant of an issue it might be.

>> Thank you. Julie, do you have anything to add?

>> Sure, I will let you know that in Wyoming, our size for all indicators is much lower than other states because we would end up excluding a lot of schools. Our and the size is 10. I think most states one with 30. We did that intentionally to make sure that more schools were included and more subgroups were included, including alternative schools. As long as schools meet the minimum requirement of 10 to 4 two indicators, they will be identified and received support. We take that into consideration when we set our small schools definition and it applies it to alternative schools, because they do tend to be smaller.

>> Another question I came in for Julie, whether the Wyoming pilot run was for all schools or for a subset of schools?

>> The pilot was applicable to all alternative schools. With the exception of the engagement piece, that was optional for the alternative schools in the first year and it was required this year and will be required going on. That is because we were introducing a new model and did not want to throw too much at once. We had some schools the first of pilot year that decided to go ahead and participate in the engagement piece, but some did not. Now they all are. We also offered our survey out to all of the traditional high schools and in our first year, we did not get very many traditional high schools that were that interested in participating in the survey, but we had a great vendor who has created an informative platform where the schools cannot only see what the partition rate -- participation rate of the school's but they could see how their students in the aggregate answered with the exceptions of the students in the schools. How they compared to other alternative schools, how they compared to other schools statewide. This year we had more traditional high school's opt in to participate in the survey. I do not know that they will continue to want to do that forever because it is not required under the traditional model at this point, but the alternative schools are required to participate in the survey. The rest of it is required because it is required that they participate in the state assessment and that is where achievement and growth comes from and it is required that they report graduation rates to us. All of that has been going on for years.

>> Another question that came in was around tracking post graduation outcomes for students in alternative settings. I want to ask you first, and then Jen, if you have anything to add, if you have any guidance on how to track graduation outcomes for alternative schools.

>> That is sometimes difficult to do, but because of our scholarship program, students that graduate and enroll in any of the community colleges or universities are pretty easily tracked, because we look at the graduates and we compare them from those who took the scholarship and those who did not, if they leave high school and enroll in college, it is easier to track, especially if they stay in state. If they leave high school and enroll in and out of state college, they go into the work force, if they do nothing, it is

harder to track but it is definitely something that our state board of education and legislator have an interest in. It will be a big topic of discussion for the technical advisory group this spring and summer.

>> Jen, let's broaden the question, I'm curious what advice you have for anyone listening in terms of what resources and other states people can look to for guidance on how to tackle alternative education and their state beyond tracking the post secondary outcomes.

>> Was a question to me?

>> Yes, Jen, I'm curious if you can share what other states can people look to for guidance on how to tackle alternative education education in the states?

>> I will point you to debrief. We have two tables in our brief. They look at all of the given ESSA indicators and how states are handling those types of things, sometimes very differently. Like I said, while we use the ESSA indicators, not all states, some states were doing this before ESSA and already looking at these things. Some of these things have been very established there I will look at page 14 and 15 of the briefs in terms of what states are doing. In terms of post secondary tracking, I would reiterate what Julie said. It is challenging in order to track those things, a lot of times it is youth report back, but some states are trying to do a better job of tracking, Indiana is a state that comes to mind. A state that is doing more to see what is going on. They are not doing it just for alternative settings, they are doing it for all schools. But, trying to look and see what happens when those students leave high school. We hope that more states try to do more around that without interfering with data privacy and things like that which are a big issue. The more we can learn about, are these alternative settings and ones that have a CT bend or are trying to connect students to post secondary as a way of re-engaging them, a lot of them do probably track these stats on their own. At they are interested in certain programs, I will go to their websites. But, that is something I think would be important and hopefully we will get more information as time moves forward.

>> Thank you so much, I want to be mindful of the time. We are coming up at 3 PM Eastern and am afraid we have run out of time. I want to take a second to think our presenters, Jen, Julie, and Jesse for joining us today. For any questions we were unable to get to on this webinar, their contact information is located on the screen. We encourage you to reach out to them with any lingering questions you have. Please join us for the second webinar in the three-part series on March 27 target will be at the same time, from 2 to 3 PM Eastern anti-registration information is on the screen. As a reminder to everyone tuning in, please feel free to take our survey upon exiting the webinar and the recording of the webinar will be posted on AYPF's website within 40 hours. Thank you for taking the time to join us today and we hope to see you again real soon.

>> [Event Concluded]