**Dueck ESSA Accountability Proposal:**

1. **Design Objectives:**
2. **Moral Imperative:** *That no student be held to a higher level of accountability than is required from the organizations established to deliver educational programs and services.* Today,grade one students are more accountable than schools and personnel.
3. **Holistic and Comparative:** The model’s focus is on providing a holistic view of the education system’s quality including *each school, school district and state*. A common “report card” *connects* each level of the school system and ensures *common purpose* for strategic planning as well as readily observed *transparency* for common understanding. Moreover, the holistic perspective *discourages gamesmanship* sometimes employed by educators when the focus is only on reading and mathematics, as well as confirming in the public’s understanding that *all educational outcomes are valued.*
4. **Fair Measurement: Schools and districts should not be (dis)advantaged by the clientele served (e.g. socio-economic status), and the model should produce overall higher levels of success for all students’ groupings over time.**
5. **My proposed accountability system.**
6. **Indicators of Academic Achievement:** Inspired by Alberta’s Accountability Pillar (2006) my system measures the percentages of students *achieving Basic, Proficient, and Advanced* levels for each grade (above grade two) and subject areas assessed. Assessing these *equally* recognizes the importance of meeting minimum requirements as well as achievement aligned with college and career readiness. The Advanced level is necessary for countering the tendency in schools to address the needs of the weak regarded as a moral imperative but, as indicated in the research, not adequately addressing the needs of our strongest students. Fairness across socio-economic regions is enhanced when the values of each level of achievement are equal.

**Schools are primarily responsible for academic achievement and, therefore, the *report card indicators are divided into two tiers*. *Tier one* contains the student testing results or hard data, and is the Tier used in determining consequences for failing performance. *Tier two* contains the soft data gleaned through surveys and is evaluated and reported so that the public has a *holistic perception* of the school/district/state.**

**Each of the four core subject areas – i.e. *reading, mathematics, science and social studies* – are treated separately for each grade assessed. In other words, *each subject at each grade level receives ratings* on the school/district/state report cards. Assessing these four subjects ensures that nothing in the core is sacrificed.**

Political necessity may require incorporating teachers’ assessments of student achievement despite the potential for grade inflation and bias. Where this is deemed essential, the report card can contain a line item recording teachers’ overall assessment of students’ “grade level of achievement” for *reading and mathematics* by recording the percentage of students achieving *“at”* and *“above*” grade level.

1. **Indicators of Student Growth: Indicators of student growth in the report card should be evaluated according to *two criteria* – *achievement* and *improvement*. Like students, schools/districts/states will be evaluated on the degree to which standards are *achieved* and *improvement* made over time, and using a *five-point rating scale* for each. These assessments of indicators are then consistent with the multiple levels and multiple criteria used in evaluating students’ progress.**

Research demonstrates that *marker bias* leads to significant grade inflation favoring female students for their compliant behavior. Therefore, written components in assessments must be marked *anonymously* or *not* be incorporated in reporting academic achievement.

Assessments will be based on the *cohort* rather than on the percentage of students writing. This approach eliminates game-playing regarding non-writers with special needs because the demographic make-up is relatively stable from one year to the next. Schools make the final determination regarding whether a student writes but *their motivation is to incorporate as many as possible*. Research indicates that boys frequently are excused from writing because they are identified as learning disabled; yet, they overcome biases within the school system and achieve higher levels than expected. Cohort reporting also deals with *absentee students* because schools are motivated to explain to parents the value of accountability for the performance of all students.

*Data analysis* used in deriving the ratings in the report card will be broken down *by classroom for each subject* so that the principal and teacher can discuss and establish *personal goals* related to the teacher’s class. This discussion can identify areas where the *pattern* of class achievement excels or is deficient.

1. **Indicator(s) of Progress Toward English Language Proficiency:** This is a *one line-item in tier one derived from the teacher’s evaluation* because it is a reasonably *objective* task. The scale in this measure focuses on the percentage of students “adequately proficient.”
2. **Indicator(s) of Student Success or School Quality:** Just as students receive evaluations of their achievement for different subjects, school systems’ evaluations should assess performance in *multiple areas* and, where necessary, from *multiple sources* – e.g. students, teachers, parents. **Balance across all areas of the curriculum – arts, P.E., languages, health, technology, etc. - is enhanced by incorporating assessments through *satisfaction surveys* which are reported for each school. These surveys also provide opportunity to assess elements within the school’s culture such as *student cooperation, physical and emotional safety, extra-curricular opportunity, communication with the home, etc.*** For example,

***- Safe and Caring***: Percentages who agree that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. For example, respondents are asked whether: students feel safe at school, students feel safe on the way to and from school, students treat each other well at school, teachers care about their students, and students are treated fairly by adults at school.

***- Program of Studies***: Percentages satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, technology, and health and physical education. For example, respondents are asked about: opportunities students have at school to: learn about music, drama, art, computers, health, another language, and participate in physical education.

