A Federal Law/Policy Framework:
Building "Single Statewide Accountability Systems" per No Child Left Behind

Edward F. Reidy, Jr., Interactive Lecture Series

Improving the Validity of States' Standards-Based Assessment and Accountability Systems

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Introduction

- Key Principles of Federal Education Law
- A Framework for Education Reform, Including NCLB Implementation
- The Role of Accountability
- Federal Legal Requirements Regarding Accountability
- Key Questions for Building a Single Statewide Accountability System
    - Defining AYP
    - Considering Other State Criteria
    - Creating a "Blended" System (by Integrating AYP and State Criteria)
    - Establishing Rewards and Consequences
- Examples
- Conclusion

Key Principles of Federal Education Law

- Federal law should reinforce sound state educational practices
- Federal standard is likely good faith, continuous improvement
- Good intentions are not sufficient; data and evidence are key
- Process matters!

A Framework for Education Reform, Including NCLB Implementation

Each step linked to the next by data/ evidence

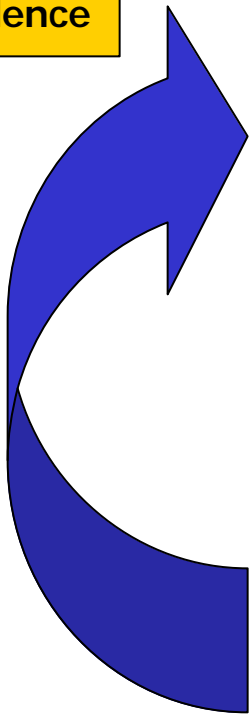| Step	Definition	Issue: _____
1. **Goals**	Non-operational, broad-based policy ends	
2. **Objectives**	Concrete, measurable policy ends	
3. **Strategy**	Broad-based theory of action/ means to the ends	
4. **Design**	Concrete, detailed statement of the strategy	
5. **Implementation**	Application of the strategy/ design	
6. **Analysis**	Consideration of evidence linking strategy/design to objectives/ goals	
7. **Review**	Amendments to strategy/design	

The Role of Accountability: Toward a Theory of Action

- Accountability is a strategy!
- Theory of Action
  - IF the state has a certain accountability system for schools/districts, THEN the state will better achieve its educational objectives/goals
  - Theory of action depends on the notion that the state accountability system is *valid/reliable* in the sense that performance indicators/decision rules:
    - lead to accurate/consistent accountability classifications,
    - which to appropriate educational interventions/consequences,
    - which promote achievement of state objectives/goals

- Integration is important
  - Accountability is one strategy among many (e.g., curriculum, resources, professional development, etc.)
  - Accountability has several dimensions (e.g., state accountability determinations, data transparency, accreditation, student accountability, etc.)

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The Role of Accountability: Application of the Framework
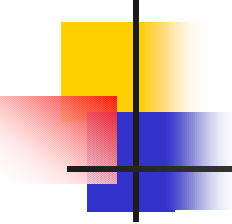
Each step linked to the next by data/ evidence

Step	Definition	Issue: ACCOUNTABILITY
1. **Goals**	Non-operational, broad-based policy ends	■ Raise achievement ■ Close achievement gaps
2. **Objectives**	Concrete, measurable policy ends	■ X% proficient
3. **Strategy**	Broad-based theory of action/ means to the ends	■ If accountability then promote objectives/ goals
4. **Design**	Concrete, detailed statement of the strategy	■ Define AYP, State Criteria, Integration, Rewards/ Consequences
5. **Implementation**	Application of the strategy/ design	■ Annual accountability determinations ■ Application of consequences
6. **Analysis**	Consideration of evidence linking strategy/design to objectives/ goals	■ Consideration of validity/ reliability of accountability system
7. **Review**	Amendments to strategy/design	■ Revisions to accountability strategy/ design

Federal Legal Requirements Regarding Accountability

- States must establish a **single statewide accountability system** that includes annual AYP determinations for all public schools and districts
    - AYP determinations are based primarily on state assessments, specifically (1) participation, (2) proficiency, and (3) OAI
    - States may adopt "blended" accountability systems that combine federal AYP and state criteria/determinations
    - Annual AYP decisions must be made for every public school/district, but AYP decisions must be valid/reliable

- States must establish a system of **rewards and sanctions** for all schools
    - Title I schools that fail to meet AYP for consecutive years are identified for school improvement and face escalating consequences, including school improvement, public school choice, supplemental education services, corrective action, and restructuring/alternative governance
    - Most Title I consequences are consistent w/ state educational interventions (w/ the possible exception of choice and SES)

Key Questions for Building a Single Statewide Accountability System

1. **AYP**: How should AYP be defined (w/in the range of NCLB flexibility) to ensure the most valid/reliable determinations (in the context of the state's accountability system)?

2. **State Criteria**: What factors beyond AYP does the state care about in terms of making the most valid/reliable accountability determinations?

3. **Integrated System**: How should AYP and state criteria be integrated to form a single statewide accountability system that will result in the most valid/reliable accountability determinations, consistent w/ state education objectives/goals?

4. **Rewards and Consequences**: What rewards and consequences should be established for specific accountability determinations to ensure that accountability determinations promote state education objectives/goals (for both Title I and non-Title I schools)?

1. AYP Design Decisions

- Use of confidence intervals
- Establishment of minimum number
- Independence of AYP indicators
- Choice of additional indicator
- Definition of FAY
- Use of multiple tests/ administrations

- Averaging data
- Definition of safe harbor
- Use of index systems
- Use of non-AYP data for small schools
- Differentiation in terms of missing AYP for some versus all groups/ indicators
- Other?

2. State Criteria Design Decisions

- Use of student/cohort, value-added, longitudinal, growth models
- Use of school-based starting points/ trajectories
- Use of index systems

- Inclusion of additional subjects
- Inclusion of additional "outcome" indicators
- Inclusion of "input" indicators
- Other?

3. Design Decisions for Integrating Accountability Factors

- Role of AYP in overall system
- Integration of determinations versus maintenance of separate AYP and state determinations
- Consistency between decisions based on AYP and state criteria

- Communication of single statewide accountability system determinations
- Other?

4. Design Decisions for Rewards/Consequences in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

- Integration of Title I and non-Title I consequences
- Moving up required consequences
- Restricting options for corrective action/ restructuring

- Determining state versus local control w/ regard to consequences
- Dealing w/ limited capacity/resources
- Other?

Example #1

AYP		State Criteria		SSAS Determinations
Y		NA		Y
N	+	NA	=	N
M		NA		Y

Example #2

AYP		State Criteria		SSAS Determinations
Y		A-F		Excellent-Fair/Poor
N	+	C-F	=	Good/Fair-Poor
M		A-F		Excellent-Poor

Example #3

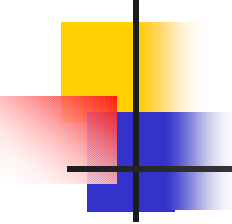| AYP		State Criteria		SSAS Determinations
Y		NA		Y
N	+	NA	=	N
M		A-F		Y N

Conclusion

- NCLB sets an agenda for states regarding accountability systems

- Some nonnegotiables, but some flexibility

- The key is establishing a process and implementing a workplan to develop a single statewide accountability system that is valid/reliable in light of state education goals and federal legal requirements

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