

Designing Accountability Systems
That Comply With
No Child Left Behind:
A framework for disciplined discussion

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States need to have a disciplined discussion of how to comply with *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB)

- About 40 states have invested substantially in designing, getting support for, and implementing accountability systems
- NCLB accountability requirements do not match what any state has done
- NCLB requirements often appear contradictory to fundamental values underlying states' systems
- NCLB provides for some state choice in how to implement key aspects
- Still unclear about how much and what specific guidance will be offered by USED regarding NCLB accountability
- Next formal NCLB planning target: January 2003



Argument

- It is possible for most states to comply with *intent* of NCLB with various implementation strategies
 - ◆ Some of the strategies are more valid and reliable – and certainly more consistent with the state’s policy and history – than some “tight interpretations” of the statute
- States should engage in a disciplined review to construct their NCLB plans, and engage USED in a disciplined dialogue about how to achieve “no child left behind”
- Design framework is a good place to start



Using a design framework to analyze NCLB and propose what states might do

- Gong, B. & Accountability Systems and Reporting (ASR) SCASS. (Jan. 2002) *Designing school accountability systems: Towards a framework and process*. – available online at www.ccsso.org or www.nciea.org
- Three parts: Conceptual framework, short checklists for coherence of design, examples
- Today: Look at Questions 1, 5, 6, 9, and 10 as examples of using framework to think about NCLB and what states might do to design a system or present a rationale for its NCLB accountability plan



NCLB core values and purposes – (my guess)

- Every child served well educationally (achieves standards)
- High (not minimal) standards
- Start right away, not take forever
- Steady, incremental improvement towards end goal
- Hierarchical responsibility (school, district, state, feds)
- Incremental assistance and sanctions to improve schools, balanced with providing students with good opportunity to learn (e.g., school choice an early option)
- Idealism over pragmatism in terms of amount of improvement expected within time line
- Centralization of power and authority regarding accountability, balanced with flexibility in finances



For what should schools be held accountable? (pp. 7, 13)

	Status	Change
Performance (Achievement)	NCLB: What percentage of students are proficient?	How much did school improve?
Growth (Effectiveness)	How much did students learn?	How much did rate of growth change?



Alternative designs, converging

- All children (no child left behind) – What accountability decisions will be made, on what basis?
 - ◆ Converges eventually if goal is 100%
 - ◆ NCLB and Quadrant 2 and hybrid Q2/Q3 models
 - ◆ Time lines (priorities) differ
 - ◆ NCLB targets neediest children in neediest schools – and ignores neediest children in other schools (until “rising bar” gets to that school)
 - ◆ Q3 demands growth from every student, every school; Q2 demands improvement from every school – which students can be/are ignored?



What are schools accountable for; how are data combined into decision?

- NCLB looks at subgroups making same status (not improvement) as school as a whole
 - ◆ Accountability subgroups are: race/ethnicity, special ed, LEP, and economic disadvantaged
 - ◆ Specifies same sanctions for school, regardless of pattern of performance
- Most state systems avoid conjunctive systems at this level, due to high unreliability and bias; many could use supplement
- What is a credible and technically defensible balance between reliability and validity? (See Hill, Carlson, 2002)



What accountability decisions, which what consequences?

- In addition to how schools are identified, also attend to what happens
- Could states specify differential assistance and sanctions, based on pattern of performance?



Sample School AYP Profiles

0 = met AYP PAC **1** = failed to meet AYP PAC hurdle

NOTE: A “1” anywhere means the school fails AYP

000000000 = school as a whole and each subgroup **passed** AYP

111111111 = school as a whole and each subgroup **failed** AYP

010010111 = school as a whole **passed** and some subgroups **failed** AYP

100000000 = school as a whole **failed** and all subgroups **passed** AYP

101100010 = school as a whole and some subgroups **failed** AYP



Hurdles – Ways to Fail

- AYP in Reading and Math
 - ◆ Whole school/district/state
 - ◆ Subgroups
 - ◆ Race/ethnic
 - ◆ Special education
 - ◆ Limited English Proficient
 - ◆ Economically disadvantaged
- Another academic indicator (required)
- Science (starting 2006-07)
- 95% participation
- Other indicators added by states (e.g., assessments in writing, social studies, high school end of course tests)



Alternate Hurdles – Ways to Meet AYP

- “Safe Harbor” for AYP – if AYP target is not met, then does subgroup reduce percentage of not-Proficient by at least 10%
- Subgroup does not have minimum number to be reliable, valid, and confidential
- Targeted Title 1 – students receiving services under Title 1 do meet AYP
- Consideration of an indicator added by the state *may not* “pass” a school if identified by required hurdles



Percent of State A (Schools) Failing AYP

(2001 data)	Minimum N			
Reading & Math	All	10	20	40
Did not fail any hurdle	0.0	32.1	50.0	63.2
Failed at least one hurdle	100.0	67.9	50.0	36.8
Failed school as a whole only (both Reading and Math)	0.0	1.5	1.1	1.3
Failed subgroup only at least one hurdle	75.5	52.1	37.2	26.3
Failed school as a whole, and at least one subgroup hurdle	24.5	18.1	15.1	12.1



Designing consequences

- States have some flexibility in determining consequences and how to assign them, especially at the district level
- Attend to design of consequences at least as much (more than) as to design of identification system



What does it take to successfully implement a system?

- In Kentucky, needed
 - ◆ On-going dialogue with policy makers (SBE, legislature, governor's office, professional associations, field)
 - ◆ “Evangelists” for system, constant consistent communication
 - ◆ Feeling that schools could do something, and that goal was reachable
 - ◆ Positive experience
 - ◆ Time for experience to identify kinks in system; commitment and flexibility to improve system



Implementation scenarios for NCLB and reasons (from paper's framework)

- Incentives
- Values
- Resources



For more information

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Check website for information on 2002 RILS conference sponsored by the Center and WestEd

- ◆ What states are doing with *No Child Left Behind*
- ◆ Reliability and *NCLB*
- ◆ Alignment and *NCLB*

