

We Choose to be Accountable

An Accountability Design for the Minneapolis Public Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Accountability is central to the mission of the Minneapolis Public Schools:

To ENSURE that all students learn.

In its Strategic Direction, MPS commits itself to **accountability for student achievement** as follows:

“As partners, students, families, and all Minneapolis School employees accept mutual responsibility and accountability for growth in achievement.”

Between 1993 and 1997, the Minneapolis Public Schools put in place most of the elements of a comprehensive accountability design. The purpose of this design document is to:

- outline the underlying principles of the accountability design;
- catalogue what is complete, what is in development and what is missing;
- show how the pieces / processes align with one another; and,
- recommend a multi-year strategy for implementation.

II. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Accountability is possible when people or organizations have all three of the things they need to succeed:

1. **Responsibility:** they know what is expected, they are capable of getting it done and they have the obligation to do it.
2. **Authority:** they have the power and resources to do the things for which they are responsible.
3. **Accountability:** they regularly get information on how they are doing which triggers consequences designed to continuously improve their performance.

This accountability design recognizes the importance of assuring that ALL three of these building blocks are present throughout the school system. Furthermore, this design is based on the following principles:

- **People want to be accountable.** The vast majority of people want to do well and want to improve. They can be relied on to take the actions necessary to succeed. The few who do not require intervention. This design treats the performers as the norm and non-performers as the exception.
- **It is better that people *be* accountable rather than just being *held* accountable.** Holding people accountable requires adding enforcement or supervision to the relationship between service providers and those they serve. While this may be necessary — especially when employees are new or if there are persistent lapses — it is more effective and efficient to put the vast majority of people in a position to be directly accountable to those they serve.
- **No ‘gotcha.’** A ‘gotcha’ approach will not ‘getcha’ better performance over the long run. Such an approach relies on fear to enforce performance expectations. A culture of fear leads to minimum achievements and the avoidance of all risk and innovations - a “stay low and go slow mentality.”
- **No set ups, no surprises.** Don’t put people who are not capable of achieving the results expected of them into positions of responsibility unless there is a system of support in place to help them improve. Don’t ask capable people to be accountable and deny them the power or resources to do the job. Don’t surprise people by demanding accountability after the fact.
- **Accountability is mutual.** All parts of the school system must be accountable. Education involves mutual expectations between and among students, families, classrooms, schools, central offices, and the District itself.
- **Accountability is both bottom up and top down, it is cumulative** - each level of an organization is accountable for the performance of the levels it serves PLUS accountable for its own added value. For example, a teacher shares accountability with students for achieving student performance standards AND is accountable for curriculum content.
- **Feedback is the breakfast of champions.** All people and organizations need frequent, regular feedback if they are to improve. The most powerful feedback comes directly from those we serve and our colleagues because they are closest to our work.

- **Punishment is a consequence, but most consequences are not punishments.** There is a continuum of consequences that runs from reward and recognition for success, to challenge and support for improvement, and finally to intervention for persistent failure. Reward and recognition are the most common consequences.
- **No resting on your oars** - accountability requires both producing results that meet or exceed today's performance targets AND continuously improving results in the future.

III. DESIGN OVERVIEW

1. Participants - those who are to be accountable

Students	Families	Classrooms	Schools	Central Offices	District
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2. Focus - accountability means being focused on:

- meeting or exceeding current performance targets AND
- continuously improving results - moving toward the ideal

3. Elements - the building blocks of accountability

Standards/ Expectations	Standards or expectations are the core. Such standards should represent a community consensus about what constitutes success. Without clearly stated expectations no individual or organization can succeed. Every part of the school system needs to know what is expected. Thus performance expectations need to exist for students, families, classrooms, schools, central offices and the district. Creating those standards requires community involvement and ownership.
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Improvement targets	Progress requires closing the gap between current performance and the standard. Nobody's perfect. All individuals and organizations can do better. They get better by knowing how they are doing now, comparing performance with the standard, and then taking aim at closing the gap. Current improvement targets are what individuals and organization's aim at in the process of continuous improvement.
Reporting/ Feedback	Direct feedback is "the breakfast of champions." (Apologies to General Mills). Without feedback people and organizations can't get better at anything. If standards and specific targets set the course, then feedback lets people and organizations make mid- course corrections necessary to successfully reach the intended destination. Feedback is most powerful when it is direct and immediate.
Consequences	Consequences are the reinforcement that any individual or organization needs to improve. Consequences exist along a continuum from rewards to punishment. They are most powerful when they are established and communicated along with performance expectations. School systems need a full range of consequences if they are to build a culture of success.
Delegation	Delegated authority makes it happen. Delegation is a covenant between participants specifying the rights, responsibilities and expectations of each. A strong covenant frees the participants to focus on achieving results, within the limits of their agreed upon authority. On the other hand, the lack of a covenant forces the participants to focus their energies on asking for permission rather than producing results.

