

HOW STATES ARE IMPLEMENTING THE ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS OF NCLB

Stanley Rabinowitz, Ph.D.

**Presentation at the 2002 Edward F. Reidy, Jr., Interactive Lecture Series
October 10-11, 2002, Nashua, NH**

ORIGINAL SET OF QUESTIONS

- 1. What must states/local districts do to be in compliance with the assessment and accountability provisions of the Act?**
- 2. What provisions of the Act are still in need of clarification/regulation?**
- 3. Is there a difference between the *letter* and *spirit* of the Act?**

Still many unresolved questions

PRESENTATION SET OF QUESTIONS

1. **What are states doing?**
2. **What are states thinking about doing?**
3. **What should states be thinking about doing...
(but may not have gotten to yet)?**

**Presentation not inclusive but addresses issues
interesting and/or important (to me)**

***Interactive Session:* what other issues fall within
categories 1 - 3?**

ASSESSMENT ISSUES VS ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES

Set up as separate provisions (legislation, negotiated rule making, draft regulations) but...

- **Where are they consistent?**
- **Where do they interfere with each other?**
- **On the one hand (*flexibility—assessment*)...**
- **On the other hand (*rigidity—accountability*)**
- **Interaction of decisions**
- **Informal vs. Formal Sanctions**

ASSESSMENT ISSUES VS ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES (continued)

- **Assessment *System* relationship to
Accountability *System***
 - Transferability of terms and concepts
 - Evaluation
 - Coherence (Alignment)
 - Tradeoffs (reliability vs. validity)

ASSESSMENT: FILLING THE GAPS

Already compliant states vs. Gap states

Strategies

- Full CRT
- Augmented NRT
- CRT Light
- CRT + NRT (different grades)
- CRT + NRT (same grades)

ASSESSMENT: FILLING THE GAPS (continued)

Issues

- Alignment: different for each option and NAEP
- When to add additional tests (grades, content)
- How to add additional tests
- What about science, social studies, etc.?
- High School:
 - Exit Exams: first time vs. cumulative passing rates
 - End-of-Course Exams:
 - multiple options vs. core
 - minority student participation rates
- Local assessments
- Spring vs. Fall assessment
- How to use 2006 date?

ASSESSMENT: SETTING PERFORMANCE LEVELS

- **Most direct interaction with accountability**
- **Existing programs vs. new/evolving programs**
- **World-class standards vs. Title I**
- **State vs. Federal definitions of Proficiency**
- **How many levels to set?**
 - Overall
 - Above Proficient

ASSESSMENT: STANDARD SETTING

What is the expected relationship across grades and content areas?

Are there known problem grades/content areas or successful initiatives?

Can you explain empirical differences?

Approaches:

- Grade by grade, content area by content area
- G x G, CA x CA, smooth
- Specific grades, extrapolate, smooth (3 – 8 vs. 3 – 5 – 8)

ASSESSMENT: STANDARD SETTING (continued)

Multiple Methods – Pros and Cons

- Convergent Validity
- How to combine multiple, “unlike” data?

Conclusions

- Method less important than how well you do it
- Multiple methods primary advantage: provide degrees of freedom for adjustments
- Need coherence (interpretability, plausibility) across grades and content area
- Use a priori information (political and statistical) followed by impact data

ASSESSMENT: GRADE-BY-GRADE COMPARISONS

Comparative year-to-year student achievement data

Vertical Scale

- Full CRT Model
- Mixed CRT-NRT Model

Percent Proficient

- Weaknesses of Vertical Scales
 - Construct
 - Statistical
 - Practical
- Alignment requirements

Adjustments as new grades/content areas come on line

ASSESSMENT: SPECIAL EDUCATION

- **Reasonable adaptations and accommodations**
- **Must provide one or more alternate assessments for students who cannot participate in regular assessment system**
- **Interaction with degree of disability?**
- **Inconsistent with accountability provisions**

ASSESSMENT: ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- **Assess in a valid and reliable manner:**
 - Reasonable accommodations
 - Use of language and *form* “most likely to yield accurate and reliable information”
- **Make every effort to develop linguistically accessible academic assessment measures**

ACCOUNTABILITY: SETTING THE STAGE

- **Principles of Reform**

- Most proposed models are defensible (thought not necessarily NCLB- approvable)...if you accept their assumptions
- Status vs. Improvement vs. Longitudinal vs. Mixed Models
- Social Studies “test”
- If you don’t know: Use NCLB
- If you do know: Crosswalk to NCLB

ACCOUNTABILITY: SETTING THE STAGE (continued)

- **Historical Context**
 - Prior experience with accountability models
 - Process used to develop accountability models (prior and new)
- **Practical Considerations**
 - Identify right schools
 - Identify right number of schools
 - Interaction with minimum N considerations

ACCOUNTABILITY: SINGLE STATEWIDE SYSTEM

- **Pre-NCLB accountability system coexistence**
- **All schools treated identically**
- **Title I schools vs. all schools**
 - Procedures vs. Sanctions
 - Elementary vs. High School
- **What about small schools?**
- **What about Alternative Schools?**
- **Need to translate local systems into NCLB language and intent**

ACCOUNTABILITY: USE OF INDEX

- **Cross Content Areas vs. Within Content Areas**
- **Number of levels (below and above Proficient)**
- **Values of levels (relative to Proficient): NCLB intent**
- **Determine point on index equivalent to % Proficient**
 - Distributional simulations
 - 100 vs. 100+
- **Time frame (...2006...2008.....2014)**

ACCOUNTABILITY: AYP

- **2002 – 2014**
 - Linear growth
 - Jagged growth
 - Curvilinear growth
- **95% vs. every child**
- **Status standard (% Proficient or Index)**
- **Use of “Safe Harbor” (% Proficient or Index)**
- **Multiple starting points**
 - Set ceiling at school level
 - Perceptions of fairness
- **Aggregation**
 - Across years
 - Across sub-groups
- **Adjustments as different grades and content areas added**
- **NAEP Audit**

ACCOUNTABILITY: MINIMUM N

- **Reliability of Assessment System vs. Reliability of Accountability System**
- **Sufficient Reliability**
- **20 – 50 (41)**
- **Alternate Questions: Credible results**
 - What N identifies the “correct” schools?
 - What N does not exempt low performing schools and subgroups?
- **20...30...40.....1000**
- ***Multiple* N problem**

CONCLUSIONS

- **Still numerous unanswered questions**
- **Landscape continues to change**

So...

- **Develop and submit Assessment and Accountability Systems...**
- **Consistent with state Reform Principles and History...**
- **Crosswalked to NCLB Provisions and Intent**

You can either...

- **Submit plan you don't want to do (and have it approved!)**
- **Submit Plan consistent with above principles**
 - Approved: OK
 - Disapproved: begin the negotiations