

**Accountability and Assistance  
Advisory Council  
May 13, 2009  
Worcester Technical High School  
Minutes**

Attendance: Robert Consalvo, Dr. Deborah Dancy, Dr. Judy DeLucia, Joseph Esposito, Dr. Anders Lewis, Anne McKenzie, Beverly Miyares, Linda Noonan, John Portz, Steven Sharek, Susan Therriault; Eva Mitchell, Catherine Sullivan, John Roper, Dr. Karla Baehr, (ESE)

1. **Welcome and Update**– Deputy Commissioner Karla Baehr provided updates on the following issues:
  - Feedback from the presentation to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on accountability and assistance
  - Work with MBAE to integrate the comparative functions from the old Just for the Kids website to ESE’s district and school trend profile
  - National Governor’s Association grant for Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and the trip that ESE and stakeholders are taking to New Orleans to examine the Recovery Schools District.
  - ARRA grants including the \$50 million for Title I school improvement work at Levels 4 and 5
  
2. **Discussion of Integrated District Standards for Accountability and Assistance** *feedback and questions from the group*
  - Karla began the discussion by clarifying how the district reviews will be coordinated with NEASC and CPR reviews. In the protocol for district reviews, districts will see evidence that reviewers read and supplement their findings from these other reviews.
  - Is it possible to do just one review to make it less time consuming for districts? Karla responded that much of the CPR review is based on federal and state legal requirements. ESE would like to ideally integrate the district review and CPR processes, but it will not happen before the next school year. One Council member noted that this year they are piloting a web-based CPR process, and it made it far less burdensome on the district.
  - Eva Mitchell provided an explanation for how the priority indicators will be incorporated in the district review and reporting process. The review team will collect evidence on all the indicators but develop findings only on priority indicators. The report will have an appendix with evidence corresponding to all of the indicators but the findings in the body of the report will focus on key strengths and weaknesses including findings on all priority indicators.
  - This issue of “comprehensive” reviews vs. “focused” reviews was discussed in great detail. Some participants believed that it was not necessary to gather data on all the indicators if they were not priority

areas. Karla clarified that ESE plans on customizing reviews by reviewing evidence on the priority indicators for all six standards, and then using this data to determine which of the six to “go deeper” on.

- Participants, in general, strongly supported the idea of focusing the reviews in this way.

### **3. Review of the Updated 10 Essential Conditions** *feedback and questions from the group*

- Karla began the discussion by clarifying the three major changes to the revised 10 Essential Conditions: a) each condition begins with a “leader” to signal the main idea; b) the conditions are more comprehensive and use more qualitative assumptions where the current version focuses on structures and practices with no explicit standard on what “effective use” would consist of; and c) there are important additions to the list based on stakeholder feedback including “effective leadership” and “effective instruction.”
- Participants debated whether “collaborative learning culture” and “shared decision-making” should be included in #1. Some felt it was too directive about the process for establishing a collaborative culture. Others felt that this was necessary given recent TELLS data about teacher working conditions. One participant felt that teachers need ownership, but there might be different leadership styles that create that ownership.
- The Essential Conditions should mention social studies, science, and history.
- Question of whether the Essential Conditions are for all districts and schools or only those that are underperforming.
- Does coaching really make a difference? Karla clarified that it was worded to take into account that “coaching” can come from many sources, not just “a coach.”
- Discipline and attendance are the best indicators of success. Schools need to track this.
- There should be an additional condition to include parent and community engagement.

### **4. Presentation of School Interventions at Levels 4 and 5 of the Accountability and Assistance Framework**–*feedback and questions from the group*

- Karla presented the group with a draft “anonymized” list of schools that might enter Level 4 based on a proposed formula of quantitative indicators. She clarified that the list was kept to 30 because of the notion of ‘reciprocal accountability’ – ESE does not want to label more schools than it has the capacity to assist.
- There will be a negative reaction because it is based solely on MCAS. CPI is complicated for people to understand.
- Karla will discuss the list with superintendents and others in the field to gain a sense if it is consistent with on-the-ground knowledge of the most “stuck” schools.

- For Level 5 schools, the quality of the lead partners is very important.
- This portion of the agenda was cut short – the Council agreed to begin next month’s agenda with this topic.