3. The Accountability Framework

The chart that follows combines the school accountability participants with the elements of accountability in a single framework. This framework can be used to track progress in creating the necessary policies and accountability tools to apply each of the elements to each of the participants.

	Students	Families	Classrooms	Schools	Central Offices	District
Standards/ Expectations						
Improvement targets						
Reporting/ Feedback						
Consequences						
Delegation						

4. Accountability Roles

Accountability does not just happen. It requires all stakeholders in the school system to carry out very specific roles.

- **Elected Officials**

Create, articulate and advocate for a community consensus on the results expected from education. Advocate for and support embodying that consensus in appropriate performance standards which can be used by all parts of the system to monitor its success and to support continuous performance improvement.

Advocate for and support creation of an integrated system of performance standards, delegated authority, direct feedback and consequences. Demonstrate such support by actively using the system as the basis for decision making.

Supply the system with the authority and resources necessary to meet the standards.

- **Administrators**

Translate the community's expectations into specific goals for student achievement as well as related and aligned standards for schools, teachers, staff, students, families and community members. Create ownership for the goals and standards so that all stakeholders mutually reinforce their attainment.

Report regularly to all parts of the system on its performance and lead the process of using information to continuously improve.

Create a continuum of consequences tied to performance ranging from rewards to sanctions.

- **Teachers**

Establish specific curriculum expectations with students and their families. Supply instruction aligned with the standards and deliver it effectively. Provide regular feedback to students, families and colleagues on performance and make necessary adjustments to achieve success.

- **Support Staff**

Supply teachers, students and families with the services necessary to effectively meet the learning needs of students. Gather regular feedback on performance and use it to improve service to students and families.

- **Students**

Own curriculum expectations. Supply the time, attention and energy necessary to achieve them. Gather feedback regularly on performance and use the information with family and teachers to make adjustments necessary to achieve success.

- **Families**

Own and reinforce curriculum expectations. Supply students and teachers with the time, attention and energy necessary to achieve them. Gather feedback regularly on performance and use the information with students, teachers and school to make adjustments necessary to achieve success.

- **Community**

Own and reinforce the learning expectations as embodied in the standards. Gather feedback regularly on performance and challenge the system to make appropriate adjustments to achieve success.

Supply the system with the authority and resources necessary to succeed. Supply families and students with reinforcement for their commitment to learning through appropriate policies, incentives and rewards.

IV. CURRENT STATUS - Catalogue of Elements

The following chart and several pages catalogue the status of each element of the accountability design for each of its participants. Some elements of this system are complete. Some are being developed. Still others are missing.

Summary - Current Status of Minneapolis Accountability Elements

	Students	Families	Classrooms	Schools	Central Offices	District
Standards/Expectations	Student performance standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota • Minneapolis 	Family involvement standards	Curriculum content standards Principles of effective instruction	Principles of effective schools	Principles of effective district support	Strategic direction and goals
Improvement targets	Individual learning plans		Professional development process (PDP)	School improvement plans	Service agreements	District improvement agenda
Reporting/Feedback	Assessments aligned with standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota tests • CAT • SBMCT • Performance assessments Report cards		PDP feedback	School information reports Feedback on school improvement plan Quality improvement process Performance management conversations School - Community reports	Trimester reports	Trimester reports
Consequences	Promotion vs. retention Rewards/recognition Tutoring/intervention	Legal intervention for educational neglect	PDP continuum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development support • intensive assistance/outplacement 	School management continuum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage/support • challenge/support • intervention 	Within service agreements	State performance contract
Delegation	Student rights and responsibilities			Site-based management parameters	Site-based management parameters	The Minneapolis Covenant

Students

1. Standards

Student Performance Standards.

Description.

State performance standards. The State of Minnesota has defined academic achievement through the Minnesota Graduation Rule at two "levels:"

The **Profile of Learning** defines "high standards" learning (that is, what a student should know and be able to do) in ten areas:

- Reading, viewing and listening
- Writing and speaking
- Arts
- Math applications
- Inquiry
- Scientific applications
- People and cultures
- Decision making
- Resource management
- World languages

Basic Skill standards have been defined for reading, writing, and mathematics. These basic skills reflect minimum competencies and essential survival skills.

