

ACSA Assessment and Accountability Task Force Report Executive Summary

At its February 2010 meeting the ACSA Board of Directors endorsed the recommendations set forth in the Report of the ACSA Assessment and Accountability Task Force entitled “Prepared for the Future: Accountability for Excellence and Equity.” The purposes of this report were fourfold:

1. To stimulate, support, and recognize college and career readiness as the goal
2. To close achievement gaps between and among demographically identified groups of students
3. To incentivize and exemplify high quality standards, teaching, assessment, incentives, and intervention
4. To impact system-wide practices at the state, district, and school levels

To this end the report included guiding principles for accountability, standards, performance measures, and incentives and interventions:

- Principles for Accountability
 - The accountability system should be designed to both stimulate, support and recognize schools that demonstrate significant progress and identify schools that have not demonstrated improvement in closing the achievement gap.
 - Expectations should be benchmarked against the expectations of internationally competitive nations as well as both college and career readiness.
 - Continuous growth in achievement must be recognized; accountability targets should be based on individual annual student gains in performance.
 - Targets should be multi-tiered with indicators at the state, district, and school levels.
 - The system must be unbiased and fair to all student groups.
- Principles for Standards
 - Both content and performance standards should be developed for all subject areas including the arts.
 - Essential standards should be emphasized.
 - There must be a balance among cognitive knowledge, problem solving, and real world application/demonstration of skills.
 - English language proficiency standards should be integrated into all academic standards.
- Principles for Performance Measures
 - Assessments should meet the highest standards of educational measurement.
 - Assessments much include measures of students’ ability to reason, analyze, and evaluate.

- Assessments should be meaningful, relevant, and motivating to students.
- Both formative and summative measures should be supported.
- There should be substantial professional development around assessments for both teachers and administrators in order to maximize their impact on student learning. Such professional development should include models of effective teaching and learning.
- Principles for Incentives and Interventions
 - There must be thoughtful ways to distinguish between improving schools and schools with long-term failures
 - Interventions should be solution-oriented and evident based.
 - There are different levels of incentives and interventions for the state, for districts, and for schools.

Conclusion:

Principles for accountability, standards, performance measures and incentives and interventions can and should be applied to support the learning of everyone in the system—from students to teachers to schools to districts as well as state agencies.