

# **School Planning Councils**

**.... PART OF THE NEW  
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK**

**An overview for the  
provincial symposium**

# Accountability

## *What do we mean by accountability?*

- In the public sector accountability is about reporting on how public resources are used to achieve designated goals - desire for 'certainty' in public institutions
- In public education - the need to know that EVERY school is a good school

# Accountability

“It is irresponsible for a school to mobilize, initiate, and act without any conscious way of determining whether such expenditure of time and energy is having a desirable effect.”

Carl Glickman

# Accountability:

“A means by which individuals or organizations take responsibility for their actions so that those who depend on them can be assured that there are some safeguards in place to encourage good practices and to prevent bad practices, to have some course of redress for problems that arise, and to have some assurance of fair and equitable treatment.”

Linda Darling Hammond

# The legislative framework

## Bill 34 - School Amendment Act

- Section 8.1 - Formation of School Planning Council
- Section 8.3 - Board approval of school plans annually
- Section 79.2 - Accountability Contracts - Oct. 31
- Section 171.1 - Appointment of Special Advisor

# An Annual Focus

From

To

**6 Year Cycle for Schools**

**Annual Review of Data -  
Schools and District**

**School Plans**

**School and District Plans**

**External Teams -  
schools only**

**District Review Teams -  
district and schools**

# Accountability Cycle

- Every district submits accountability contract by October 31
- Every school develops a school plan and submits to the board at a date set by the board

## Intended Practice

- 20 districts visited by Deputy annually
- Annually up to 20 districts have an review

# Mandate for School Planning Council

“By a date specified by the board, a school planning council must prepare and submit to the board a plan for the school in respect of improving student achievement and other matters contained in the board;s accountability contract relating to the school.” 8.3(2)

“A school planning council must consult with the parents’ advisory council during the preparation of the school plan.” 8.3(3)

# Key Beliefs about District and School Planning

- The intent of the accountability framework is to focus school and district attention and resources on improving student achievement.
- The school is the locus of change.
- Student achievement includes intellectual, human and social, and career development. It is about ALL achievements and the achievements of ALL students.

# Beliefs...

- School and district leaders need to be knowledgeable about assessment practices and using assessment to plan for instruction. Teams of teachers use assessment data to plan for and modify instruction.
- School and district plans reflect the characteristics, values, and needs of the community they serve.

# Beliefs...

- Superintendents and principals ensure plans are in place to improve the performance of the full range of students.
- School and district improvement plans are based on multiple data sources including classroom, school, district and provincial measures.

# Beliefs...

- Guidelines for accountability contracts and school plans provide a degree of consistency – not conformity.
- A clear focus in a few key areas promotes commitment and more effective use of resources.
- Improvement activities should be student focused, needs based, standards referenced and data driven.

# Process principles for school planning

- “No fault” problem solving - help teams identify, analyze and solve problems without recrimination. Each team member shares responsibility for successes and failures.
- Decisions via consensus. Voting inherently creates winners and losers.
- Collaboration - focus on the task and the relationships with the entire school community.

# Transition Year - What does this mean?

2002-2003 is a transition year for both school planning councils.

By October 31, 2003 all districts will have submitted accountability contracts based on input from school plans developed by the school planning council at all schools.

# Guidelines for School Plans

- Clearly stated goals in important areas of student achievement.
- Goals should be
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Relevant
  - Timely

# School Plans will include:

- Analysis / rationale for the selection of goals
- Data sources used in the analysis
- Specific annual targets for improving student achievement
- Groups specified for focused attention
- The data the school will use to track progress

# Guiding questions for school plans

## ■ *Clarity*

Does it specifically state what you want to accomplish in a concise way?

## ■ *Feasibility*

Can it realistically be accomplished? What resources can be used for support?

## ■ *Measurable*

How will you know when it has been accomplished?

# Guiding questions

- *Time frame*

When will it be done?

- *Challenging*

Is it enough of a stretch?

- *Linking*

How well does it relate with other activities?

- *Holistic*

Does it promote a whole school effort?

# District Accountability Contracts

Will include:

- A description of the context of the district
- Clearly stated goals for improving student achievement
- A data-based rationale for the selection of each goal
- An identification of specific targets for improvement - both long term and annual

# Accountability contracts...

Will include:

- A summary of the progress made in the previous year(s) in moving toward the desired target and the data sources used to determine the progress.
- A description of the way in which the district is making the connection with school plans.

# Accountability contracts...

Will include:

- The strategies the district is using to support ALL schools with their improvement efforts.
- The efforts the district is making to raise the performance of identified groups of students.

# Closing thoughts...

We need in each school:

- A commitment to improving student achievement based on the conviction that achievement is not predictable based on a student's ethnicity, gender or home language
- The use of data as a basis for inquiry in a cycle of improvement

# And..

- The willingness to adopt and adapt strategies that work.
- Collaborative infrastructures focused on improving classroom practice.

*Let's learn from each other.*

# Improving schools...

A [school's] results are determined through webs of human commitments born in human conversations.

Fernando Flores