Minneapolis performance standards. MPS has only one level of expected performance. High-level, common expectations for each student are described in two ways:

Grade level expectations describe the learning that is to occur in each grade. These are high standards that meet or exceed State expectations and are aligned with the district's curriculum content standards.

Student performance standards "set the bar" for student work. They describe *how well* a student should be able to do the expected work via "evidence" of performance and/or setting the level of proficiency on the Standards Based Multiple Choice Test (SBMCT). These performance standards include descriptors and exemplars of quality student work. A standard of performance is to be established for each developmental level (5 years to 18 years) across the curriculum.

Status: Both the State and Minneapolis have student performance standards in development, with initial sections complete.

State: Minnesota students in the class of 2001 must pass a Basic Skills test in reading and mathematics at 75%, and exhibit writing competence in order to graduate.

All students are expected to be "engaged" in high standards work related to the Profile of Learning by 2002 (i.e., access to courses and/or state approved performance packages are examples of the ways that allow students to demonstrate "engagement"). Mastery is not a requirement of graduation.

Minneapolis: Grade level expectations are completed for the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics, K through 8th grade, and high school. Grade level expectations exist K-11 for social studies. Grade level expectations for science and the remaining components of language arts (i.e. listening and speaking) are to be completed by June, 1998.

As of June, 1997, "sample" performance standards for reading and math have been completed for grades K, 1, 3, 5, and 7, and for writing for grades 3, 5, 7. (These are called samples because they do not cover all components of the grade level expectations.) Additional components of reading and math standards, extension to high school, and the performance standards for Inquiry are to be developed during 1997-1998.

2. Improvement Targets

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

Description: Set annual learning goals tailored for each student, based on their learning abilities and achievement to date, and agreed upon by parent/guardian, teacher, and student.

Status: ILPs are to be in place for all K-6 students. (Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are similarly done for Special Education students). ILP use is strongest K-3, and varies from school to school.

Individual Learning Plan use could be strengthened by:

- closer alignment between learning goals and grade level expectations;
- and,

- clearly describing expectations of all the partners: the student, his/her family and teacher.

3. Reporting/ Feedback

Assessments Aligned with Standards

Description: Standards-based assessments measure how students, individually and collectively, are progressing toward achievement of performance standards.

Status:

State assessments: Minneapolis is entering its third year in administering the State's Basic Skills tests. Students first take these tests in 8th grade. Pre-testing support has been developed for schools to use. During 1997-1998, Basic Skills testing will be administered in early February.

Third and fifth grade Minnesota Comprehensive tests will be administered for the first time during February and March, 1998. These tests are to assess a student's achievement of high standards in reading and mathematics through both selected- and constructed- responses. A writing assessment for fifth grade is also being developed. Minneapolis is expecting to receive more information about the composition and objectives of these tests during fall, 1997.

District assessments: Minneapolis's assessment strategy has moved the district from the use of a single, standardized norm-referenced test (CAT) at almost every grade level to a combination of standardized norm-referenced tests and standards-based selected response tests. Specifically, Minneapolis has finished its first year with Standards Based Multiple Choice Testing (SBMCT) in mathematics and reading (grades 4 and 6). Next year these assessments will be done in grades 2 through 7.

These tests, and other assessment tools, closely align with MPS standards and State assessments. District assessments are now all aligned to the Basic Skills tests which help assess whether students are on track to passing.

Report Cards

Description: Reporting mechanism to student concerning his/her achievement of learning goals.

Status: A district format exists; use varies by school. Report cards often contain letter grade or Pass/Fail information.

In the future, reporting needs to be more closely aligned with student performance standards. Standards-based assessments are capable of reporting out a *learning map* of the different proficiencies needed for graduation. Such a “learning map” helps communicate what the student has already learned as well as the kinds of learning yet to come.

4. Consequences

Description. A continuum of consequences K-12 would vary system responses based on student performance. Where a student is performing at or above standard, that student could be accelerated. Where a student is struggling, additional support given. And where a student is falling far behind, intervention would occur.

Status: Graduation depends on demonstrated mastery of state Basic Skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, starting with the class of 2001. District graduation requirements are currently expressed in terms of course work completed and credits earned. These need to be synchronized with the State’s graduation requirements and MPS student performance expectations.

