

**Goals and Guiding Principles for Accountability
in
Kentucky's Public Education System**

Kentucky Board of Education December 7, 2010 Study Session

(Note: Informed by the national work of the Council of Chief State School Officers Accountability Task Force in the paper titled "Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems)

Kentucky Board of Education Challenge - Development of an accountability model to drive behavioral change to yield steady growth toward realizing the vision of ALL children proficient and prepared for success.

Goals of Next-Generation Kentucky Accountability System: This document provides a roadmap to guide Kentucky in developing a next-generation, college- and career-ready accountability system designed to achieve the following policy goals:

- Articulate Kentucky's expectations for school and district performance to drive actions for improving student achievement across the Commonwealth's educational system with the ultimate goal of all students graduating ready for success in college and careers.
- Identify differences in performance of schools and districts in valid, accurate, and meaningful ways so that schools/districts in need of improvement can receive appropriate support and interventions to meet expectations and top-performing/high-growth schools/districts can be recognized as models of excellence.
- Empower and engage educators, policy/law makers, parents, and the public through regular communication and transparent reporting of clear data on performance and results so that they can take action appropriate to their roles.
- Foster a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.

Guiding Principles of Next-Generation Kentucky Accountability System: Guiding principles help ensure that state accountability design decisions validly and reliably promote Kentucky's educational goals. Such principles include the following:

- The accountability system should emphasize high standards and drive the goal of college- and career-readiness for all students.
- The accountability system should be *systemic* and aligned across all actors, from federal to state to local (including schools and districts, educators, and students) with the availability of actionable data throughout.
- The accountability system should include a deliberate focus on district-level accountability and capacity-building given the tight locus of control between local school boards, district leadership, and their schools.
- The accountability system should be meaningful for all districts, schools and students at every performance level as the system should encourage continuous

improvement. While there should be particular focus in getting low-performing districts, schools, and students to increased levels of achievement, the system must also identify the high-performing districts and schools from which best practices can be gleaned – as well as encourage all schools and districts to become better.

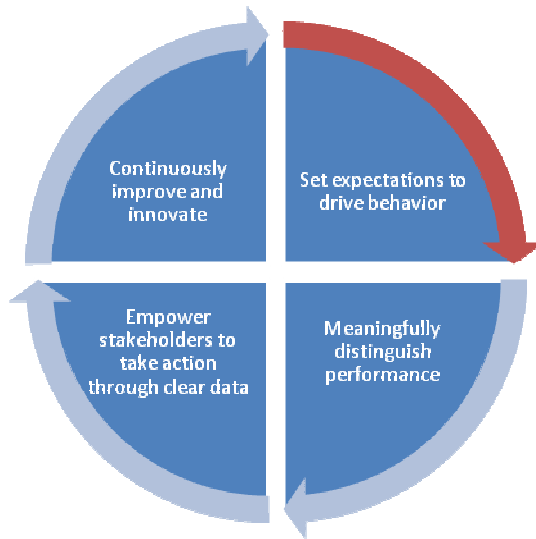
- The accountability system should ensure that similarly-situated schools and districts are treated in a similar fashion.
- Validity of determinations and classifications should guide the design of the accountability system, while simultaneously being balanced against the need for clarity and transparency and the need for reliability and comparability across states.
- The state accountability system should be *one part* of the state's holistic education structure, built upon a research-based theory of action, aimed toward increasing student achievement. Robust data systems to inform policy and instruction, teacher and leader development, aligned curriculum and assessments, among others, should be equally important components of the Commonwealth's education system.
- Along with informing educational policy decisions, the next-generation accountability system should reinforce sound teaching and learning through, for example, improved assessment systems, effective data reporting, richer diagnostic evaluation, etc.
- The state accountability system should contribute to strong and positive school cultures that value and support high expectations for all students and teachers.
- The accountability system should be open to and driven by innovation.

Shared Accountability

The state accountability system should acknowledge and encourage the responsibility of all actors for increased student performance outcomes – including the students themselves, parents, educators, and leaders at both the school and district levels. Accountability needs to be shared if it is to be effective; however, shared accountability cannot be perceived as an excuse for the core, independent responsibility of all schools and districts to ensure all students succeed. It is important to recognize these other forms of accountability to ensure that they align with the Commonwealth's overall accountability system. These other forms include:

- Student accountability – includes the complex decisions and consequences associated with designing a state assessment system and how that will be used to gauge individual student progress (e.g., graduation requirements, exit exams, grades) as well as the personal responsibility each student should assume in performing to the best of his/her ability.
- Parent accountability – parents are students' first teachers and therefore, have a primary role in ensuring that their children rise to their educational potential.
- Teacher and leader effectiveness – emerging systems of teacher/leader evaluation and compensation hinge on student performance. States are grappling with how to measure the complexity of a teacher's and leader's influence on students' learning.
- Superintendent and school board effectiveness – creating conditions for continuous improvement is an essential role of school boards and superintendents. The Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Board of Education should work with the state level school boards association and superintendents association to align evaluations to accountability goals.
- Working conditions – working conditions impact learning outcomes and must be an essential element of data systems that inform improvement efforts, regardless of whether working conditions data are included in the final determinations of school and district accountability ratings.
- Early learning accountability – programs geared towards ensuring that students enter kindergarten ready to learn should be held accountable for results
- Higher education accountability – more attention is now being paid nationwide on how higher education institutions support and facilitate student progress and degree attainment once they graduate high school ready for college.
- Teacher preparation programs – data systems must inform the improvement of this essential link in the education system.

The graphic below illustrates that the goals of next-generation state accountability systems are integrated and mutually-reinforcing. (From CCSSO “Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems”)



The graphic below illustrates a policy framework that can guide Kentucky in developing its next-generation accountability system to meet the goals and guiding principles cited on pages 1-3 of this paper. (From CCSSO “Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems”)

