

Recommendations on Accountability

THE ASCD Working Group on New Directions in Secondary Education recommends that ASCD adopt the following position regarding accountability:

1. That ASCD welcome accountability plans which are designed primarily to support individual growth of pupils and teachers in their ability to assume progressively more responsibility for their own actions.

2. That ASCD support efforts to design curricula in such a way that a curriculum's strong and weak points can be identified. Thus, curricula can be systematically strengthened through the process of improving the effectiveness of those parts of a curriculum which are least effective.

3. That ASCD support efforts to clarify the rights and responsibilities of teachers and pupils as they work with one another in day-to-day learning situations, and that curricula be structured in such a way that pupils and teachers can be held accountable for their responsibilities.

4. That ASCD support efforts to evaluate pupil performance, recognizing that pupils should be evaluated in reference to course objectives. Tests, when used in conjunction with other evaluation activities, can be used for purposes of holding pupils and teachers accountable for their commitments.

5. That ASCD support the use of norm-referenced tests when such tests are used for the purposes for which they are intended. Such tests should not be used, however, to evaluate teacher performance or the effectiveness of the curriculum.

6. That learning objectives should be developed at the local district or building level. ASCD should oppose the practice of state departments of education imposing learning objectives on teachers and pupils.

7. That ASCD should also oppose the practice of publishing statewide assessment scores in such a way as to identify individual schools or districts. ASCD should recommend that statewide assessment programs be launched only for the purpose of providing information on which state level policy decisions may be based. The kinds of decisions which will utilize such information should be defined before such programs are initiated.

8. That ASCD's national and state officers should be encouraged to seek funding for curriculum building projects which will demon-

strate the effective implementation of the accountability concept described here.

9. That ASCD national and state officers should be encouraged to use their influence to oppose legislation which would have the effect of transferring responsibility for defining learning objectives from the local to the state level, which would cause teachers, curricula, or schools to be evaluated on the basis of mandated test scores. ASCD should especially oppose the tying of state aid funding formulas to the performance of pupils as measured by mandated statewide performance tests.

The ASCD Working Group on New Directions in Secondary Education views the accountability movement with mixed emotions. We see within the movement the potential for moving our educational programs toward greater centralization of control. We recommend that our organization oppose such a trend.

On the other hand, we see possibilities for adopting many of the concepts of the accountability movement as we go about our tasks of organizing more effective curricula for the nation's secondary schools. We believe that accountability can be reconciled with humanistic education. We urge our membership to demonstrate that such a reconciliation is possible through launching curriculum building projects designed for that purpose.

It is only just that some of the funds being appropriated to develop state level dominated accountability systems should be used to demonstrate that such systems are not necessary.

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