

Information Management in the System of Shared Accountability-Responsibility

Definition of the System of Shared Accountability-Responsibility (SSA-R)

The System of Shared Accountability-Responsibility (SSA-R) is a results-driven information management system that provides the core information infrastructure supporting the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) *Shared Accountability strategy*. It serves as a scaffold for the strategy's architecture which integrates people, and the work processes of schooling-- *teaching, and learning* -- with knowledge management technologies and processes. In this role it provides timely and user appropriate data and information for effective and efficient results-driven decision-making from the classroom to the board room.

The flow of data and information in the SSA-R is based on a performance measurement component that starts with a focus on schools and student performance, and, from there, is designed to assess the attainment of aligned standards for every aspect of the organization. Data will be collected and reported on pre-determined performance indicators. The analysis of data collected be it formative (periodic assessments) or summative (end of year assessments), will be contained within reports that will provide essential knowledge required for continuously managing the closing of gaps between performance and standards at all levels of the system.

Knowledge and Knowledge Management

“Knowledge is information that changes something or somebody—either by becoming grounds for action, or by making an individual (or institution) capable of different and more effective action.”

Peter F. Drucker, “The New Realities.”

Information is as essential to the life of an organizational system, as blood is to the human system. In both case they provide the essential nutrients to sustain healthy collective and individual life.

This knowledge can become organizational *wisdom* once people have access to it and can integrate it with their own experiences. Knowledge therefore is only as powerful as the people who choose to, and have the support to, use it once they have access to it. As the information infrastructure for the MCPS *Shared Accountability strategy* -- which provides that support and access -- the *SSA/R* is designed to facilitate that transition of *data* to *information*, and then to useful *knowledge* that -- if we truly learn from using it at work -- can lead to MCPS' organizational *wisdom*.

The SSA/R as a strategic tool

Management of information is essential to a sustainable results-driven organization that must learn from the results it gets and, especially, doesn't get. The timely access to, and productive use of information is the linchpin to the effectiveness of SSA-R's role in the *Call to Action's* Shared Accountability strategy. Both recognize that "closing the gaps" takes place through daily individual and collective decisions. Purposeful decisions that heretofore had to be made without sufficient information and knowledge to understand and do something about their results. The SSA-R's information management processes support that continual gap-closing at school sites, while data, information and knowledge fed into the other strategic processes [e.g., the Instructional Planning Model, the IMS, Performance Support Teams] serve to support continual "raising of the bars" for those same gap-closing decisions.

As the information infrastructure for MCPS's Shared Accountability strategy, the information system supports the assumption that improving student outcomes is a shared responsibility of multiple stakeholders and that these same stakeholders are accountable for the necessary processes needed to support those decisions so that organizational performance improves as a whole.

To accomplish that, the SSA-R as an information management system, seeks to enhance the capacity of each decision-making leader - whether in classroom, school building or district office - to act responsibly and responsively.

It is designed to support all leaders' responsibilities with respect to stressing accountability and continuous improvement. Leaders must be able to make timely and effective decisions, produce results through strategic planning to close the gap between the present state and desired future, and the implementation and evaluation of programs, practices, and policies. The effectiveness of the implementation of Our Call to Action initiatives can be monitored and evaluated using data contained within the SSA-R.