

Superintendents And School Boards Wake Up!!!

For too long, a culture has developed in the world of public education where accountability and performance measures have been weak. Principals blame the teachers. The teachers blame the students. The school boards blame the superintendent. The superintendents blame school boards and principals and teachers, all claiming that many of the factors leading to poor student performance are “out of their control”. Well times are changing.

The first major shift toward objective performance standards and accountability was No Child Left Behind and the development of “AYP” – measuring school performance based on attendance, academic performance and other objective factors. Pennsylvania is now moving rapidly, as to comply with federal regulations and to create a state wide system of accountability. Governor Rendell has placed an increased focus on the responsibility of school administrators. In his 2007-2008 budget he has proposed that measures be added to school district administrators’ contracts to determine how effective they have been at increasing the districts PSSA results. If an administrator fails to meet these goals set forth by the school board they would be in jeopardy of losing their job. These performance measures will exclude districts where PSSA results have been up to par, but those districts could elect to use Rendell’s plan if they wish to do so.

The second major shift toward accountability is Act 1 – which is described in detail herein. This act is just the beginning of a trend to force school districts to watch how they expend their fiscal and labor resources – just like the private sector. Taxpayers will now have the power to reject annual budgets the cause taxes to rise more than inflation. There is already a movement underway to make Act 1 even more powerful and to give the taxpayers in each school district more power.

Many within public education complain that the Governor’s plan, Act 1 or No Child Left Behind places unfair pressure on superintendents, principals and assistant principals. They could lose their job based on standardized testing scores, which they do not always have control over. However, Katie Phillips, a spokeswoman for Rendell said “If principals and superintendents are not helping their students make progress in reading and math, then it’s not fair to the kids and their parents to allow that situation to continue.” Governor Rendell’s plan is following suit with other states who aim to be fully compliant with No Child Left Behind. More than half the states have devised plans which hold the administration accountable in inadequately performing school districts, however no state has proposed a plan as specific as Governor Rendell’s.

Unbelievably, although Delaware Valley High School – Bustleton has helped...