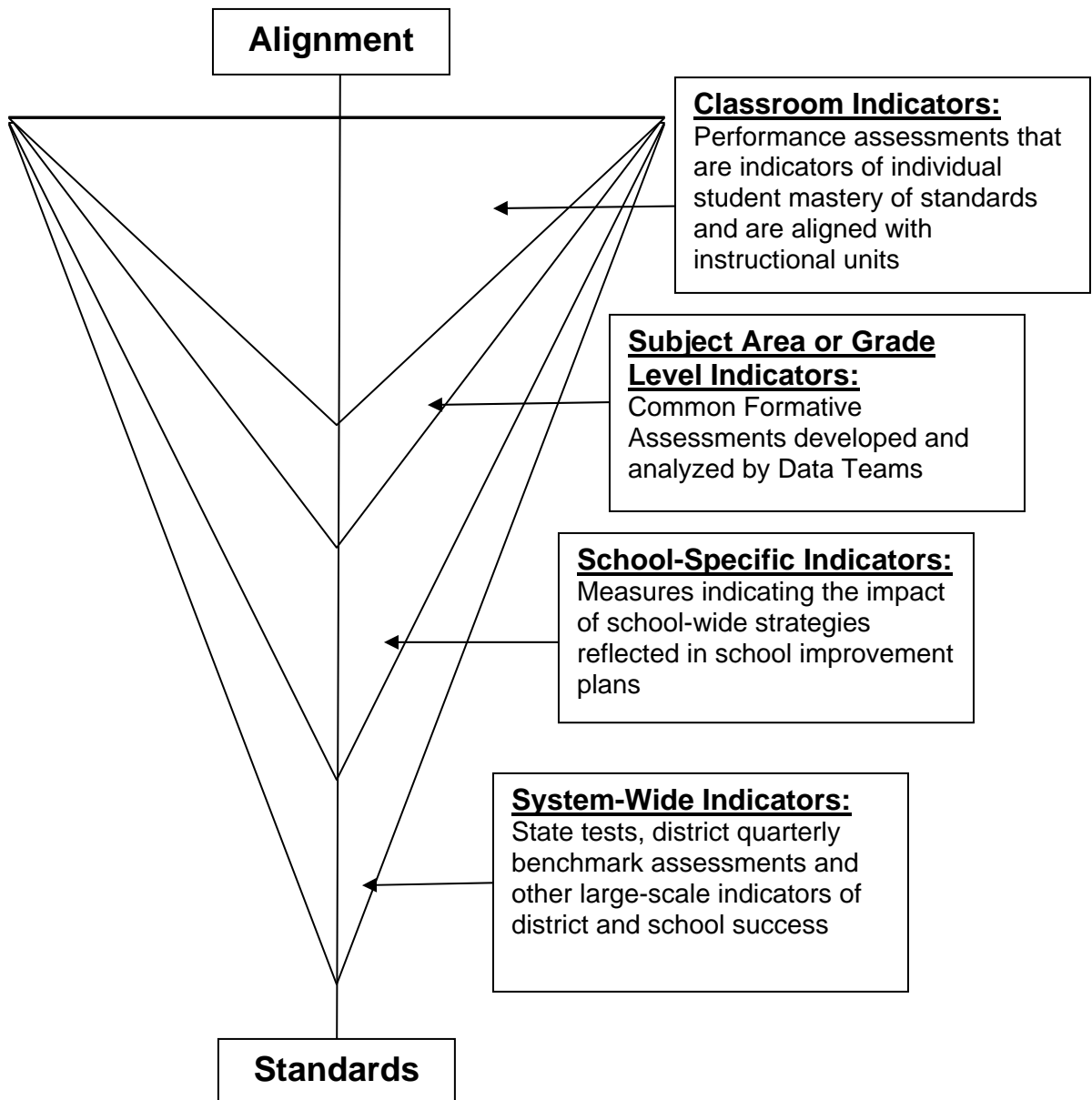


Accountability and Implementation: A Systems Approach to Aligning Standards and Indicators in Districts, Schools, and Classrooms

School systems collect and analyze data on a variety of levels from general to specific, from comprehensive state tests to individual classroom assessments. As leaders, it is crucial to align and focus this influx of data so that all stakeholders can use the information from key data indicators to make sound instructional decisions that positively impact individual student learning.



Executive Summary

Using Three-Tier Accountability Systems to Improve Student Achievement

Adapted from: *Accountability for Learning: How Teachers and School Leaders Can Take Charge*, by Douglas B. Reeves, published by ASCD, 2004.

