

Meeting Parental Expectations in the Age of Accountability

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How do you measure the quality of a baseball player?

- ◆ a) by the number of home runs hit
- ◆ b) by season batting average
- ◆ c) by the increase in attendance at the ball park
- ◆ d) by the number of World Series rings worn by the team

How do you measure the quality of a business?

- ◆ a) by the number of ads on TV
- ◆ b) by the bottom line of the financial report
- ◆ c) by the corporate logo
- ◆ d) by the name recognition of the person doing the commercials

How do you measure the success of a politician?

- ◆ a) by the number of terms served
- ◆ b) by the number of laws introduced
- ◆ c) by the margin of votes in the last election
- ◆ d) by the amount of federal funds brought to the local community

How do you measure the quality of education?

- ◆ class size
- ◆ per pupil expenditures
- ◆ age of building
- ◆ tenure of staff
- ◆ starting salary

OR

- ◆ number of graduates in Ivy League schools
- ◆ SAT scores
- ◆ satisfaction level of parents
- ◆ enrollment trends

Input vs. Output in Education: A shift

FROM:

- ◆ intentions and efforts
- ◆ institutions and services
- ◆ resources and spending

TO:

- ◆ goals and ends
- ◆ products and results
- ◆ outcomes and effects

Education: Focusing on Achievement

- ◆ Are students able to read and write?
- ◆ Is significant learning taking place in sequence from year to year?
- ◆ Are graduates successful in the workplace?

Outcomes in Lutheran Education

- ◆ Are students experiencing a growth in faith?
- ◆ Do students have a growing understanding of Scripture?
- ◆ Are students showing evidence of their faith in daily living?



Measuring Outcomes

- ◆ 1. Specify what it is that students are to learn.
- ◆ 2. Devise a method of testing to determine whether learning has occurred.

Relationship of input to outcomes is important, if a relationship exists.

National Commission of Excellence in Education (1983)

"America is a nation at risk [whose] educational foundations are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity...."

The push for outcomes . . .

- ◆ Benjamin Bloom's "mastery learning"
- ◆ National Governors' Conference
- ◆ Goals to be achieved by 2000
- ◆ Accountability at all levels of education

Five Essential Elements in Accountability Systems

Southern Regional Education Board, 1998



1. Rigorous content standards

2. Tests of student progress

3. Professional development to align with standards and test results

4. Public reports on results

5. Rewards, sanctions, assistance

Several Additional Features

(Fuhrman, 1999)

- ◆ Focus on school rather than district
- ◆ Continuous improvement rather than a one-time fix
- ◆ More sophisticated measurement beyond pass/fail

Accountability in Lutheran Education



- ◆ Local school - autonomous congregation
- ◆ Altered by tuition
- ◆ Connected to national movement
- ◆ Parents as stakeholders

What do parents expect?

"Key motivation is desire to provide their children with a better education and safer environment than available in public schools."

(1999 LCMS Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support)

Additional Advantages Parents See in Lutheran Schools:

- ◆ attention to individual needs
- ◆ introduction to, contact with, and practice of Christian values
- ◆ traditional educational style
- ◆ limited class size
- ◆ more involvement in children's education

Accountability and Expectations

- ◆ Consider lines of accountability
- ◆ Be sensitive to expectations
- ◆ Discuss these scenarios with colleagues, Board members, parents

1. St. Bernard's Curriculum

At St. Bernard Lutheran School, the principal and teachers consider themselves experts in establishing the curriculum and choosing textbooks. They have decided to pilot new math materials in the primary grades. The Board is informed of their actions, and parents learn of the change after the first week of school, when students bring home a parent letter provided by the publisher.

Discuss:



- ◆ How should parents be involved in a school's program?
- ◆ What input should they have?
- ◆ What are the lines of accountability?
How might lines of accountability be improved?

2. The Pastor at Waterloo

The pastor at Waterloo Lutheran Church annually asked the preschool director for a list of children who were not baptized. He then sent a letter to all of the families announcing a "baptism Sunday" and suggested that those who were baptized would be given first priority for re-enrollment for the following year. The director refused his request and was not rehired.

Discuss:



- ◆ What can congregations rightfully expect of those who enroll in their schools, early childhood programs and other educational ministries?
- ◆ What is wrong with the lines of accountability at Waterloo Lutheran?

3. Who's on first?

For many years, the chair of the school board has had an office next door to the school office at Solidarity Lutheran School. The chairperson is available in the office three mornings per week for consultation with parents, teachers, and anyone else who desires to see him/her. The principal is usually teaching class during this time.

Discuss:



- ◆ What is right at Solidarity?
- ◆ What is wrong at Solidarity?
- ◆ What is the role of the board of education?

4. The Aging Pastor

DCE Dave joined the church staff fresh out of the DCE program at Concordia. He was the first DCE to serve the growing congregation, whose pastor had been there for 11 years. "I need someone to help me with all of these activities," the pastor explained. "I'm not as young as I used to be." DCE Dave left after two years of "doing what the pastor didn't want to do."

Discuss:



- ◆ To whom are staff members accountable?
- ◆ How does a congregation create and maintain a system of accountability for its staff?

5. Running the school

Before Genesis Lutheran School opened its doors for the first time, Board members met to make plans for the new school. When asked about serving on the Board, one parent commented, "I am eager to serve. Finally, I can decide how my school should be run."

Discuss:



- ◆ How could this attitude be healthy?
Unhealthy?
- ◆ Who runs the school, anyway?

Some Suggestions for those in Ministry



1. Plan for outcomes

- ◆ Follow the SAM formula:
 - Specific
 - Achievable
 - Measurable
- ◆ Allow for God's blessings
- ◆ Help students set goals

2. Communicate

- ◆ What is your mission? Vision?
- ◆ Practice "no surprises"
- ◆ Involve those affected by a decision in making the decision
- ◆ Keep communicating

3. Practice Forgiveness

- ◆ Missing goals present opportunities for the Gospel
- ◆ Not everyone is comfortable with measuring by outcomes
- ◆ Help those who fail to be more realistic

4. Clarify Accountability

- ◆ Draw a plan
- ◆ Review internal documents for consistency

Set Goals Now

- ◆ On the basis of this presentation and the accompanying LEA Monograph, what are some areas which need attention? Your list may include some of the following:
 - Personal goals
 - Professional goals
 - Organizational goals