



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Note takers and participants recorded extensive stakeholder feedback during the Laurens County ESSA meeting. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Accountability Common Themes

1. The accountability data is difficult to understand in some cases. Stakeholders suggested simplifying the ratings or providing more help to parents and the public to understand the system.
2. Data collection can be daunting. Stakeholders asked for some way to simplify or streamline the process, perhaps through a checklist of tasks to help focus the work of data collection.
3. Stakeholders are not convinced that the rating system accurately reflects school performance. The system rates performance of some items that are out of the control of those being rated. Stakeholders don't think it's fair to be held accountable for things out of their control, such as attendance (parents and students).

Assessment Common Themes

1. There is stronger support for formative assessments that help teachers know where students are so they can adjust their instruction.
2. Stakeholders worry that not testing science and social studies sends a message that these subjects are not important.
3. Stakeholders are concerned that testing has become too political and is being used for political ends rather than to support students and teachers.

Educator and Leader Development Common Themes

1. Individual comments varied widely and there were no dominant themes. Stakeholders mentioned a range of important qualifications for teachers and principals including: content knowledge, instructional leadership and a passion for teaching and kids. Poverty, funding and equitable access present barriers to students' access to effective teachers and leaders.

Federal Programs to Support School Improvement Common Themes

1. Individual comments varied widely and there were no dominant themes. Comments covered the following areas: leadership, training, ongoing communication.

Education of the Whole Child Common Themes

1. Individual comments varied widely and there were no dominant themes. Comments covered the following areas: fostering relationships with the public, providing students with opportunities to explore their interests, assessing student interests, providing mental health services, needing after-school programs, and needing colleges to set up satellite classes in remote counties.