Overview: Educational accountability need not be a destructive and demoralizing exercise. Teachers and school leaders can collaborate to create an accountability system that is meaningful and motivating, focused on student achievement and also related to the “antecedents of excellence” – those specific actions of teachers and school leaders that lead to improved achievement and educational equity.

Tier 1 (District-Wide Indicators – Results): These are selected by the superintendent and Board of Education, and represent the values of the district. Typically Tier 1 indicators focus on the most important Board goals, such as achievement, equity, and safety. Every school has responsibility for and reports on designated Tier 1 indicators. District-wide Indicators include scores on state tests as well as measurements of safety, attendance, equity, and other critical system-wide factors. District-Wide Indicators are

- *System Wide*—Measures used by everyone in the district
- *Clear*—Broad application is obvious to all stakeholders in the system
- *Stable*—Consistent targets
- *Aligned*—Support district-wide goals
- *Focused*—Minimal in number

Tier 2 (Building and Central Office Indicators – Causes): School-based indicators: Each school has unique needs. Some schools need to work on parent involvement while others need to focus on collaboration among teachers. Some schools need help on student engagement while others need work on reading intervention. Tier 2 indicators respect the individual needs of each school and avoid the typical “one-size-fits-all” mistake that plague traditional accountability systems. While Tier 1 indicators focused on effects – test scores, for example – Tier 2 indicators focus on causes – the actions of teachers and leaders. For example, a Tier 1 indicator might indicate reading scores on a state test, and a Tier 2 indicator would reflect the percentage of classrooms that implement the district reading program at a proficient level based on multiple observations during the year. Building and Central Office Indicators are specific measurements chosen by each building or central office department based on its specific needs. Examples include:

- Increase percentage of grade level and subject area teams functioning in Data Teams or Professional Learning Communities (creating and focusing on the results of common formative assessments at least twice quarterly)
- Increase percentage of classroom assessments that reflect multi-method assessment
- Increase the frequency of writing assessments, with collaborative scoring, editing, and rewriting
- Increase the percent of students who score proficient and higher on reading, note taking, and summarizing assessment given at the end of 1st semester
- Increase percent of students who make healthy choices for lunch
- Increase percent of times students arrive to school on schedule

Considerations: Effective Building and Central Office Indicators are:

- *Relevant* to specific school or central office needs
- *Measurable* – expressed in numbers or percentages, not merely a reflection that “we implemented a program” or “we had training”
- *Continuous* – measured throughout the year – monthly, quarterly, or perhaps three times a year
- *Early warning indicators* – allow teachers and administrators to make mid-course corrections where necessary

Tier 3 (Narrative): This provides the “story behind the numbers” so that policymakers, professional staff, and parents can understand the unique needs of each school, and also understand how the Tier 2 “cause” indicators are related to the Tier 1 “effect” indicators. Tier 3 narratives are found in school reports as well as central office and/or district reports.

Selecting Tier 1 Indicators

Criteria for Tier 1 Indicators:

- Measures used by everyone in the district – Non-negotiable
- Broad application – Clear to all stakeholders in the system
- Consistent, stable targets – School/department plans are designed to support.
- Aligned with district-wide goals
- Minimal in Number

Tier 1 Indicators are the “Big Rocks” that focus efforts on:

- Achievement (State and district assessments, grades)
- Engagement (attendance, participation in activities, parent involvement)
- Safety (playground safety, building safety, discipline referrals)
- Capacity (highly qualified staff, professional development system)

Sample Tier 1 Indicators:

- Percentage of students scoring proficient and higher in reading.
- Percentage of students scoring proficient and higher in writing.
- Percentage of students scoring proficient and higher in math.
- Percentage of students attending school 95% or more of the time.
- Percentage of students without disciplinary violations
- Percentage of professional development hours that are directly related to the district’s Tier 1 Accountability Indicators.

