

Redesigning the Commonwealth's Accountability and Targeted Assistance/Intervention System

Key Principles

October 16, 2008

1. The district is the entry point for our accountability and assistance work. The Department's focus needs to be on building the district's capacity to support and guide improvement efforts in its individual schools.
2. We must develop an accountability system that coordinates and integrates agency review processes, reducing the burden on districts as they undergo assessment procedures and bringing a sharper focus to the Department's review efforts.
3. A strong accountability system will not, by itself, result in continued improvement. Systems of support and intervention commensurate with our accountability requirements are necessary to secure continued, strong improvement.
4. We must develop a system that provides levels of accountability and support built on a continuum that progresses from "loose" to "tight," directly linked to the severity and duration of identified problems.
5. We must revisit state statute and regulations regarding accountability and assistance in order to create sufficient state authority within the tiered levels of our system.
6. Our system must incorporate clear expectations for monitoring the district's efforts to implement improvement plans, emphasizing sources of evidence that address the impact of that implementation.
7. We must define a clear picture of what success looks like, including reasonable benchmarks of progress, so districts know what they're shooting for along the way and what it would take to exit accountability status.
8. The Department must develop and enlist the support of partners if we are to efficiently and effectively implement accountability and assistance measures.
9. We must be realistic in our expectations for improvement; it takes time to effect the kind of changes in attitudes, beliefs, expectations and ultimately in culture that are the foundation for steady, sustained improvement and real change.
10. We must value the power of the human dimension of change; relationships and collaboration are key to improvement. It's not a one-person job.

