

District Accountability Survey

March 1999

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WestEd
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District Accountability Survey

This questionnaire is part of an evaluation being conducted for the California Department of Education by WestEd in collaboration with Management Analysis and Planning, Inc. (MAP). The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the processes and impact of California's Standards-Based Accountability System in school districts statewide and the relationship of this system to school district efforts to improve student performance. Two hundred districts are being surveyed as part of this study.

About this Questionnaire

This questionnaire contains the following sections:

- I. Local Accountability System Features
- II. Content Standards
- III. Student Assessment Measures
- IV. Analysis and Use of Data
- V. Review of School Performance
- VI. Helps and Hindrances

We recognize that more than one person from each district may need to be involved in filling out the questionnaire, and we encourage such collaboration. We also welcome further written comments in any section or on any item of the questionnaire. It is important that all districts receiving this questionnaire participate in the survey so that the results will fairly represent districts across the state. **Please fold the completed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope as soon as possible.**

YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. No information identifying individual districts or survey respondents will be reported under any circumstances. Please remove the name label on the front cover before returning the completed questionnaire.

Thank you for contributing your time and thoughtful responses to this study.

For Further Information

If you have any questions about this questionnaire or about the study in general, please feel free to contact us:

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District Accountability Survey

This survey asks you questions about your district “accountability system.” For the purposes of this study, “accountability system” is meant to encompass a broad range of practices in districts. We welcome further written comments on any questionnaire item; please feel free to use the back cover if necessary.

SECTION I. Local Accountability System Features

1. Does your district have what you consider to be a **standards-based accountability system**?

- Yes
 No
 In development

2. Listed below are a number of possible **components of local accountability systems**. Indicate the level of implementation in your district of each component. *(Circle one number on each line.)*

	Not implemented	Partially implemented	Fully implemented for less than 2 years	Fully implemented for more than 2 years	Don't know
a. Grade-level content standards in English/language arts and mathematics	1	2	3	4	9
b. Use of multiple assessment measures to determine whether students meet grade-level standards	1	2	3	4	9
c. Alignment of assessments with district content standards	1	2	3	4	9
d. Periodic reviews of school performance	1	2	3	4	9
e. District intervention strategies for low-performing schools	1	2	3	4	9
f. District rewards or incentives for high-performing or improving schools	1	2	3	4	9
g. Incentives for students to maximize performance (e.g., requirements for promotion or graduation)	1	2	3	4	9

3. **Who has been involved** in developing your district’s accountability system? *(Check all that apply.)*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District accountability and/or assessment director(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> School board members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other district personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/community members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Principals and other school administrators | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher education faculty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional consultants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

4. Rate the extent to which, **in your opinion**, the accountability system or particular accountability components have **affected** each of the following in the district as a whole. (*Circle one number on each line.*)

	Too early to expect effect	Negative effect	No effect	Some positive effect	Significant positive effect
a. Standardized test scores	0	1	2	3	4
b. Student achievement on other measures of academic performance	0	1	2	3	4
c. Student attendance rates	0	1	2	3	4
d. Drop-out rates	0	1	2	3	4
e. Teacher morale	0	1	2	3	4
f. School climate	0	1	2	3	4
g. Parent/community satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4
h. Parent involvement	0	1	2	3	4
i. District-level curriculum and instruction policies	0	1	2	3	4
j. District-level assessments	0	1	2	3	4
k. Curriculum and instruction practices in schools	0	1	2	3	4
l. Classroom assessments	0	1	2	3	4
m. Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4

5. For any items in the previous question for which you indicated an effect (positive or negative), please **elaborate on the role played by the accountability system** or particular accountability components.

6. In your district, how do **Title I schools compare with non-Title I schools** in the degree of implementation of the accountability system or particular accountability components?

7. What is your opinion of the **pending state legislation** related to school accountability? (Discuss the feasibility of implementation in your district, interaction with other legislation or policies, etc.)