Sample Tier 2 Indicators

- Increase collaborative scoring using a common writing rubric
- Increase number of common formative writing assessments that are created and analyzed by Data Teams

Record District Goals for the 2007-2008 School Year:

The following suggestions are from the Oregon 'Standards for District Success'

Standard 1: Curriculum

Standard 2: Instruction (Program, Personnel, Professional Development)

Standard 3: District and School Culture and Norms

Standard 4: Family and Community Engagement

Standard 5: Leadership

Standard 6: Integrated Systems and Structures (Planning and Improvement,
Organizational Structures and Resources)

District Goals for 2007-2008

“The Science Fair for Grownups”

By Douglas B. Reeves, Ph.D.
Center for Performance Assessment
www.MakingStandardsWork.com
(800) 844-6599

One of the most powerful techniques that educators and school leaders can use to improve decision-making in the classroom, school, and district is the “Data Wall.” Ideally, the Data Wall is a portable display, using the cardboard three-panel display frequently used for student science fairs. When administrators gather to discuss their ideas for improving student achievement, the Data Walls provide a rich source of information about the strategies employed in each school. Within each school, the Data Walls can be the focal point for faculty discussions on improving student achievement. For principals and teachers who are already using data to guide their instructional decision-making, the use of a Data Wall will not create any additional work. For leaders who are not using data to guide their decisions, the Data Walls provide a valuable technique to jump-start their work. Most importantly, this technique will insure that the analysis of student data is not isolated to a single seminar or a staff development program on data, but rather it becomes a continuous part of faculty and administrative decision-making throughout the school year.

THREE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THE DATA WALL:

1. External data, such as state test scores.
2. Internal data (classroom assessments or other school measurements involving teaching practices chosen by the school that reflect its unique needs).
3. Inferences and conclusions (drawn from the data).

INFORMATION FOR THE PANELS:

Left Panel: Includes tables, charts, and graphs that illustrate state test scores for the school and district. There may also be narrative comments, such as *“84% of our students are proficient or higher in mathematics according to the state test scores and 78% are proficient according to a district test. A review of the last three years of data show consistent progress on both state and district measurements, with particular gains in the problems-solving portion of the math assessments.”*

Middle Panel: Includes data on teaching strategies associated with mathematics followed by another brief narrative, such as, *“The charts above show that the number of mathematics assessments including student writing has increased significantly in the past three years. Those assessments have emphasized the problem-solving portions of the state test. The charts also show a strong increase in interdisciplinary mathematics instruction, with the frequency of math instruction in music, art, physical education, technology, science, and social studies much greater for the most recent school year than was the case in earlier years.”*

Right Panel: Includes inferences and conclusions, such as, “Our analysis of the data suggests that multidisciplinary instruction in math and writing in math have both been effective strategies to improve student performance. Therefore, we have planned to expand these strategies in the following ways (provide examples of the strategies specifically applicable to the individual school). We remain very concerned about the 16% of students who are not proficient on the math portion of the state tests and have developed individualized learning plans for each of these students. In addition, we have added the following intervention strategies for all non-proficient students (include specific strategies applicable to your school).”

OTHER NOTES TO PREPARE FOR THE “SCIENCE FAIR FOR GROWNUPS”:

1. Principals will not make formal presentations – the Data Walls speak for themselves. Principals should be prepared to respond to questions from colleagues about their Data Walls.
2. The primary function of the Data Wall and Science Fair is to allow principals to ask one another questions and share with each other informally how they achieved their successes. *[If the Science Fair takes place during a multi-day leadership conference, then the displays should be set up during the breakfast of the first day and left up throughout the conference.]*
3. The process of continuous collaboration must continue all year, not just at the retreat. The Data Walls can be the focus of internal staff development, joint faculty meetings with other schools, and planning for instructional interventions and professional development activities.
4. **CRITICALLY IMPORTANT:** The Data Walls are not for the purpose of impressing outside observers, the superintendent, or any other external audience. The primary purpose of the Data Walls is for the principals to share information with their fellow principals and, most importantly, with their faculties.
5. Principals will have to make choices regarding which data to use. They will want to show the information that is most important, drawing clear conclusions, and making the point to the faculty members that they are not merely displaying data, but **USING** data to inform their leadership decision making.

Action Plan

Instructions: Based on your Self-Evaluation outline an Action Plan for each district Improvement Goal. Your Action Plan should be evidenced-based. Complete a separate table for each Improvement Goal identified by the district.