Prior to twelfth grade, the system’s “normal” response is either retention or promotion. This has raised the issue of social promotion - moving students to the next grade with their peers regardless of their level of achievement. This is justified by the belief that neither of the current options for low performers - promotion or retention - has been shown to improve their achievement. But Minneapolis need not be forced into a promotion versus retention choice. It is positioned to move toward a fuller range of responses based on student competency. Some examples are already in place:

- A process exists to waive course attendance/ content when a student can demonstrate competency, using an assessment against standards. However, to date this has had limited use, primarily in physical education.
- Independent Study. Generally done within alternative schools, students are allowed to work independently when they demonstrate high levels of proficiency.
- Tutoring. A variety of tutoring efforts go on (e.g., cross-age, peer to peer, voluntary, and professional). Tutoring usually exists to encourage

practice of already instructed material. To date, it is seldom used to offer another instructional approach.

- Referrals to alternative schools. Usually done today for behavioral reasons or because the student or his/her family initiates a request. The Minneapolis school system infrequently generates referrals for academic reasons.

5. Delegation

Description: Delegation occurs whenever a teacher sets his/her learning and behavioral expectations for the class and transfers real responsibility for living up to those standards to the students. This delegation is most powerful when it sets mutual expectations. Similar to the process or format of the Covenant, a teacher and his/ her students could set mutual rights, expectations, and responsibilities.

Status: Done in individual classrooms; not systemically. However, work championed by the City-wide Student Government entitled Principles For Effective Schools and Student Rights and Responsibilities describes what a student has a *right* to expect while with the Minneapolis Public Schools in terms of access, a conducive learning environment, and safety. It also describes the *responsibilities* the student has to actively participate in his or her own learning and in no way inhibit the learning of others. This was completed in May 1996.

Families

1. Standards

MPS Family Involvement Standards

Description: Specifies what needs to happen at the district service center, schools, classrooms, and homes to increase the level and quality of family involvement in the success of Minneapolis students. Families are expected to: support learning; hold high, reasonable expectations for each child's achievement; understand what is expected of them to support success; and actively support the school and district.

Status: Developed during spring, summer, 1996. Adopted by Board of Education in October, 1996. As with the curriculum content standards, understanding and use of these standards could be enhanced by further specifying family expectations.

2. Improvement Targets

Status: Missing. No process exists to encourage families to set educational improvement targets. However, this could be done as part of the ILP process.

3. Reporting/ Feedback

Family Involvement Assessments / Audits

Description: Reflection or feedback on how the family is doing with regard to the standards or goals.

Status: A self-assessment instrument for the home level is to be designed during 1997-1998. (During 1996-1997 assessments occurred at the district level and with fifty school/ classroom grant recipients regarding the use of family involvement standards.)

4. Consequences

Status: A full range of consequences for families has not been developed. Infrequently, the legal procedure of family neglect is used to intervene when children have been absent an excessive number of days.

5. Delegation

Status: Nothing done systemically.

Classrooms

1. Standards

Curriculum Content Standards

Description: Statements of what all Minneapolis students are to know and be able to do across the K-12 curriculum by developmental age group. These standards inform *what is taught* by stating what is to be learned by each student in any Minneapolis school.

Status: Key curriculum content standards have been completed at each developmental stage (5 - 9 years; 9 - 14 years; and 14 - 18 years) for ten subject areas. The first five subject areas were introduced in fall, 1995:

- English Language Arts;
- Fine Arts;
- Mathematics;
- Science; and
- Social Studies.

Standards for five more were introduced in fall, 1996:

- Health Education and Family and Consumer Sciences;
- Information Media Technology;
- Physical Education;
- Technology Education; and
- World Languages.

One area, English Language Arts, was revised June, 1997.

MPS Curriculum Content Standards are further specified in the MPS grade level expectations described earlier. They intersect with each of the State's graduation standards.

During 1996-1997, teacher awareness of curriculum standards was emphasized. The plan for 1997-1998 is to use Language Arts as the lead to show the connections among curriculum, grade level expectations, performance standards and assessments. The hoped for result? A majority of teachers understand the expectations, and through the examination and discussion of student work, help develop common agreement about student work necessary to demonstrate proficiency.

Principles of Effective Instruction

Description: Seven research-based descriptors of effective instructional practice. Examples: accommodate student differences when planning for instruction and teachers modeling active learning. These standards inform *how to teach*.

Status: Done. Adopted by the Board of Education in 1994. Similar to curriculum content standards, these standards could be strengthened by developing specific performance expectations.

2. Improvement Targets

Professional Development Process (PDP) goals

Description: The Professional Development Process (PDP) asks each teacher to set specific improvement goals based on district and school expectations and feedback on past performance.

