education**first**

Questions

Stages

Clarity

Accountability Redesign Steps & Discussion Guide

November 2024

The purpose of this discussion guide is to support leaders in anticipating the critical questions, discussions and considerations to keep in mind throughout the process of redesigning an accountability system.

Accountability systems are at their strongest when the communities that schools are a part of see the system as central to efforts to build meaningful learning experiences, environments, and outcomes for young people. Afterall, ultimately it is students, families and their community which schools are accountable to.

Youth, parents, families, and community members are experts in their own experiences and what they need education systems to accomplish for them. Young people and their families, along with members of the communities that schools are situated within and intended to serve, should co-create accountability systems alongside teachers, policy experts, professionals who work with specific populations of people, and education advocates.

These stakeholders should provide iterative input and feedback at each step in an accountability redesign. Before launching a redesign process, how stakeholders will contribute should be clearly defined:

- Who will ultimately make final decisions as your accountability redesign progresses?
- Who are the groups, stakeholders or leaders who will collaborate and partner on the decisionmaking? What decisions will they be able to influence and what decisions will they not be able to influence?
- How will the process ensure the aspirations and concerns of those accountability systems are meant to serve—education leaders, educators, families, students, and the community—are understood and considered?
- Who will provide consultation, feedback, analysis and alternatives along the way?
- Who needs to stay informed of the accountability redesign process?

Accountability System Redesign Stages	Key Questions
Frame the Problem	What are the key problems you are trying to solve in your accountability system? Are these problems symptoms of a deeper issue or are they root causes? How do you know? Do these problems look the same across communities, districts, schools, and subgroups of students? If not, how does the problem manifest for different subgroups or communities? What do different stakeholders need in order for this problem to be addressed (ex. Teachers need… District leaders need…)? How do you know?

Articulate a Vision for a Future State	What is the purpose or purposes of your accountability system?
	What outcomes do you hope will be driven by a redesigned accountability system? How will teaching, learning and school experiences change as a result? Over the next 2-3 years? In 10 years?
	When your new accountability system is fully operational, what actions will different key stakeholders be empowered to take? For example: Students will be able to… Teachers will be able to… School/district leaders will be able to… SEA leaders and policy makers will be able to…
	How will your accountability system foster trust and collaboration?
Ideate on Solutions	What accountability system solutions, designs and approaches exist that match the needs and problems you've identified?
	What limitations exist for your solution options? Such as policy requirements or resources.
	What does research say works and does not work?
	What data will enable stakeholders to take the desired actions? What valid and reliable measures are available or could be created to gather this data?
	How will your accountability system balance academic outcomes with school conditions?
Evaluate Enabling Conditions	What are the current structures and practices within your existing accountability system that would support the transition to a redesigned system?
	What existing resources can you adjust or tap into?
	What relationships and partnerships do you have to build on or leverage in this transition?
	What power dynamics or conditions might support your system in making the transition?
	What mental models or mindsets exist among your leaders or key stakeholders that may support this transition?
Plan for Implementation	How might different contextual factors influence implementation success or failure?
	What competing initiatives or efforts may impact your implementation plan? How will you mitigate these?
	How will schools and stakeholders experience accountability differently? How will

	you prepare them for these changes and communicate with them?
	What are the most effective strategies to support implementation of a redesigned accountability system? How will these strategies encourage a data-driven culture and collaboration using data?
	How will you leverage evaluation and ongoing progress monitoring to ensure fidelity of implementation?
	How will you incorporate adjustments and new discoveries learned through progress monitoring?