

**School and district accountability and assistance system:
Stakeholder feedback form**

April 2016

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is interested in hearing from a broad range of stakeholders about Massachusetts' school and district accountability and assistance system. Coming changes in statewide assessments and federal law have provided us an opportunity to reconsider the principles of our current system, the data we use to measure school and district progress, and the types of supports and assistance we make available.

In the coming months, we will be connecting with stakeholders statewide to gather their feedback on the strengths of the current system and what types of changes they would like to see. We will use this feedback as we model potential revisions and then reengage with stakeholders again to gather additional input on these ideas.

This feedback form is meant to give interested parties an opportunity to weigh in on the principles we should take into consideration as we design the system. It includes a series of questions about various considerations for accountability systems and provides the opportunity for open-ended comments on a number of guiding questions. You may answer as many or few questions as you wish.

We thank you for taking the time to participate in this early feedback process and look forward to continued discussions about the direction of the state's school and district accountability and assistance system.

1. If you would like to attach a letter or other document containing feedback rather than or in addition to responding to the survey, please attach it here. **[Attachment]**

2. Which best describes your role? **[Required; only allow respondents to select one]**
 - a) District superintendent
 - b) District-based federal program director (e.g., Title I director)
 - c) Other district central office administrator
 - d) School principal or other school administrator
 - e) Teacher
 - f) Other school- or district-based personnel
 - g) Local teacher union representative or staff or leader of a state teachers association
 - h) Staff or leader of another state education association (e.g., MA Association of School Superintendents)
 - i) School committee member
 - j) Business leader
 - k) Parent or guardian
 - l) Student
 - m) Member, staff, or leader of other nonprofit, advocacy, or philanthropic organizations
 - n) Member, staff, or leader of a policy research group or think tank
 - o) Education researcher
 - p) Other education stakeholder

- 2) Designing school and district accountability and assistance systems often requires balancing two competing priorities. How would you advise the state to balance the competing priorities listed below? *[Each question will have 7 response options: heavy weight on left prompt (e.g., simplicity and clarity), moderate weight on left prompt, slight weight on left prompt, equal weight on both priorities, slight weight on right (e.g., robustness), moderate, heavy. Each will be its own question since the scale will be unique to each prompt.]*

<p style="text-align: center;">Scale from 1 to 7 1=heavy weight on left priority 4=equal weight on both 7=heavy weight on right priority</p>		
Prioritizing simplicity (focusing on a few key measures, even though this might not fully account for local context or other policy priorities)		Prioritizing robustness (accounting for a greater number of measures/indicators, even though this can make the system more complex and harder to understand)
Prioritizing data that are easily compared across districts and schools (e.g., statewide student assessment data)		Prioritizing data that may provide richer detail but are less comparable across districts and schools (e.g., discipline or suspension rates, college-level course participation)
Prioritizing inputs (e.g., teacher qualifications, course offerings)		Prioritizing outputs (e.g., student academic performance, graduation rates)
Prioritizing student achievement when rating schools and districts		Prioritizing student growth or improvement when rating schools and districts
Identifying schools and districts that perform the lowest as compared to others		Identifying schools and districts that perform below a certain standard
Rating school districts based solely on its lowest performing school (“a district is only as strong as its weakest school”)		Rating a school district based on the overall performance of its students

- 3) We would like Massachusetts’ state school and district accountability and assistance system to reflect stakeholders’ educational priorities. To help guide our thinking, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the statements below. If you are unsure, please leave the row blank.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The measure of student performance should incorporate both achievement and growth.				

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The system should identify the schools and districts with the lowest overall student performance.				
The system should identify the schools and districts with the largest achievement gaps between student subgroups.				
The system should identify and recognize schools and districts with the best student outcomes, not just those with the lowest performance.				
The system should identify a rating for every school in the state with sufficient data.				
The system should identify a rating for every school district in the state with sufficient data.				
Schools and districts with the lowest student performance should get the most support from the state.				
The system should take into account the full range of course offerings available in the district or school (e.g., arts, music, physical education, advanced coursework).				
The system should take into account indicators of the college and/or career <u>readiness</u> of students in the district or school (e.g., participation in advanced coursework, completion of a college preparatory curriculum, participation in career planning and preparation activities).				
The system should take into account the college and/or career <u>outcomes</u> of students who graduate from the district or school (e.g., enrollment in postsecondary schooling, employment).				

We are interested in any suggestions or additional thoughts you may have about how we should design our accountability and assistance system. We have provided a number of guiding questions on the next few screens. Please respond to as many or as few questions as you would like.

- 4) In your opinion, what is the purpose of having a system for school and district accountability and assistance?
- 5) Thinking broadly, which aspects of Massachusetts' current school and district accountability and assistance system do you value? Why?
- 6) In your opinion, which types of behaviors/actions does Massachusetts' current accountability and assistance system incentivize? Are these the right things?

- 7) Does the system as currently designed effectively classify the right schools and districts into the right categories (Commendable? On target? Off target? Low or very low performing?) Explain.
- 8) Do the assistance elements of the system, as currently designed, provide appropriate and effective support to schools? Districts? Explain.
- 9) Which aspects of Massachusetts' current accountability and assistance system, if any, would you like to change in the future? Why?
- 10) New federal law requires the state to include at least one additional indicator of school quality or student success in its accountability and assistance system, other than student assessment results and graduation/dropout rates. The law states that this could include such measures as student engagement, educator engagement, access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, or school climate and safety. Keeping in mind the benefits of having consistent data for all schools and districts for this indicator, how would you advise us to fulfill this requirement?
- 11) What other comments or suggestions would you like to share?