Status: Designed and in practice. Origin dates back to 1984; twelve pilot sites in 1992. Extended to all teachers in 1995-1996.

3. Reporting/ Feedback

PDP Feedback

Description: The teacher forms a team, usually of teachers and the principal only, but may include other colleagues, parents, students and community members, to provide coaching and feedback regarding improvement goals and results. The team meets with the individual teacher several times during the year, reviews data on performance, observes classroom practice and gives the teacher direct feedback on what is working and areas for improvement.

Status: Extended to all teachers in 1995-1996. In 1996-97, student feedback surveys were developed. The use of feedback from students and families is encouraged during 1997-1998.

4. Consequences

Professional Development Process continuum

Description: The Professional Development process has a continuum of consequences based on goal attainment:

- *Professional Development*--continuous encouragement and recognition for setting and achieving goals
- *Professional Support*--directive support to teachers who require additional help to achieve their goals
- *Intensive Assistance/ Outplacement*--confidential, short term support for tenured teachers in crisis. If improvement goals continue to not be realized, intensive assistance can turn to career transition or outplacement for those teachers who would be better placed in another career.

Status: The professional support process was added in 1996-1997. It is used for all new teachers, any teacher requesting additional support, and for teachers assessed as in need of additional support. Intensive assistance has been in existence for many years; however, it was further designed to fit with the professional development process in 1995. Last year, the performance issues for 49 teachers were addressed through these processes.

5. Delegation

Status: Systemic methods are missing.

Schools

1. Standards

Principles of Effective Schools

Description: Describes eleven characteristics of an "effective school" based on national research and local experience. Example: Effective schools have high and rigorous standards for what every student should know and be able to do. The full document includes indicators for each area. The expectation is that schools constantly strive to move toward this picture of excellence.

Status: Adopted by the Board of Education in Site Based Management in Minneapolis Public Schools, June, 1994; amended January, 1997.

2. Improvement Targets

School Improvement Plans

Description: An individualized plan developed annually by each school community to provide focus and direction to the school. Within this process, each school:

- looks at its own performance data, the expectations contained within the District Improvement Agenda, and the needs of the students served;
- sets clear expectations of the results to be produced, in measurable terms;
- determines specific actions needed, measures results and receives feedback on actions taken;
- reports progress; and,
- sets revised actions and goals.

Status: Renamed School Improvement Planning in 1994; its predecessor was the Building Profile process. The use of School Improvement Plans varies from school to school. For some, all decisions and work are guided by their SIP. For others, it is a paper process that they don't own. Under any name, meaningful school improvement remains a core strategy of the district.

3. Feedback/ reporting

School Information Reports (SIRs)

Description: Individualized school performance reports, SIRs contain a wide range of data on student achievement, attendance, demographics, and student/ staff/ parent perceptions of the school.

Status: Provided in the fall of each year by Research, Evaluation, and Assessment staff. The individual school usually collects other data to supplement the information provided by the District. During 1997-1998, more frequent, smaller SIRs may be attempted.

Feedback on School Improvement Plans

Description: Provides feedback to each school on its School Improvement Plan. Teams of three read the plan and provide written critique regarding: the criticality of the improvement goals selected; the alignment with the District Improvement Agenda; and its understandability.

Status: Developed and implemented for the first time during 1996-1997. For 1997-1998 there is an expectation to give more timely feedback, defined as within 60 days of receipt.

Quality Improvement Process

Description: QIP is a "school wide PDP." QIP is a process of critical self-reflection regarding school practices and results. A school's self-reflection is validated and challenged by feedback from visiting external teams of educators, parents, and community members (cadres).

QIP uses a modified Baldrige framework of seven categories of organizational quality but tailors the questions in each area to assess MPS standards in practice.

Status: QIP was designed and "road tested" with five schools (three elementary; one middle; one high) during 1996-1997. The intent is to have 10 schools utilize the Quality Improvement Process in 1997-1998.

Performance Management Conversations

Description: Two way conversations between district and school leadership to:

- Review past performance, expectations contained in District Improvement Agenda, and unique needs of students served;
- Inform individualized performance targets set in School Improvement Plan;
- Monitor progress 1-3 times during each year;
- Determine needs for additional district services; and,
- Strengthen understanding and communication between schools and central offices.

Status: Missing. To be designed and implemented, starting fall, 1997.

School-Community Reports

Description: Each school is to communicate with its community three times a year regarding school performance and its school improvement.

