

07. STATE ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. DISTRICT PERFORMANCE. District leaders use Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) school performance data to determine opportunities for improvement of learning across the district.

i. State assessment data are used to identify district and school strengths and needs in the tested grades and subjects.

Wyoming schools annually administer the Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress (WY-TOPP). District and school strengths and needs can be determined with state assessment data for the tested grades and subjects. The state accountability model combines assessment scores and other measures (e.g. graduation rate) to determine a school performance rating.

ii. State assessment data are used to identify individual students in need of learning support to close the achievement gap.

State assessment results, in combination with other diagnostic assessments, can be used to identify student skill deficits so they can be addressed through the core instructional program and the system of learning supports.

iii. An annual report card is used to consolidate data and report district and school results to stakeholders.

The Wyoming Department of Education provides an [ESSA report card](#) that is used to report state, district, and school information to stakeholders.

B. CURRICULAR GUIDANCE. District leaders ensure that the Wyoming content and performance standards included in the state assessment blueprints are addressed by the learning goals students are expected to meet.

i. State assessment blueprints are used in the development of essential learning goals or priorities for the tested grades and subjects.

The [WY-TOPP assessment blueprints](#) are available from the WDE. The Wyoming *performance level descriptors* in Chapter 10 rules provide more specific guidance as to what is considered basic, proficient, and advanced performance for each grade level. Opportunity for students to learn the content on the state assessment will impact their results on the assessment (Marzano, 2003).

ii. Assessment resources and release items are used in the planning and development of the instructional program in tested grades and subjects.

Resources related to assessment are available at wyoassessment.org

iii. Assessment results are compared to grades or other performance levels to ensure the expectations for student proficiency are consistent.

Some districts compare state summative assessment results to the results from common assessments for the same standards/benchmarks to determine the comparability between district and state student performance levels. If there are wide variations between student performance on the state assessment and the district results for the same content, it indicates the need for analysis of the causes of the discrepancy.

08. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND SUPPORT

A. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS: School-level leadership teams determine necessary improvements to increase school performance using WAEA data and other needs assessment processes.

i. School leadership teams have defined the student achievement results they are trying to attain, and how these results are measured.

For schools required to complete an improvement plan, the goal must include an analysis of the reason the school is not meeting or partially meeting expectations, and/or why the school is identified for comprehensive or targeted support under ESSA.

ii. Student achievement data are reviewed by the leadership team to compare the current reality with the desired results.

The state accountability system confidential data can be reviewed in multiple ways to determine an appropriate goal. Schools may also benefit from reviewing *How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better* to determine interventions that are appropriate to their stage of the improvement journey (Mourshed, Chijioko, & Barber, 2010, pp. 27-28).

iii. The leadership team analyzes processes to decide what to improve to achieve the desired results, including eliminating unnecessary or redundant initiatives.

Anthony Bryk contends educators are constantly engaged in pursuing a new program or new idea without considering how to make it all work together reliably every day. How the system operates and how all of the parts come together to produce the intended outcomes is key to improvement. Bryk says for too long educators have been passive recipients waiting for the next policy or program to be passed down from above. Schools will not continuously improve unless the practitioners doing the work are empowered and actively engaged in improving how the work gets done. (Bryk, 2017)

B. IMPROVEMENT PLANS. Principals for schools that are partially meeting or not meeting expectations submit improvement plans to the district and state. These plans are used to guide school improvement.

i. The needs analysis is used to develop an improvement plan consistent with the district continuous improvement process, and in accordance with statute.

Based on the work of Anthony Bryk and the Carnegie Foundation, school improvement planning should focus on the *Six Core Principles of Improvement* (Carnegie, 2018). While the plan must meet the requirements of Wyoming and Federal statute, the actual document submitted to the state can be designed to address the specific needs of the school. While there is no required format, the WDE would prefer a brief plan (e.g. 1-4 pages).

ii. The leadership team uses change leadership to influence implementation of the improvement plan by school staff.

Anthony Muhammad encourages reading education literature for at least two hours per week so there is not as much cognitive dissonance between the proposed changes and existing beliefs. He says, in his experience, people aren't opposed to change if they see value in the changes. He recommends implementing any improvement as a pilot before taking it to scale (Muhammad, 2015).

iii. Leadership teams from schools identified as priority schools participate in the Statewide System of Support (SSoS).

The Statewide System of Support is described on the Wyoming Department of Education website. The following are the pillars of support:

1. Cultivating exceptional leadership
2. Improving teaching and learning
3. Developing a high-performance culture
4. Establishing effective structures & processes
5. Engaging families and the community

Accountability and Improvement References

Bryk, A. S. (2017, March 27). *Keynote at the 2017 Carnegie Summit*. From Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: <https://vimeo.com/213758186>

Carnegie. (2018). *The Six Core Principles of Improvement*. From Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: <https://bit.ly/2td6TBI>

Marzano, R. (2003). *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Muhammad, A. (2015, February 26). *How To Manage The Discomfort of Change*. From Solution Tree: <https://www.solutiontree.com/blog/discomfort-change/>