

**Accountability and Assistance  
Advisory Council  
November 3, 2008  
Holy Cross – Hogan Conference Room  
Minutes**

Attendance: Andy Churchill, Dr. Robert Consalvo, Dr. Deborah Dancy, Dr. Judy DeLucia, Joe Esposito, Dr. Anders Lewis, Sam Liao, Annie McKenzie, Beverly Miyares, Linda Noonan, Laura Perille, Dr. John Portz, Dr. Pat Schettini, Steven Sharek, Susan Therriault; Robin Ahigian, Dr. Karla Baehr, (ESE)

**1. Review of AAAC's role and responsibilities – *questions and clarifications***

- The distinction between the EMAC/EQA process and the new Office of S&D Accountability in DESE is independence. As such, the AAAC's role is advisory to the BESE and also to the Department as policies, practices, regulations and the post audit survey are developed for BESE approval. One thing AAAC will not be doing is reviewing school district audit reports; that is now the role of the BESE.
- Karla emphasized that the Board of ESE is the policy making body for the Department. Before adopting regulations, it will seek the recommendation of this advisory council, but this advisory council is not the decision making body.
- Need to be careful about repeating past mistakes made in the design and implementation of the accountability system. Karla indicated that the Framework (discussed below) is intended to address that concern.
- Need to include a post audit survey for districts to complete to develop a feedback system. Karla explained that we are developing a survey to gather baseline data from superintendents, principals, and others to address this.
- The shift of ESE's accountability and assistance work is to focus on districts rather than school by school, both to build the districts' capacity and to address ESE's limited capacity.

**2. Review of district trend profile examples – *feedback from the group***

- More discussion is needed around Comparable Value Analysis
- Under *Other performance indicators*, look at the four and five-year graduation rates for students who had pre K and/or full day K.
- We need a broader window than 4-5 years of high school – perhaps 12-13 years that is backward looking.
- Under *Resource indicators*, change the word “permanent” describing teacher certification status to “professional”
- Under *Resource indicators*, teachers with a major in their content area should be added.
- We need “buy in” from school committee members to include non-academic areas e.g., arts, music and athletics, in the measurements.

- Information on the diversity of staff is needed; research suggests that student performance improves if staff reflects the student population.
- A caution was raised about requiring/imposing new data requirements on districts. Karla explained that no new data would be collected; we would use/collect data that ESE gathers for other things.
- SAT scores should be added to the profile. Can we determine and include where students go if they leave a district prior to graduation?
- What are the standards and what is driving this data collection? We want to be careful about falling into a ranking system, such as US News & World Report.
- It will be more difficult to come up with standards for elementary and middle schools than for high schools.
- Steve Sharek objected to including Mass Core in the profile.

3. **Initial Review of Draft “ESE Framework for District Accountability and Assistance”** – *feedback and questions from the group*

- It would help to know and be clear about the products and processes going on along the path towards co-governance.
- There were questions about what we mean by “regional assistance centers” (Anders) and a suggestion to use the same language that the Governor’s office uses – *Readiness Centers* rather than regional centers.
- Make the “triggers” clear along the way – what triggers a district to move from stage 4 to stage 3?
- There were questions about the timing and whether this is an annual review process. Make that clear in the document.
- What if a district does everything they set out to do in the plan and things don’t improve? It might make sense not to think of it as a linear progression; districts may bump around in level 3 or 4 and never advance.
- How do we know what really works? We need to develop some research based, program evaluation tools. The Department has a unique opportunity to take the lead to define and disseminate best practices.
- Is there a goal for capacity at the inner “tighter level” as well as the outer level? Where we don’t have the capacity, are districts on their own and where is the triage for them?
- The next iteration of the framework, as well as the work plan for accountability and assistance, will be sent to the council in advance of the Dec 1 meeting

Reviewed, amended and adopted, Dec, 1, 2008 (14-0)