Status: Done sporadically; infrequently aligned with school or student performance. In the future, these need to contain common “vital signs” of school performance.

4. Consequences

The School Performance Management Continuum (SPMC) chooses a few, key indicators of school performance and describes a continuum of responses. Trend lines of these *key vital signs* would indicate when school performance is successful or improving vs. adequate or static vs. inadequate or declining. The continuum of consequences includes:

- *For successful or improving schools:* encouragement and support for continued improvement including financial and other rewards for schools that achieve performance goals and show on-going improvement.
- *For adequate or static schools:* challenge and support to improve (including support to new schools to assure they get off to a successful start).
- *For inadequate or declining schools:* prescriptive intervention to reverse declining performance, up to and including a “fresh start”.

Status: Minneapolis is in its second year with Quality Performance Awards (piloted spring-fall, 1996), a means to celebrate and accelerate school accomplishments. Schools can participate in the performance reward process by achieving district goals as well as their own school goals.

Tailored interventions occur as necessary, but little is communicated about them, nor are they seen as “learning opportunities.” One school had a “fresh start” prior to 1996-1997. Assessing the impact of that “fresh start” and lessons that might be applied to similar circumstances in the future should be done early in 1997-1998.

5. Delegation

Site-based Management Parameters

Description: Delegates specific authority and accountability from the district to sites. The parameters specify within ten subject areas which decisions are to be made by the district and which by the schools. In general, the decisions assigned to the district focus on standards and performance expectations (i.e., *the ends*) while those assigned to schools are concerned with how the expectations are achieved (i.e., *the means*).

Status: Completed: Site Based Management in Minneapolis Public Schools. July, 1994; revised January, 1997. Communication about the parameters and support of their use needs to be improved. Many schools are limited by what they *assume* rather than what they *know* about the parameters.

Central Offices

1. Standards

Principles of Effective District Support

Description: Describes thirteen characteristics of effective central services based on national research and local experience. As an example, an effective district sets a strategic direction and establishes improvement planning processes to support student achievement. The full document includes indicators for each area.

Status: Adopted by the Board of Education, 1994. Site Based Management in Minneapolis Public Schools.

2. Improvement Targets

Service Agreements

Description: Service agreements are "performance contracts" that outline service requirements and standards. Each central office service unit has a service agreement specifying the scope of services to be provided, service levels, and associated funding.

Status: First used during 1996-1997. Subsequent cycles need to strengthen customer choices and add powerful measures to provide regular information about progress.

3. Reporting/ Feedback

Trimester Reports: Performance data on the quality of district service performance.

Status: Measured and reported on a District wide publicly three times a year since 1995. Only limited data is available for individual service units.

4. Consequences

Recovery/ redress: Service agreements specify what will be done when service doesn't meet expectations.

Status: Recovery strategies were included, starting in 1996-1997. Other consequences based on performance are missing.

5. Delegation

Site-based Management Parameters

Description: Delegates specific authority and accountability to the district. In general, the decisions retained by the district focus on determining the mission and establishing common standards and performance expectations.

Status: Completed; Site Based Management in Minneapolis Public Schools. 1994.

District

1. Standards

Strategic Direction and Goals

Description: Sets the mission of the Minneapolis Public School system (and all of its schools.) The mission captures both the purpose of the school system and its commitment to accountability: "To ensure that all children learn." The mission is incorporated into the Strategic Direction which specifies the district's goals, values, beliefs and strategies.

Status: First written in 1994; revised in 1996.

2. Improvement Targets

District Improvement Agenda

Description: Sets measurable improvement goals and priority actions for the coming year. Provides a focus for district work, decisions, and action.

Status: Minneapolis has had a District Improvement Agenda since January, 1994. The agenda has evolved from one comprised primarily of *tasks* to one focused primarily on *measurable results* and a short list of improvement efforts.

3. Reporting/ Feedback

Trimester Report: Performance on DIA goals

Description: A system of regular (3-4 times per year) reporting to the school system and the Minneapolis community on key indicators of the district's performance. The key indicators are based on the district's standards and annual goals. They include reporting on student achievement, the learning climate, family involvement, community confidence, attraction and retention of students, curriculum, instructional effectiveness, and management and administration. The existence and public nature of this reporting is designed to earn and even increase public trust in the system of public education.

Status: In place since the 1994-1995 school year.

4. Consequences

State Performance Contract

Description: Under a performance contract with the state, each year the district can earn additional state money if it achieves pre-established goals.

Status: Earned \$360,000 in 1996-1997.

