Guiding Principles for School Accountability

Overview

This document shares the guiding principles of the School Accountability Team at the Michigan Department of Education. These principles shape the work and customer service provided by the team to students, parents, communities, and other governing bodies in the State of Michigan. These principles define how the team works together and makes decisions fairly and impartially. Additionally, the work of the team and guiding principles are aligned to the goals included in the statewide Top 10 Strategic Education Plan. For more information on the Top 10 Strategic Education Plan, please visit: www.mi.gov/top10in10.

Mission Statement

Improve learner outcomes by providing accessible and student-focused, data tools and resources that increase transparency and accountability for Michigan public schools and support the educational goals of Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan.

Accountability Core Tenets

These core tenets define the purpose and uphold the integrity of accountability services, ensuring every product and process delivered by the School Accountability Team is focused on elevating student outcomes by supporting Michigan's education systems. The accountability core tenets are the A's of accountability:

- **Accessible:** Tailored for clarity across diverse audiences, from parents to policymakers.
- **Adaptable:** Modularly designed to evolve with changing state and federal laws.
- **Accurate:** Sourced from official state data (MSDS, REP, EEM) for ultimate integrity.
- **Analyzed:** Guided by objective research and data-driven insights rather than discretionary decisions.
- **Actionable:** Presented in modern, user-friendly formats to empower effective decision-making.
- **Aligned:** Integrated with Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan.

Guiding Principles

Belief:	Action:
The information systems and products we develop should facilitate equitable access to a high-quality education for all students by ensuring transparency, accountability, and meaningful engagement with stakeholders.	• Prioritize subgroup achievement to ensure all students are represented in data-driven decisions. • Engage parents, students, educators and stakeholders. • Publish "Light of Day" reporting to promote awareness and promote informed decision-making. • Maintain a student-centered focus over adults within systems. • Ensure transparency in our systems and resources – not as a punitive measure, but as a key to identifying areas needing improvement.
All schools must be held to the same high standards, through fair, transparent, and consistently applied policies and practices. Equity in accountability ensures that all students and schools receive the same opportunities for success	• Apply standard measures to all students and schools. • Maintain transparency and openness. • Document all policies, business rules, and decisions for clarity. • Provide accurate, clear, and timely communication to schools and stakeholders. • Adhere to our written documentation for policy and procedure. • Use state-collected data sources (MSDS, REP, EEM, state assessments) as the sole source of accuracy in student and school data systems. • Enforce published deadlines equally, without exceptions. • Ensure equal opportunities for all schools by avoiding preferential treatment or exception. • Base decisions on objective criteria, not "who you know" or privilege insider knowledge.
We hold the highest standards of integrity, accuracy, and accountability by making thoughtful, data driven decisions, embracing continuous improvement, transparency, and taking responsibility for our work, while remaining fair, ethical, and free from special interest influence.	• Acknowledge and make corrections when the error was ours. • Plan, strategize, and think carefully and conscientiously through all steps involved in each activity or initiative. • Take collective responsibility for the team and our work quality and hold ourselves accountable for our collective success. • Embrace constructive feedback and integrate it into our processes. • Maintain honesty, fairness, and professionalism in all interactions • Focus on the big picture while fostering innovation and cross-team collaboration.

	• Ensure clear and consistent Communication within the team, office, and the Department. • Take responsibility for errors, avoiding excuses, and prioritizing continuous improvement • Commit to honesty and accountability in our relationships both within the office and external to it. • Remain nonpartisan and not beholden to special interests in our work. The positions we take will be based on sound objective and professional analysis of research. • Uphold ethical standards by rejecting bribery and corruption wherever they have been reliably identified.
As a customer-focused team, we provide high-quality and timely customer service and support to all stakeholders.	• Communicate effectively through targeted and broad channels to our stakeholders and customers. • Provide clear and realistic timelines for deliverables and updates. • Offer helpful support to all stakeholders while ensuring fairness and consistency. • Host conferences, webinars, etc. to enhance the dissemination of information. • Maintain a high-quality, user-friendly web presence with easily accessible resources. • Document and publish business rules for transparency and consistency across all systems. • Provide technical assistance to help customers understand and utilize their data effectively. • Listen to stakeholder feedback to identify core issues and implement proactive solutions. • Collaborate with stakeholders and other offices to reduce unnecessary burdens on customers where possible. • Work cooperatively and professionally with all individuals and organizations. • Remain objective and independent in addressing issues thoroughly.
We support the continuous improvement of student outcomes, educator effectiveness, and overall school performance by leveraging data, research, and collaboration.	• Concentrate on providing data for information, improvement, and targeting resources. • Offer technical assistance regarding assessment, accountability and other data.

	• Create meaningful opportunities for engagement with schools around their data and performance. • Ensure our work is highly skilled and seek to increase our skill levels through strategic professional development plans, learning opportunities, and internal discussions/efforts. • Hold a personal vision for the importance of our work and be responsible for the high-quality implementation of our various initiatives. • Deliver accurate and timely data and actionable reports to our stakeholders. • Actively seek feedback from stakeholders on what and how to improve in our products and processes. • Conduct and apply rigorous research to improve methodologies for operational work, and to provide more reliable, valid, and useful data to stakeholders. • Promote the responsible and ethical use of data by schools, researchers, and other customers. • Use research and data analyses to help drive informed decisions and highlight effective and ineffective policies, both internally and externally to MDE.