

**Accountability and Assistance  
Advisory Council  
February 11, 2009  
Worcester Technical High School  
Minutes**

Attendance: Dr. Judy DeLucia, Joseph Esposito (by phone), Dr. Anders Lewis, Annie McKenzie, Beverly Miyares, Linda Noonan, Laura Perille, Dr. Pat Schettini, Steven Sharek, Susan Therriault; Eva Mitchell, Catherine Sullivan, Mary Street, Robert Lee, Jeff Nellhaus, Dr. Karla Baehr, (ESE)

**1. Deputy Commissioner's Update on District and School Accountability –  
*questions and clarifications***

- As ESE continues to conduct district reviews, members would like to weigh in on the indicators that are used.
- One member expressed concern about a perceived “hiatus” in terms of the state accountability function and questioned whether ESE was “on track” to meet the district review requirements in the legislation. Karla clarified that the 15 reviews required this school year will be conducted and that, although big budget cuts are impeding progress, ESE is “on track”.
- A question was raised about the searchable database of teacher contracts. Karla explained that ESE is in the process of designing the database and incorporating ideas from other models across the country.
- A question was raised about why the 10 Essential Conditions are being revised and what the vetting process would be to include others in the process of those revisions. Karla explained that the 10 Essential Conditions were originally not embedded in a concrete theory of action and pieces were missing. She will continue to engage the AAAC and Stakeholder Working Group members in the process of revising them.
- It was suggested that Karla compose a Progress Report similar to this one before every AAAC meeting.

**2. Presentation of the ESE MCAS Growth Model –*feedback and questions from the group***

- ESE should put careful thought into how to roll the Growth Model out in a way that establishes its legitimacy.
- Questions were raised about who would have access to this data. Would schools and teachers be able to use it? Bob Lee explained that they are still designing new ways to draw inferences from the data.
- Questions were raised about how we might make this data most useful for districts. ESE must make sure schools and districts will know how to make use of this tool.
- The model raises questions about how to decide what “success” means. Do you blame high achieving districts for stagnant growth?

- Jeff explained that questions remain about how to account for mobility issues and whether we can hold districts accountable for the growth of transient students.
- The Growth Model needs to be further challenged and rolled out slowly. It needs to be vetted in the field to prevent unintended consequences.

### **3. Review of Draft #5 of the Framework for Accountability and Assistance – *feedback and questions from the group***

- Why is the role of regional assistance centers not present in the framework? Karla explained that ESE is not sure how much support can be promised through the School Improvement Assistance Centers at the different levels in the triangle.
- Karla clarified that the point of entry is the district, so if a district has one or more schools in intervention, then the district is in need of intervention.
- We need more clarity around standards. If standards and indicators are of high quality, it reduces confusion and makes it easier for schools and districts to know what to do.
- One member suggested adding a page to the Framework that would clarify the standards for Level 1.
- How will ESE facilitate the use of the Essential Conditions?
- One member suggested that ESE should move beyond discussion of the Framework and start implementing it.
- Using the 10 Essential Conditions as a critical feature of the Framework is problematic because there has not been enough discussion around the assumptions behind them and the wording that was chosen.
- The state should propose new Essential Conditions and new district standards and we should talk about them.
- The Essential Conditions should be written in common English, not in “edu-speak”.
- Karla explained that given our limited resources, a “triage” approach to assistance is required. Instead of trying to assist every school in NCLB status, the Framework is based on what we can meaningfully do with ESE capacity to review and intervene in underperforming schools and districts.
- One member suggested adding a supplemental page to show assistance strategies and be more explicit about ESE approaches to support.
- It is important to take inventory of what assistance is available statewide and to organize it on the website.
- What are the resource implications to the 10 Essential Conditions? Are they backed up by legislative and fiscal support or is it up to the district to allocate the funding?
- ESE should be strategic about how assistance is delivered in unique and innovative ways.
- ESE needs to be careful about the subjective nature of the gateways. The criteria must be consistent so as not to be perceived as “political” in determining the districts that require intervention.