5. Delegation

Status: Explicit delegation of responsibility and authority has not occurred specific to Minneapolis. The state allocated funds for 1997-1999 to further design accountability between the state and school districts. Pieces include demonstrated alignment with state standards, public reporting of state test results by school district, and attainment of improved results for financial support received.

V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A. Implementation 1993 - 97

For the last several years implementation of the accountability design has been focused in five areas:

1. Standards: Standards and expectations have been developed for each participant in the design.
2. Classrooms: The Professional Development Process for teachers has created mechanisms for target setting, reporting and feedback, and consequences for all teachers.
3. Schools: School Improvement Plans, School Information Reports, the Quality Improvement Process and School Performance Management Continuum of consequences have been the focus for development and implementation.
4. Student Assessment: The District has developed and is implementing a strategy for assessment that is aligned and linked with its student performance standards.
5. District Improvement Targets and Reporting/ Feedback: The Strategic Direction, District Improvement Agenda, and Trimester Reporting have been in place for 3 years.

The chart which follows highlights the parts of the framework that have been the focus of implementation during 1993-1997.

Minneapolis Accountability Design

Implementation 1993 - 1997

	Students	Families	Classrooms	Schools	Central Offices	District
Standards/ Expectations						
Improvement Targets						
Reporting/ Feedback						
Consequences						
Delegation						

B. Implementation Opportunities

1. Highest Priority

- a. Improve performance feedback to schools and implement the school performance management continuum.
 - Organize and carry out regular performance reviews with schools focusing on performance to date and specific actions for improving performance beginning fall, 1997.
 - Integrate the several performance feedback mechanisms (School Information reports, School Improvement Plan feedback, Quality Improvement Process feedback) so that schools experience them as based on a common set of indicators and expectations beginning fall, 1997.
 - Implement the recommended school consequences strategy (School Performance Management Continuum) in 1997-98.

- b. Complete and deepen all aspects of student accountability. Of particular concern is assuring even and complete implementation throughout the District. Specifically:
 - Focus on the five core curriculum areas - language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts along with the State's inquiry standard. (Note: this requires limiting the energy committed to other curriculum areas.)
 - Complete development of grade level expectations and student performance standards in the core curriculum and inquiry grades K-12 by June 1999.
 - Complete development of "learning maps" for the core curriculum that display standards, performance levels and performance examples and can be used as curriculum, assessment and reporting tools in these same core areas by June 1999.
 - Resolve issues related to social promotion by June 1998 especially those related to support and intervention for students performing below expectations.

2. Second Priority

- a. Adopt a more specific approach to family accountability during 1997 -98. The two best predictors of school success are what goes on in school (the quality of curriculum and teaching) and what goes on at home (the degree of reinforcement for learning).
 - Define the minimum expectations of every family to include:
 - ⇒ awareness of curriculum and performance expectations of students;
 - ⇒ regular school attendance by students;
 - ⇒ regular, successful completion of homework; and,
 - ⇒ regular participation in reviews of student performance and goal setting.
 - Define the minimum expectations for schools and teachers as including:
 - ⇒ effective communication of curriculum and performance expectations to every student and family;
 - ⇒ effective communication of family expectations to every family; and,
 - ⇒ regular reviews of student/family performance and goal setting with every student and family;
 - Report on and discuss student/family performance on ILP's, report cards and in regular reviews.
 - Create a range of consequences for families that includes:
 - ⇒ Rewards - family recognition for those who meet expectations (honor role, certificate, special reception, free passes etc.).
 - ⇒ Supports - refer those who don't meet expectations to Family Services for development of a family education plan designed to create a structure for education support within the family (community-based tutoring and support could be critical elements).
 - ⇒ Interventions - for those who will not or cannot meet expectations
 - loss of school choice (students assigned to programs designed to intervene and provide extended school support);
 - refer to county for family support services; or,
 - refer to county attorney re: educational neglect.

Begin by implementing the reward and recognition elements to help create a culture that expects feedback to families on their performance. Announce the availability of the support elements shortly thereafter to reinforce the importance of the family accountability. When both the rewards/recognition and support elements are in place announce the interventions. This will give the system time to prepare the community for the change and to set up the needed school, county and community components.

- b. Build on past efforts to increase central office accountability.
 - Fully implement customer service agreements that include performance targets, regular reporting, and consequences (including customer redress where service is deemed inadequate) during 1997-98.
 - Pursue opportunities for the creation of internal enterprises (in addition to central stores) that would be strictly accountable to their customers beginning 1998-99.