***- Education Quality***: Percentages satisfied with the overall quality of basic education. For example, respondents are asked about: overall quality of education in your or your child’s school, the quality of teaching in your or your child’s school, what is being learned in the core subjects is useful (students), students are learning what they need to know (parents and teachers), school work is interesting, school work is challenging, and learning expectations at school are clear.

***- Work Preparation:*** Percentages of teachers and parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviors that will make them successful at work when they finish school.

***-Citizenship***: Percentages who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship. For example, respondents are asked whether students at your school/your child’s school: help each other, respect each other, are encouraged at school to be involved in activities that help the community, are encouraged to try their best, follow the rules.

***-Parental Involvement***: Percentages of teachers and parents satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child’s education. For example, teachers and parents are asked: about the opportunity for parental involvement in decisions about their child’s education, about the opportunity for parental involvement in decisions at their child’s school, whether parental input into decisions at their child’s school is considered, whether parents are involved “A Lot” or “Some” with decisions about their child’s education.

**e) Calculating Summative School Grades:**

The achievement/standards evaluation compares the current school system result against fixed standards for each measure. The cut points will be set by selecting the 5th, 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles on the distribution of baseline scores. The comparison of the current result to the standards results in one of the following achievement levels: • Very high for results at or above the 95th percentile • High for results between the 75th and 95th percentiles • Intermediate for results between the 25th and 75th percentiles • Low for results between the 5th and 25th percentiles • Very low for results below the 5th percentile. *This standards approach ensures that goalposts for measuring performance are not shifting.*

 Improvement is determined by comparing the current result to the previous three-year average. The comparison uses a Chi-Square test, and sample size is taken into account by the test, so that large school authorities require a smaller amount of actual change in their results to trigger statistical significance. My submission assesses *comparisons with self* or with previous levels of performance thereby negating the problem of socio-economic diversity.

1. **What about Schools with Low-performing subgroups:** Each of the *tier one* categories can be broken into identified sub-groups – e.g. African-American, Hispanic, ESL, etc. – and rolled into the evaluations but reported separately in the technical analysis.

1. **School Grades or Ratings:** Evaluations of achievement and improvement are combined for each measure, resulting in one of the following *overall evaluations*: • *Excellent • Good • Acceptable • Issue • Concern* (see below). Balancing, or equalizing, *achievement* and *improvement* evaluations is very important for providing a more complete picture of performance especially when improvement results near 0% or 100%.

**The *holistic* nature of this comprehensive report card combined with the overall evaluations based on achievement and improvement, as well as coded descriptions including *words and color*, are not conducive to a single, summative evaluation (e.g. letter grade) for the school/district/state. The codes in the “overall evaluation” column greater transparency for readers than attempting to garner agreement on a scoring rubric for a single grade.**



*Accountability without consequences is not accountability*. A school only has *one opportunity* with a child and their success must be ensured. Therefore, intervention is required when a *school or school district* has failing results in *academic achievement (Tier one.)* When the “overall assessment” registers “concern” or “red” on 25% of the *total of Tier One indicators*, progressive discipline is initiated.

**Year One:** Warning letter that next year’s results must be reduced below the threshold or “further action will be taken.”

**Year Two:** If failing results (25% @ *concern*) occur two years in succession, an “intensive assistance” plan is prepared by the principal in consultation with staff and community, and submitted to the superintendent. For district results, the plan is prepared by the superintendent with community participation, and submitted to the state.

**Year Three:** Three consecutive years with failing results (25% @ *concern*) for a school will result in the principal’s removal. For district results, the School Board is replaced by an “Official Trustee.”

1. **Recommendations for the Department of Education:** Recognition and reward are important considerations for pursuing improvement. Intrinsic motivation by itself is insufficient. Accountability is usually perceived as a negative when, in fact, it is also a positive when people understand *that we hold accountable what is deemed valuable.* Research demonstrates that extrinsic motivation has significant positive value.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Results on hard-data outcomes should be incorporated into performance evaluations and influence individual’s pay throughout the school system. Such a program then connects teachers, school administrators, district administrators, state administrators and, where applicable, politicians directly involved with education.
2. Schools and school districts should be incented with grants *for achieving annual performance targets* identified through *negotiation* between principals with superintendents and superintendents with state administration. Grants earned recognize stewardship of resources, provide additional funds for achieving next year’s targets, and enhance *teamwork* between levels within the school system. Negotiation is the basis for these incentives which means that states will proportion funding to districts and districts to schools; however, the U.S. DoE proportions an allotment to each state.
3. Teacher recognition programs frequently are in evidence but seldom are these evident for system leaders (school/district/state). States can recognize the teamwork of senior administrators and school boards for districts attaining highest levels for achievement and improvement. In other words, “blue” ratings can be used to qualify for a number of levels of certificates for display purposes which corresponds with the recognition (scholarships) given to students. Award ceremonies for schools and school districts recognize the team’s success.

**Note: Sample of a completed report card is below. In year one, every rating was pegged at “yellow” based on the knowledge that Alberta was the highest performing jurisdiction in the world based on PISA results.**