SECTION II. Content Standards

	English/language arts content standards	Mathematics content standards
8. Has your district developed or adopted grade-level content standards ¹ for what every student in the district should know and be able to do in English/language arts (column 1) and in mathematics (column 2)? (<i>Circle one number in the English column and one in the mathematics column.</i>)		
Yes	1	1
No	2	2
In development	3	3
Different district schools use different content standards	4	4
Other: _____	5	5
<i>Note: if you answered "no" for either English/language arts or mathematics, skip the remaining questions in this section for that content area.</i>		
9. What is the basis for your district content standards? (<i>Circle all that apply in each column.</i>)		
State standards (1998) ²	1	1
Earlier state documents (specify: _____)	2	2
Challenge standards	3	3
New Standards Project standards	4	4
NCTE/NCTM standards	5	5
Standards developed by another district or county office	6	6
Developed own standards from scratch	7	7
Other: _____	8	8
10. Who has been involved in developing and/or adopting the content standards in your district? (<i>Circle all that apply in each column.</i>)		
District accountability and/or assessment director(s)	1	1
Curriculum specialists	2	2
Other district or school administrators	3	3
Teachers	4	4
Parents	5	5
Students	6	6
School board members	7	7
Business/community members	8	8
Higher education faculty	9	9
Other: _____	10	10
11. In what year were the district content standards adopted? (If the content standards are still in development, indicate when your district anticipates their adoption.)	_____	_____

¹ "Grade-level standards" are standards for each grade taught in the district, e.g., K-12 in a unified district.

² The English/Language Arts and Mathematics Content Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1998.

		English/language arts content standards	Mathematics content standards
12.	a. For which of the following groups does your district require professional development related to the use of the district content standards? <i>(Circle all that apply in each column.)</i>		
	Teachers	1	1
	Principals and other school administrators	2	2
	District curriculum staff	3	3
	Other district staff	4	4
	None	5	5
	Other: _____	6	6
	b. In a given year, about how much professional development does your district require for teachers related to the use of the district content standards? <i>(Circle one number in each column.)</i>		
	Less than 1 day	1	1
	1 to 3 days	2	2
	More than 3 days	3	3
	Don't know	4	4
13.	Rate the extent to which district-adopted instructional materials are aligned with district content standards. <i>(Circle one number in each column.)</i>		
	Not at all	1	1
	To a small extent	2	2
	To a moderate extent	3	3
	To a great extent	4	4
	Don't know	5	5
14.	a. Has your district compared the district content standards to the state content standards (1998) for rigor (in terms of breadth, depth, pace of learning, levels of performance)? <i>(Circle one number in each column.)</i>		
	Yes	1	1
	No	2	2
	In the process	3	3
	Plan to do	4	4
	Not applicable: district adopted the state standards	5	5
	Don't know	6	6
	Comment: _____		
	b. If yes, how did the district content standards compare to the state standards? <i>(Circle one number in each column.)</i>		
	Less rigorous than the state standards	1	1
	As rigorous as the state standards	2	2
	More rigorous than the state standards	3	3
	Don't know	4	4
	Comment: _____		

- c. Briefly **describe the process** that was or will be used in your district to compare the district standards with the state standards for rigor.

English/language arts: _____

Mathematics: _____

15. Estimate the percentage of teachers in your district whose **classroom teaching reflects** the district content standards.

English/language arts content standards: _____ % Mathematics content standards: _____ %

SECTION III. Student Assessment Measures

16. Which of the following **assessment measures** does the district use at one or more grade levels for **accountability purposes**? (Check all that apply.)