3. Third Priority - Renewal and Extension

Renewal and extension of the elements of this design must be built into the regular work of the district. Each of the components of the framework needs an owner champion beginning in fall, 1997 who will be responsible for:



- a. Reviewing, updating and where appropriate, extending standards and performance expectations on a regular schedule (e.g., a regular schedule for curriculum reviews). It is particularly important that the standards continue to become more specific, moving from descriptions of the ideal state or general principles to statements of specific performance expectations.
- b. Evaluating the effectiveness of target setting and reporting/feedback to assure that they are aligned with standards and producing continuous improvements in performance.
- c. Evaluating and improving the efficacy of the range of consequences - important here are the credibility and appropriateness of the connection between performance and consequences.

Within the current organization's structure, accountability component owners/champions would be as follows:

- For students: TIS (re: standards and reporting/ feedback) and Student Services (re: improvement targets, consequences and delegation)
- For families: FACES
- For classrooms: TIS
- For schools: School and Site Services
- For central offices: Superintendent's office
- For the district: Superintendent's office

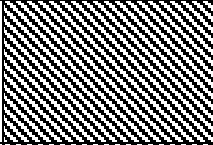
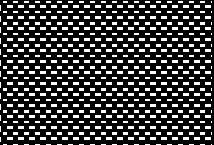

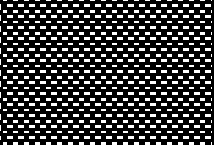
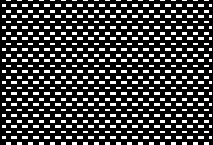

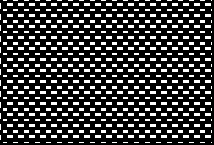

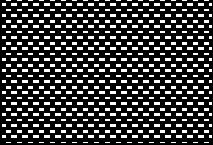

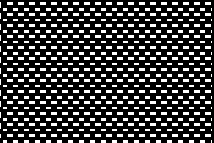

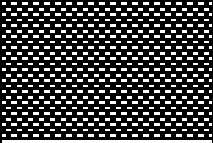

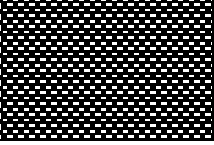
Implementation Summary

The chart which follows highlights which the parts of the framework present the best implementation opportunities during 1997-2000. The key to the chart is:

Top Priority	Second Priority
	

Minneapolis Accountability Design

Implementation Opportunities 1997-2000

	Students	Families	Classrooms	Schools	Central Offices	District
Standards/Expectations						
Improvement Targets						
Reporting/Feedback						
Consequences						
Delegation						

C. Stakeholder Support

Implementation of any accountability design requires a specific strategy to build ownership by all of the District's stakeholders. These include:

- Students
- Families
- Teachers and school staff
- Principals
- Central Office Staff
- District leadership
- Board of Education
- Community Leaders
 - Political
 - Labor
 - Citizen
 - Business
 - Media
 - Religious

Leadership Strategy: Begin by building ownership and support among internal leaders. Much work on aspects of the accountability design has already been done by 5 with 5, the District Leadership Team, the Strategy Team and the Board. These four groups should be asked to improve and endorse this design.

Principals: Following endorsement by leadership, ownership needs to be developed among Principals. They should be asked to focus on School and Classroom accountability as well as the application of the Principals' Professional Development Process. Principals need to be conversant with the mechanisms that will be used to implement consequences for teachers, schools and themselves. Incorporation of key elements of this design into the Principals' contract should also be pursued.

Teachers: Key elements of this design should be incorporated into the teachers' contract. In addition, staff development should continue to focus on the use of the Professional Development Process as well as implementation of the curriculum standards and related assessments. Additional staff development should be provided to implement the family accountability elements described above.

Community Campaign: A campaign should be organized to engage the community in critical elements of this design. Special emphasis should be given to the standards, targets and consequences related to students, families, classrooms and schools. Group meetings/discussions should be the communication mechanism. PTA and other school based meetings should be reinforced by opportunities that are created on the agendas of organizations throughout the community (civic groups, clubs, churches, business organizations) as well as special opportunities organized by the District for the broader community. A media campaign should reinforce the messages being delivered in the group meetings.

School and Classroom Campaign: Concurrent with the community campaign should be a similar effort in each school and classroom. The emphasis should be on assuring understanding by every family and student of what is expected of them if they are to succeed, what the school and classroom will do to support them, how performance will be measured and supported and what will be the consequences. Ultimately building ownership among students and families is critical if achievement is to improve.