IMPROVEMENT GOAL										
[Identify and briefly describe the Improvement Goal necessary to resolve the Priority Concerns identified in the district Self-Evaluation.] Percentage of _____ scoring proficient and higher on the _____ in _____ will increase from ____ % to ____ % administered on _____.										
NEEDS ANALYSIS (Added)										
[What data do you need to review to reveal the strengths and challenges for both students (effect data) and adults (cause data)?]										
STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARD(S)										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
STANDARDS FOR DISTRICT SUCCESS										
[Identify the Standard/Indicator to be addressed by this Improvement Goal. Refer to Oregon's <i>Standards and Indicators of District Success</i> framework.]										
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FOR RESEARCH-BASED EDUCATION STRATEGY										
[What evidence supports the Strategies/Activities you are implementing to achieve your Improvement Goal. Please provide a brief summary of any relevant evidence from the research literature or past district experience.]										
Strategy <i>What evidence-based strategy will be implemented? How do you know the strategy (Tier 2 Indicators) will help achieve the goal?</i>	Evidence of Implementation <i>What evidence do you have that what you planned to do is being done (monitoring)? What actions will I monitor?</i>	Evidence of Impact <i>What evidence do you have that the change you wanted has occurred (evaluation)? How will I measure this impact?</i>	Person Responsible <i>Who will provide oversight for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the strategy?</i>	Start Date <i>What is the projected start date?</i>	End Date <i>What is the projected end date?</i>	Estimated Costs <i>What are the anticipated costs?</i>	Fund Source <i>What sources of funding will be used for the activity (more than one source may be listed)?</i>			

Maple Elementary School
Sample Annual Accountability Report
June 2007

General Information

Address: 1495 S 3rd St.
Phone: 487-8723
Principal: Thomas Greene

Demographics

Female: 53%
Male: 47%

African American: 74%

Enrollment

Total: 365
Kgn: 65
1: 67
2: 54
3: 59
4: 62
5: 58

Hispanic: 2%
White: 24%
Regular Ed.: 91%
Special Ed.: 9%
LEP: 0%
Free/Red. Lunch: 49%

System-wide Indicators: Tier I

Indicator	District Average 2006	School Score 2006	School Score 2007	% Change
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Reading and Literature on Gr 3 annual state assessment	90%	68%	72%	4%
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Math Knowledge and Skills on Gr 3 annual state assessment	92%	74%	87%	13%
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Reading and Literature on Gr 4 annual state assessment	84%	40%	50%	10%
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Writing on Gr 4 annual state assessment	75%	84%	76%	-8%
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Math Knowledge and Skills on Gr 4 annual state assessment	65%	60%	66%	6%
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Reading and Literature on Gr 5 annual state assessment	83%	40%	50%	10%

Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Math Problem Solving on Gr 5 annual state assessment	82%	84%	76%	-8%
Increase % students scoring proficient or higher in Math Knowledge and Skills on Gr 5 annual state assessment	91%	60%	66%	6%

Maple Elementary School

Sample Annual Accountability Report
June 2007, Page 2

School-Based Indicators: Tier 2

Indicator	2006	2007	% Change
Increase percent of teachers that provide direct instruction daily in best practices in reading instruction	27%	63%	36%
Increase percent of teachers that assess reading comprehension using a written summary scored by a rubric every two weeks	15%	70%	55%
Increase percent of teachers that assess math problem solving using an extended written response with corresponding rubric weekly	5%	90%	85%
Increase percent of teachers that assess writing monthly using the 6 trait rubric	10%	60%	50%
Increase the percentage of teachers that participate in monthly Data Team meetings to look at student writing samples scored with a common grade level rubric	5	20	200%

School Narrative: Tier 3

The 2006-2007 school year was a success in many respects for Maple Elementary. The school was also presented with some challenges. Our academic performance based on the state fourth grade test improved significantly in the areas of reading and math.

Reading: Every teacher was trained on best practices in reading instruction. Direct instruction was provided daily in these best practices. Students were grouped and regrouped every two weeks to address areas of skill deficiency and skill development. Each trimester, the entire staff reviewed the district reading assessment data and planned the following trimester's instruction based on the

assessment results. The Instructional Coaches provided 30 minutes of modeled best practices in every classroom once a month.

Mathematics: Maple elementary began an intervention program for students with low performance in mathematics. The students attended intervention strategy sessions with a certified teacher for 45 minutes once a week. In addition, every classroom provides Daily Computation Skill practice for the first 5 minutes of every math lesson.

Parent involvement: Parents were encouraged to participate in many activities. The fourth and fifth grade teachers held a special night for student to reinforce math skills using arts and crafts. Many parents assisted with this event. The Parent Teacher Association at Maple held two fundraisers this year to raise money for the resource center.

Conflict resolution: We hired a new school counselor this year, Dr. Mary McManus, who organized weekly conflict resolution workshops. Students were required to attend the first workshop, and subsequent participation was on a volunteer basis. Our hope is that this will help them grow into better and more peaceful citizens and to reduce conflicts in the school setting.