

Accountability Evaluation
Interview Protocol: State Implementers

MAP is a private consulting firm working as a subcontractor to WestEd on a project funded by the California Department of Education.

The study I am working on is investigating the relationship between state level accountability policies and procedures and what actually happens in school districts, schools and classrooms. Today I would like to focus on the perspective of state officials.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Note: During interview, keep a running record of all relevant materials mentioned, and ask for them at the end of the interview.

Name:

Title:

Years in position:

Previous experience:

1. What is your understanding of the purpose of an accountability system? What problems is it designed to address?
2. What do you perceive as the primary mechanisms which drive the state's accountability system? How are these related to each other?

Prompts: State standards, state assessment, curriculum frameworks, textbook adoption, STAR, others

3. How far along in development and implementation are these components and how well are they aligned?
4. What training has the CDE provided to districts on local standards development and implementation? On local assessment systems? On local accountability systems? On using data from local accountability systems?
5. How is the CDE using data from local accountability systems? What are future plans for use?
6. How are the districts and schools using the data from local accountability systems? What plans are there for future use and how far along in implementation are the districts?
7. How have federal and state categorical programs and initiatives influenced the State's accountability system and what is their relationship to each other?

Prompt: What about the State's current Title 1 (IASA) student performance data analysis and reporting requirements? How do Title I schools compare with non-Title I schools in the degree of standards-based accountability system implementation?

Prompt: What about the current initiatives to identify, provide incentives and intervene to support high to low performing schools?

8. Which of these policies, programs or initiatives provide technical assistance to schools? What has been the focus and nature of that support? (e.g. get a sense of magnitude)

Prompt: ask about how many workshops, conferences held, how many districts/schools participate and what they have covered.

9. Which decision-making bodies and individuals at the state level have primary responsibility for overseeing accountability policy and mechanisms?

Prompt: what is the role of the state board vs. state department vs. legislature vs. governor's office?

Prompt: who is responsible for monitoring district and school performance? (e.g., Coordinated Compliance Review, Program Quality Reviews, student test score analysis, etc).

10. What is your (and your division's) role and responsibility in directing and supporting the state's accountability system? How much time do you spend on related tasks in a given day/week?

11. How would you characterize early evidence of the impact or changes from standards-based accountability? What appear to be positive outcomes? Negative outcomes?

12. What do you see as emerging best practices of standards-based accountability systems? Why?

13. What state-level practices and documents have helped districts and schools in implementing their systems?

14. Are there state-level practices that you feel have hindered districts and schools in implementing their systems? If so, what are they and how could they be improved?

15. How are other education-related institutions such as universities, regional laboratories, foundations, subject matter projects, the California Leadership Association, Comprehensive Assistance Centers, test publishers, etc., helping schools and districts in implementing their systems?

16. What problems are districts having with implementation?
17. What, if any, additions or changes in the law could help alleviate these problems? (i.e., are there changes that could be made by the Legislature that would better meet the intent of the law and lead to more successful implementation?). What, if any, additions or changes could the CDE make in practice to help alleviate these problems?
18. Which of the strategies above do you see as being most important in helping districts successfully implement accountability mechanisms? (i.e., changes in the legislature, CDE, districts, or schools)?
19. Which districts do you think have an exemplary accountability program and why?
20. Is there anything else we haven't discussed that you'd like to mention about the accountability system?