

**September 2002 Progress Report
The Department of Education
Culture of Accountability Report**

Secretary Paige established the *Culture of Accountability* Employee Teams to help the Department become an organization of excellence. The December 2001 *Culture of Accountability* recommendations address leadership, management, communication, work processes, skills gaps, performance evaluation, and other issues on the minds of Education Department employees. This is an update on the implementation of those recommendations.

Many of the Culture of Accountability recommendations are now part of *One-ED*. The Department's *One-ED* plan creates a cohesive vision for workforce planning, human capital development and management, and organizational restructuring necessary for achieving the President's Management Agenda, and contains the Department's planned response to those challenges. The President's Management Agenda established goals for government-wide improvement in human capital planning, reduction in management ranks, and the increase use of competitive sourcing (public-private competitions for certain work that is not inherently governmental).

Leadership and management demonstrate commitment to developing an organization of excellence

- Secretary Paige held meetings for all staff on the strategic plan, and is now meeting with the staff of each principal office to share his vision and talk directly with them about his initiatives. The Secretary also hosts monthly lunches with staff from across the Department to learn more about the work and concerns of front-line employees.
- A "Meet the Senior Officers" series is underway. Senior Officers make lunchtime presentations on the initiatives in their offices, to improve communication across offices and offer employees a more complete view of the Department's activities.
- Further improvement in leadership and management skills, as well as systematic succession planning, are in *One-ED*. Through the *One-ED* leadership development model, the Department will identify and develop talent for competitive succession into leadership roles at all levels; align leadership with the Department's strategic direction; and improve the performance assessment of the Department's leaders and managers. The Department will put these practices in place over the course of the next year.

Improve communications throughout the Department

- Senior Leadership is working to communicate Department priorities and strategic direction. Presentations and e-mail notices announced the release of the strategic plan; annual plan; Culture of Accountability Report; and *One-ED*. The Department plans and priorities are always available to employees on ConnectED.

- The Department is expanding its videoconferencing technology. Each Department location, including regions, should have videoconferencing facilities with technical support available from OCIO by December. In May, the principal office technology coordinators met to discuss how to use videoconferencing.
- All Department *MS Outlook* e-mail distribution lists are now complete and accurate, and will be updated every 60 days.
- Each month, a new article will describe how an ED program and office is helping to achieve one of the strategic goals. The July issue of *Inside ED* contained an article about how the Comprehensive School Reform program helps encourage the use of scientifically based methods in Department programs.
- Each principal office has a draft communication plan to ensure that employees receive the information they need on Department priorities and activities. Communication plans also address staff need for information about the activities of ED's State, local and institutional partners, and the latest information on educational practices. Communication plans will be updated again in November.

Align work processes, resources and technology to achieve outcomes

- The Department's priority actions, which focus the Department's work on the strategic plan objectives, are published in the annual plan. Each office has a series of actions to pursue in support of the strategic goals. These action steps are the basis of each senior officer's performance agreement with the Secretary. Senior Officers also have performance agreements with the managers (SES), which are consistent with the strategic plan.
- In May and June, supervisors participated in training on managing performance and aligning performance expectations with the Department's strategic plan and management goals. Supervisors then updated employee performance agreements for the current performance evaluation period. Beginning this fall, all new supervisors will participate in training on performance management.
- A renewed employee suggestion program, focused on gathering suggestions for improving Department work processes and meeting the strategic goals, will be introduced in this fall.
- Improving the grant-making process is a long-term effort. The Department is involved in government-wide efforts to implement "e-gov" including a single point of access to government grants. In FY 2003, all competitive grant programs should accept electronic applications. As many programs as possible will use the Department's E-Application system. Other programs will accept electronic documents by e-mail or disk. A standard grant application will facilitate the electronic submission of applications as well as

streamline the application process. *One-ED* includes a plan for a full review of the grant process by March 2004.

Get the right people with the right skills in the right jobs

One-ED is a five-year systematic approach to achieving this objective. Many of the short-term recommendations of the culture of accountability team were incorporated into this plan. Some *One-ED* actions supporting the culture of accountability are:

- With new performance agreements in place, supervisors will begin focusing awards on employee accomplishments that support the achievement of the Department's goals.
- Professional development opportunities will focus on skills gaps. The FY 2003 training opportunities will be targeted to developing the most-needed skills and will take quality and cost-effectiveness into consideration. All employees will have Individual Development Plans. Individual Development Plans will cover all aspects of employee development, including rotational assignments. The *One-ED* plan includes on-going improvements in learning opportunities, in grant management and other job-specific areas.
- Executive officers and managers have received updated information on more flexible approaches to hiring, recruitment bonuses, and other strategies that they can use to manage their human resources. This information is also available on ConnectED. Offices hiring new staff have new recruitment materials available to them, along with a network of graduate programs that are potential recruitment sources in skill areas needed at the Department.
- The system for reviewing and providing feedback to employees during their probationary period will be updated and improved.

Evaluate performance, take responsibility, and be accountable for outcomes

- The Department has a new performance appraisal system ready to replace GPAS. The new system, EDPAS, includes multiple performance levels and more job-specific performance criteria.
- In March, supervisors were charged with aligning their employees' performance standards for the new appraisal cycle with key priorities of the Department (the Strategic Plan, the President's Management Agenda, the Blueprint for Management Improvement, and the Culture of Accountability). Supervisors were also charged with making their recommendations for performance awards consistent with the Department's awards policy, and awarding tangible accomplishments that directly reflect the strategic priorities of their offices.

- A mandatory process for managers to consult with OM on disciplinary issues to ensure consistent and appropriate discipline was established in December. The Department has also just released standards of conduct and disciplinary actions to ensure actions are consistent across the agency and support the culture of accountability.

The Department will continue to report progress on Culture of Accountability recommendations through the Blueprint for Management Excellence and One-ED.

For more information about One-ED, the Culture of Accountability, the President's Management Agenda, and the Blueprint for Management Excellence, see ConnectED "Initiatives and Priorities" at <http://connected/init/index.cfm?navID=6C0D94A9-0E46-46C1-9317469A34FCF034>