

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY THE FOCUS – INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Kentucky schools are in a unique situation of accountability transition. While the Kentucky Department of Education is fervently working on the development of our new accountability system, the interim assessment will maintain part of CATS, eliminate part of CATS, and introduce some of the new system. In the meantime, the role of School Based Decision Making Councils will be critical in focusing on school improvement, measuring student achievement, and keeping the school community informed about progress.

To continue momentum for increasing student achievement (each council's first priority) during this interim period of accountability, schools should have a very intentional plan that is in line with the district's plan. The following steps will guide you through the development of your school accountability plan.

1. DECIDE YOUR VISION OF SUCCESS

Now is a great time to revisit your school's vision. Follow these steps to develop a new vision statement or revise or recommit to the one you already have.

A. Define the school's vision of success. Part of having a clear vision is having a common understanding of what success means for your school.

Some ideas:

- Proficiency for all students (the definition for proficiency has not changed)
- Closing achievement gaps
- Progress on internal measures of progress such as ThinkLink, MAP, GRADE, etc.
- EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT results
- Fewer students needing remedial classes in the next school level
- Increased numbers and diversity of students in gifted, advanced, or AP classes
- Passing rate on AP exams

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

B. Agree upon two or three goals that will measure progress toward your vision.

C. Decide how to monitor whether or not your school is achieving its goals. *(This will become more defined as you work through all of the steps.)*

D. Determine the role the principal and teacher leaders will fulfill to move your school toward its vision of success and reaching your goals.

E. Plan how the vision and goals will be communicated to your school community.

2. IDENTIFY WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

The standards for what students need to know and be able to do are being revised. During the interim, our Program of Studies and Core Content are still relevant and required. The school council must provide expectations and guidance for teachers to continue teaching the current standards.

Answer the following questions to form a united statement about what students need to learn.

A. What is the common source teachers will use to determine what they will teach our students?

B. What are our expectations for refining/unpacking standards and how will we support teachers to accomplish this work?

C. What are some consistent practices (such as posting and teaching from common targets) we need to implement school-wide?

C. How will we monitor what is being taught and the implementation of school-wide practices?

D. How will we ensure rigorous, engaging instruction?

3. IMPLEMENT SCHOOL-WIDE FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

For the interim period, Senate Bill One outlines required assessments. In order to keep moving forward, local districts can enhance the assessment plan by providing schools more specific guidance and resources. The SBDM council is responsible for implementing the district assessment plan and refining it to meet the needs of the school's students.

Rick Stiggins, one of our nation's proven authorities on assessment and consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education, advises that we must "...change our assessment beliefs and act accordingly, or we deprive learners of maximum success..." He also promotes a balanced assessment system that includes classroom assessments, interim assessments, and annual testing. Now is the perfect time at the district level to implement these forms of assessments and use the data to drive instruction.

Complete the following to specifically define your school's accountability plan for the next two years.

Annual Testing (State Assessment)

A. What are the district's plans for measuring progress from year to year in Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Writing On Demand? *(Calculate an index, compare percentages of proficient/distinguished, check state ranking if available)* How can our council enhance that plan?

B. Will we give and score the Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies assessments? If so, how will we communicate the results?

C. What information do we need as a council to establish a new policy regarding writing portfolios?

D. What new council policies are needed to guide and support the implementation of Program Reviews for Arts/Humanities, Practical Living/Vocational Studies, and Writing Portfolios?

E. Do we need to establish an ad hoc assessment committee to keep us moving forward during the interim period?

Interim Assessment

A. Do we already use an interim assessment, such as ThinkLink or MAP? If not, what funding source can we use to purchase one, and which one will we purchase? *(If you do not have an interim assessment, consider establishing a committee of administrators and teacher leaders to study and make recommendation. If your district has purchased or will be purchasing this for you, they will provide guidance for implementation as well)*

B. How often will we give the interim assessment and when will results be communicated to the SBDM council?

B. How are the interim results used to drive instruction? How do we analyze these results?

C. How are the interim results used to identify students who need interventions? How will this be communicated to the SBDM council?

D. What structures do need or have in place to provide interventions for students?

Classroom Assessments

- A. What does Rick Stiggins mean by the term classroom assessments?

- B. What professional development do our administrators and teachers need to understand classroom formative assessments, how they're used, and how they drive instruction?

- C. How can we support classroom teachers as they use classroom assessments to change their thinking about assessment as an integral part of instruction?

- D. How will our council provide the structures for teachers to share forms of classroom formative assessments and their results? Is this the work of our professional learning communities?

4. DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Now that you have made critical decisions about school accountability over the next two years, it is important to not only share the plan, but ensure that stakeholders understand the plan.

Answer these questions to outline how you will communicate with stakeholders.

- A. Who needs to know our plan and expectations for school accountability during the interim period?
(Teachers, students, parents, superintendent, school board, community members)

- B. How will we ensure teachers know and understand the plan? How will we provide opportunities for them to ask questions?

- C. Who are our key communicators who will share and promote our plan for accountability and continued school improvement?

- D. What means of communication do we have available to share our plan?

- E. In addition to KDE's public reporting, what do we want to share about our progress and results?