

KNOW THE FACTS: Differentiated Accountability



What is Differentiated Accountability (DA)? DA is an accountability system that aligns the state's current accountability measures with federal No Child Left Behind legislation. DA uses Florida school grades and adequate yearly progress (AYP) to place schools in various DA school categories, enabling the school system to cater its plans of action and levels of intervention depending on the intensity of the school's problems.

Why would a school enter DA? Schools enter DA if they do not meet AYP for two consecutive years.

How does a school exit DA? Schools must make AYP for two consecutive years to exit DA.

What is the difference between Category I and Category II in DA? In order to best troubleshoot each individual school's issues, the DA matrix splits schools based on school grade and percent of AYP not met. The differentiated categories each have their own individualized action plan, minimizing the requirements for higher performing schools and differentiating school-wide concerns from subgroup intervention.

When does the government intervene with a failing school? Schools that either have not shown improvement in reading and math during a five-year period or do not have at least 65 percent proficiency in reading or math would be considered Intervention schools. Additionally, schools that have earned at least four F grades in the past six years are eligible for intervention.

Does DA only apply to Title I schools? No, any school not making AYP for each subgroup of students is placed on the DA matrix; however, no A, B or C school will ever fall into the Intervention category.

Who implements DA interventions? Either the district or state, depending on where the school falls on the DA matrix. Teachers can be monitored by various observers in their classrooms from each branch depending on their categories. As many as three groups of observers may stand in on teachers during the workday.

How is DA affecting our educational professionals? DA demands that education professionals spend an unreasonable amount of time on non-instructional duties. Education professionals are often times frustrated with the necessary rigid adherence to a fast-pace instruction mandated in DA. Moreover, the uniformity in teaching has killed creativity, hurt morale and reduced students learning.

How is DA affecting education support professionals? Florida's DA law also mandated all education support professionals, not only those in Title I schools, become highly qualified by the 2011-2012 school year.

How is DA affecting Broward County students? Classrooms are continually interrupted during the workday, and students' learning environment is stressed and fragmented.

What is BTU doing?

COMMITTEES: The BTU has formed three staff action committees to address issues specifically surrounding Differentiated Accountability. The union staff committees are charged with coordinating grievances filed on behalf of members, scheduling informational meetings with stewards and district leaders, and community outreach.

SURVEY: The union conducted a comprehensive member survey to gather authentic data as to the membership's knowledge of DA and to measure the impact DA is having on members in the classroom. The survey also provided an important opportunity for members to provide feedback and input as to how the DA program is impacting their classrooms.

MEDIA OUTREACH: BTU staff has provided survey data as well as DA research and information to the local media. Union staff members have discussed the membership's concerns with the media and continue to advocate for greater public awareness about this issue.

TRAINING: The union has sponsored comprehensive steward and staff training concerning DA so they have the most up-to-date information available.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS: The BTU-EP negotiations team has stalled and so far successfully fought back district DA contract proposals that would strip the contract of important employee transfer rights. The negotiators have also succeeded in protecting employees' rights to fair evaluations, which officials are trying to change as part of the DA program.

MEMBER EDUCATION: The union has worked to educate all members about DA including those who work at schools that have not been impacted by the program to date. Members can read the district's DA contract language proposal on the BTU Web site.

SCHOOL BOARD OUTREACH: BTU leaders as well as union school board liaisons are in the process of reaching out to individual members to educate and inform them about the negative impact the DA program is having on working conditions and student achievement.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION: The BTU has developed a PowerPoint presentation to educate all members about DA.

GRIEVANCES: Union staff has filed 13 grievances on behalf of members who feel their contractual rights are being violated as a result of the DA's implementation. Grievances have been filed in the specific areas of loss of planning time, excessive interruptions of classrooms, evaluations based on student performance data, lesson plan requirements, and paperwork redundancy.

STATE ACTION: Union staff has filed an Unfair Labor Practice with the Florida's Public Employee Relations Commission. The district has violated the state's collective bargaining law by failing to bargain specific elements of the DA's implementation that impact employees.