LESSONS LEARNED: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
PEER SESSION NOTES
OCTOBER 20, 2015

Topic Brainstorm:

- Complexity of measures and how the details are communicated to schools (8 votes)
- Academic measures beyond state tests given once a year (8 votes)
- What are the best/effective ways to share performance data with: schools, general public, parents, board members (8 votes)
- What are suggestions for academic metrics that will remain constant for 5 years when accountability tools and state tests are changing every 1-3 yrs? (7 votes)
- How do we create consistent evaluation criteria of schools when our state is in constant legislative flux? (7 votes)
- Updating performance frameworks based on best practices/changes in state measures and expectations. Varying contract terms so some schools on new framework, some on old (6 votes)
- How do we respond as a district authorizer to shifting assessments/accountability systems in a way that is meaningful and allows operators to feel fairly evaluated? (5 votes)
- What works best when ratings change (up/down) year after year for a summative evaluation? (3 votes)
- How do you measure growth in a high school? (3 votes)
- Inclusion and weighting of social-emotional learning indicators (3 votes)
- Differentiate frameworks for alt ed schools (3 votes)
- In a differentiated accountability framework, how much differentiation is enough? (2 votes)
- External stakeholders (lenders, general public, philanthropy) and their reliance on an accountability and performance framework system (2 votes)
- **How are you monitoring efforts tied to performance frameworks? (2 votes)**
- How do authorizers tweak standards after each year? (2 votes)
- How are authorizers communicating expectations—best approaches (1 vote)
- Charter approved measures vs. authorizer selected (1 vote)
- Financial oversight measures (1 vote)
- Strategies for creating/building/maintain political will to close underperforming charters (1 vote)
- Gathering data that directly apply to the measures and reporting to multiple audiences (1 vote)
- Holding schools accountability during a "pause year" based on testing difficulties.
- What do you do when the mayor and district support the operation of a very poorly performing school-one you would usually close?

Agenda:

1. How to we communicate to our stakeholders: parents, charter school leaders, the public, decision-makers

2. Consistency in academic measures as the measures/expectations change over time

3. Academic measures beyond the state framework/accountability systems

4. Balance the complexity of the data with the accessibility

Notes from Discussion:

1. Stakeholder engagement and communication of performance:

- DC: created a parent guide
- NM: not just framework performance, but also demographic information
- NM: individual goals are developed by the schools. CHALLENGE: how do we assess and communicate results? In NM, these goals are required. CHALLENGE: are the measures easily analyzed?
- Fulton Co: Our parents were not understanding the data we were sharing. Parents said they look at test scores, but we found that they looked at appearance and word of mouth—was not different by SES status. Even though parents aren't looking at the measures, they're still critical metrics.
- How to effectively communicate key information?
- SOLUTION?: user's guide—information to help make the data more accessible.
- As an authorizer you have the responsibility/right to close the underperforming school. Authorizer should communicate performance/sanctions. You can control the market. NM: caveat: decisions are appealable
- ASD: Focus on replication/revocation as a critical lever—but how do we communicate the reason for our decisions to parents? Parents communicated interest in attendance, discipline, and culture data above performance data; noted that schools who were having focused regular data nights with parents were the ones whose parents spoke to interest in and knowledge of performance data
- OR: implementing a PF for the first time this year: what have you learned about how you communicate to the school?
- ASD: Provide operators with district-wide comparative school performance reports to give them context for their performance/growth relative to their peers and to know who is performing well and might be a good resource
- DC: Press release of performance—boost high performers. Tier 1 schools get a 'badge' a kind of certification of quality
- AZ: Communication was strictly you met or you didn't. If you didn't then you had additional engagement/intervention

2. Consistency in academic measures as the measures / expectations change over time

- How do we remain consistent in our evaluations when state assessments and expectations are changing?
- AZ: framework measures are comparative (percentiles rather than percentages)
- HI: When federal/state law changes making measures comparative
- DC: we had a "Hold Harmless" year for Elem/MS—will not have a tier, will only have a score. For high schools, because of the diversity of measures, we maintained the expectations.
- NM: Concerned about comparative data, especially when talking about schools working with specific/unique populations (dropout recovery, etc)
- OH: Not one-size-fits-all, but there is a default closure and authorizers can have a 'higher standard' above what calls for closure.
- AZ: had performance framework for different types of schools
- CHALLENGE: What do you do when performance of schools changes?

3. Academic measures beyond the state framework/accountability systems

- High school: PSAT, SAT, Exit exams, Dual enrollment/earning in college credit
- HI: we allow schools to submit mission-specific goals. There is quality control: the authorizer has to approve it: measureable, objective, calibrated and makes sense for performance
- Attendance
- Re-enrollment
- Pre-K classroom observations
- DC: Propose assessments for K-2 grades: b/c there is not state assessment. Schools can use their own assessments, but they have to be validated and reliable, more standardized.
- NM: CHALLENGE: we sometimes have individually developed goals, but sometimes they're not outcomes based
- ASD: We allow operators to use any Lexile-approved assessments and convert growth in lexile scores to an easily digestible measure of performance, re: grade levels of growth. Enables the operators autonomy in the selection of their interim assessment while allowing the district to use the data in an apples-apples comparison in our framework
- DC: adult programs have mission-specific goals
- Maine: NWEA Map test, particularly for the lower grades. Schools are required to use a local assessment. Some do portfolio assessment. CHALLENGE: The state assessment changes annually, so trying to avoid a metric based on outdated test.
- NM: list of assessments
- Measure for social-emotional learning.

4. Balance the complexity of the data with the accessibility

- HI: Saying that it's "nuanced" how do you communicate complexity? Don't want it to be so formulaic that you can't effectively evaluate the school
- DC: we have a parent leadership group. Provide the report cards and ask, "Can you understand this?" The feedback has driven how we have communicated performance
- Q for DC: Based on the feedback did you change the framework? -We stopped roll out of an entire framework based on feedback from the parent group.

- ASD: Previously provided webinar trainings on the performance framework to operators at the start of the year and then the district would lead all accountability/performance meetings, in which there were few true checks for operator understanding. Realized some operators had not digested or could not articulate the meaning behind some accountability metrics. Added the following accountability meeting structure options this year: (1) operator/school led meeting where they communicated back to ASD what their targets are and prior performance relative to them-"like student led conferences☺," (2) joint working session or (3) district-led with guided discussion questions and CFUs.
- Roll up score calculator. Schools can calculate their scores themselves. DC now asks schools to "validate" their scores by providing tools to help the operator/school to calculate scores.

5. Open Discussion: Interventions

- OR: Don't have a schedule of interventions. What do you do with the variety of performance?
- NM: When do I interact with a school? Why? How? Clear expectations and identified steps for intervention based on performance.
- AZ: If you fluctuate in your performance, the authorizer should still have a discussion of performance. Need to consistently perform. Performance Management Plan expectations for performance improvement.
- ASD: For the academic portion of the framework, we have a 100 pt scale. Need to earn at least 50 pts to be out of the red. We average the last 3 yrs of performance on 3-year cycles to make revocation decisions
- HI: know that scores can fluctuate—especially for small schools. Need to have continued discussions w charter board members.
- DC: qualitative site reviews—based on the Danielson evaluation: 2 week in depth observation/ evaluation. Looks at mission and goals. Classroom environment and instruction domains. External reviewer included. Another body of evidence to consider if you need to take action. School leader/board member meeting.
- AZ: looked for systematic processes that were data driven. Evidence that the school leader was engaged in the educational process. PD of teachers was data driven based on the needs of the school.