Norm-Referenced Tests (NRTs)

- SAT-9
 Other NRT (English)
 Primary language NRT
 Different NRTs used in different district schools
 Other: _____

Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs)

- District-developed English/lang. arts CRT
 District-developed mathematics CRT
 Commercial CRT
 Different CRTs used in different district schools
 Other: _____

Other Measures

- Report card grades
 Writing samples
 Teacher evaluation/judgment
 Different measures used in different district schools
 Other: _____

17. What process, if any, does the district use to ensure that **class grades are consistent and comparable** across district schools? (Check all that apply.)

- District-issued grading policy or guidelines
 District provides professional development opportunities for teachers on grading
 District compares grades at different schools
 District compares student achievement on multiple assessment measures for triangulation of data
 Other: _____
 None at this time

18. If the district uses locally developed assessments, does the district provide any **professional development** for teachers on the **use and/or scoring** of these measures (e.g., rubrics)?

- Yes No Not applicable

19. Rate the extent to which district assessments (not including the SAT-9), taken as a whole, are **aligned with district content standards**. (Circle one number on each line.)

	Not at all	To small extent	To moderate extent	To great extent	Don't know	Not applicable
English/language arts assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mathematics assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION IV. Analysis and Use of Data

20. Rate the extent to which each of the following groups (generally speaking, throughout the district) **examines and analyzes student assessment data** for students within the relevant unit (e.g., district, school, or classroom). (Circle one number on each line.)

	Group has no access to the data	Not at all	To small extent	To moderate extent	To great extent	Don't know
a. District curriculum & instruction personnel	0	1	2	3	4	9
b. District accountability & assessment personnel	0	1	2	3	4	9
c. Principals and other school administrators	0	1	2	3	4	9
d. Teachers	0	1	2	3	4	9
e. Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4	9

21. Listed below are a number of possible reasons why a **district** might collect and analyze student assessment data. Rate the extent to which **your district** currently uses student assessment data for each of these purposes. (Circle one number on each line.)

	District does not use data for this purpose at all	District uses data for this purpose to small extent	District uses data for this purpose to moderate extent	District uses data for this purpose to great extent
a. To satisfy state and federal reporting requirements	1	2	3	4
b. To design new district-wide programs for schools	1	2	3	4
c. To improve instruction in all district schools	1	2	3	4
d. To rate or rank district schools	1	2	3	4
e. To identify schools that need assistance	1	2	3	4
f. To help schools identify individual students who need assistance	1	2	3	4
g. To identify teachers who need assistance	1	2	3	4
h. To identify factors that influence student achievement	1	2	3	4
i. To gauge the performance of student subgroups across district schools	1	2	3	4
j. Other: _____	1	2	3	4

22. Listed below are a number of possible reasons why a **school** might collect and analyze student assessment data. Rate the extent to which **schools in your district** (generally speaking, among a majority of schools) use student assessment data for each of these purposes. *(Circle one number on each line.)*

	Schools do not use data for this purpose at all	Schools use data for this purpose to small extent	Schools use data for this purpose to moderate extent	Schools use data for this purpose to great extent
a. To diagnose areas where students are in need of instructional support	1	2	3	4
b. For placement of students (e.g., into certain courses, support services, or educational programs)	1	2	3	4
c. For evaluation of individual students (e.g., for promotion to the next grade level or for graduation)	1	2	3	4
d. To identify which students do not meet grade level standards	1	2	3	4
e. To guide curriculum and instruction on an ongoing basis	1	2	3	4
f. To identify areas for school improvement	1	2	3	4
g. To better target school resources	1	2	3	4
h. To gauge the performance of student subgroups within the school	1	2	3	4
i. To identify teachers who need assistance	1	2	3	4
j. For evaluation of individual teachers	1	2	3	4
k. Other: _____	1	2	3	4

23. Does your district provide support or opportunities for **principals and other school administrators** to get professional development in how to analyze and use student assessment data?

Yes No Don't know

24. Does your district provide support or opportunities for **teachers** to get professional development in how to analyze and use student assessment data?

Yes No Don't know

25. By which of the following **categories** does your district **disaggregate student assessment data** at the district, school, and classroom levels? *(Circle all that apply on each line.)*

	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	SES (e.g., free/ red. lunch)	Title I	LEP	Special Educ.	Gifted & Talented	Migrant status	None
a. District level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
b. School level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
c. Classroom level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

26. Rate the **technical capacity** (computing, trained staff, etc.) of your district to **analyze student assessment data** at each of the following levels. (Circle one number on each line.)

	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Don't know
a. District level	1	2	3	4	5	9
b. School level	1	2	3	4	5	9
c. Classroom level	1	2	3	4	5	9

27. What **additional resources** would best help your district to analyze student assessment data? (Check all that apply.)

- Guidance from the California Department of Education (CDE)
- Statewide student data system
- Professional development
- Other: _____
- Better technology and professional development to use the technology
- More staff with evaluation or statistical background
- No additional resources or assistance needed

SECTION V. Review of School Performance

28. a. Does your district currently use an **index or formula** to rate **the performance of schools** in the district?

- Yes No

b. If yes, what **measures** are part of this index? (Check all that apply.)

- Standardized test scores
- Report card grades
- Other student academic performance measures
- Student attendance rates
- LEP redesignation rates
- Drop-out rates
- Graduation rates
- Rates of retention-in-grade
- Teacher attendance rates
- Teacher morale
- Parent/community satisfaction
- Parent involvement
- School climate
- Other: _____

29. a. What types of **performance targets**³, if any, have been set for each of the following subsets of schools in your district? (Circle all that apply on each line.)

	No performance targets set	Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets ⁴	District-specified performance targets (other than AYP)	Other performance targets (please specify)
a. Title I schools	0	1	2	_____
b. Non-Title I schools	0	1	2	_____
c. Other subset of schools (specify subset): _____	0	1	2	_____

³ A performance target is a goal which a school should try to reach on a single assessment measure (e.g., standardized test scores or student attendance) or combination of measures (e.g., test scores *and* attendance) over a given period of time.

⁴ Per CDE guidelines from Ruth Ann McKenna, memo, June 30, 1997

b. If you indicated any performance targets set by the district, which of the following characteristics (if any) apply to these performance targets? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Targets tailored to individual schools
- Targets rise over time
- Targets set for student subgroups (as well as for schools)
- Targets set for more than one measure or for a combination of measures (e.g., an index)
- Other: _____

30. What **policies or intervention strategies** does the district employ with schools that demonstrate low academic performance? *(Check the **three** that are most important.)*

- Schools are given a period of time to improve. If they do not, consequences follow.
- Schools consult with school community (e.g., teachers, parents, students).
- Schools are assisted by district-appointed experts in formulating an improvement plan and goals.
- Schools receive additional professional development opportunities.
- District officials conduct reviews of school-site personnel.
- District reconstitutes schools (particularly if schools do not improve over time).
- District tailors interventions to particular schools.
- Other: _____

31. a. Does the district offer **incentives or rewards** to individual schools for high student performance or for improving performance?

- Yes No

b. If yes, what forms do these incentives take? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Monetary incentives for schools
- Monetary incentives for teachers
- Other: _____
- Recognition for teachers and/or schools
- Waivers from district policies/regulations

SECTION VI. Helps and Hindrances

32. a. Have any particular state-level practices or documents **helped** your district to develop and implement its accountability system?

- Yes No

b. If yes, what have you found most helpful? _____

33. a. Have any particular state-level practices or documents **hindered** your district in developing and implementing its accountability system?

Yes No

b. If yes, please discuss: _____

34. Rate the **communication** from the California Department of Education about state and federal **expectations/requirements of districts** in terms of each of the following. *(Circle one number on each line.)*

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Don't know
a. Developing, adopting, and implementing content standards	1	2	3	4	9
b. Selecting and implementing student assessments	1	2	3	4	9
c. Combining multiple measures to determine whether students meet grade level standards	1	2	3	4	9
d. Analyzing assessment and other data	1	2	3	4	9
e. Reporting data	1	2	3	4	9
f. Reviewing school performance	1	2	3	4	9
g. Improving school performance	1	2	3	4	9
h. Improving student performance	1	2	3	4	9

35. a. Do you believe that state and federal expectations/requirements with regard to accountability and districts' roles in accountability are **fair and reasonable**?

Yes No

b. If no, please comment: _____

36. From whom does your district **receive assistance** in developing, implementing, and refining the district's accountability system? *(Check all that apply.)*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> California Department of Education (CDE) | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional consultants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other districts in county or state | <input type="checkbox"/> Universities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County offices of education | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional education laboratories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National education organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Test publishers | <input type="checkbox"/> Subject-matter projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Assistance Center(s) (CAC) | <input type="checkbox"/> No assistance sought |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide System of School Support (S4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

37. Rate the **support** your district has received (e.g., from the agencies and organizations listed in the previous question) in terms of each of the following. For each item that you mark "good" or "very good," write in the agency/organization that has been most helpful. (Circle one number on each line.)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Don't know	Who was most helpful?
a. Developing, adopting, and implementing content standards	1	2	3	4	9	_____
b. Selecting and implementing student assessments	1	2	3	4	9	_____
c. Combining multiple measures to determine whether students meet grade level standards	1	2	3	4	9	_____
d. Analyzing assessment and other data	1	2	3	4	9	_____
e. Reporting data	1	2	3	4	9	_____
f. Reviewing school performance	1	2	3	4	9	_____
g. Improving school performance	1	2	3	4	9	_____
h. Improving student performance	1	2	3	4	9	_____

38. a. Over the past year, have **you or someone from your district** participated in any **workshops for districts** related to standards-based accountability?

Yes No

b. If yes, please list the title of each workshop attended, who offered it (e.g., CDE, county office of education, etc.), and rate how helpful it was.

<u>Workshop Title (need not be exact)</u>	<u>Who Offered the Workshop</u>	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
_____	_____	1	2	3
_____	_____	1	2	3

39. a. Would you or others from your district like to have an opportunity for **more professional development** related to standards-based accountability?

Yes No

b. If yes, what would be most helpful? _____

40. Listed below are a number of challenges districts might face in developing and implementing an accountability system. Circle the letters of the **top five challenges** your district faces or has faced, and then in the spaces on the right rank order them from 1 to 5 (1 = greatest challenge).

- | | Rank Order |
|--|-------------------|
| a. Reaching local consensus on content standards | _____ |
| b. Finding or developing reliable and valid forms of assessment | _____ |
| c. Implementing professional development for teachers in the use of content standards | _____ |
| d. Aligning curriculum, instruction, assessment, and content standards | _____ |
| e. Finding expertise in data analysis (at district or school level) | _____ |
| f. Acquiring technical support or tools for performing data analysis | _____ |
| g. Setting realistic performance expectations or targets for schools | _____ |
| h. Generating parental or public support for accountability-related changes | _____ |
| i. Making sure the system is equitable for all schools and population subgroups | _____ |
| j. Dealing with limited resources (time, staff, financial support) | _____ |
| k. Juggling district priorities (e.g., class-size reduction, repair of school buildings, etc.) | _____ |
| l. Balancing local needs with state or federal requirements | _____ |
| m. Understanding confusing or conflicting state or federal requirements | _____ |
| n. Accommodating changing state or federal requirements/policies | _____ |
| o. Other: _____ | _____ |

41. What types of support, and from whom, might help your district **overcome these obstacles**?

42. For our records, how many people were involved in filling out this questionnaire?

- One person
 One to three people
 More than three people

43. For **follow-up purposes**, we may wish to contact the people who filled out this questionnaire. Please provide contact information:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>E-Mail Address</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Your thoughtful responses are appreciated. Thank you for your time.