

PILLSBURY UNITED COMMUNITIES

MODERNIZING EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN MN

The current education accountability system in Minnesota (World's Best Workforce) is not driving the needed changes for a better K-12 education system for our youth and society. Minnesota needs to create flexibility for local accountability pilots to support rethinking accountability and what it means to deliver high-quality education and prepare students for their life and work ahead.

In 2021, Pillsbury United Communities along with local and national partners set out to redesign the accountability system for the 18 charter schools we authorize in Minnesota. Our goal has been to develop an accountability system that celebrates schools' innovative, student-centered, and community-responsive practices, while also calling all of us to be better and do better. Our eight authorized high schools are in the implementation and data collection phase for reporting to be completed on the 2022-2023 school year. Students, families, and communities will lend their critical voices in supporting our work to hold these schools accountable as this work moves forward.

Over the next two years, we hope to pilot our system at high schools across the state in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education.

Passing SF620 will allow us to:

- Establish a pilot program to support the redesign performance frameworks for schools to improve educational outcomes, particularly for students of color.
- Engage students, families, and community leaders in redesigning performance frameworks in support of continuous improvement.

About Pillsbury United Communities

Pillsbury United Communities is a multi-dimensional, 145-year-old nonprofit organization that operates four community centers and six social enterprises in Minneapolis and has regional impact. We serve primarily Black, Brown and Indigenous people, people who are refugees and immigrants and people who are poor and working class. We provide emergency services and stabilization support for individuals and families and take on projects that invest in the long term prosperity, equity, and justice in our state. Our work spans health and human services, community development and the arts, and youth and education. We serve young people during the school day as a public charter school authorizer of 18 schools and via district programming partnerships in Minneapolis. Outside of school, we support youth via clubs and programs in our community centers along with internship opportunities. Annually, we provide over 200 internships for youth in Minneapolis and serve 9000 students across the state of MN as an authorizer.

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Background

After 21 years of the current accountability construct in federal and state policy in the United States, there is growing recognition that it isn't working for our students, families, and communities to improve teaching and learning. The current accountability system is not driving the needed changes for a better K-12 education system for our youth and society.

We cannot continue waiting to move forward with tweaking the status quo. We need transformational change. The primarily Black, Brown, Indigenous, and low-income students and families we serve deserve an educational accountability system that is built for and designed by them.

Most school accountability systems have focused on a narrow definition of success. Developing youth requires examining the learning opportunities and conditions a school provides to support broader student outcomes.

We must support a results-based system and new performance frameworks to offer an easy to understand, more nuanced picture of outcomes and quality. For accountability, schools can use a results-based outcomes framework, setting metrics with communities, families, students, and stakeholders. In evaluating school quality, there can be shared accountability between the governing body, each school, their leaders, educators, members of the community, families, and students.

Using an equity-based performance framework can incentivize good practices, improve results for student success, and build trust with communities through rethinking benchmarks and goals that are in the best interests of students.

Next generation accountability systems can empower states, districts, communities, and schools with timely, relevant information and provide the capacity to analyze and continuously improve instruction and learning. For example, in 2019, Colorado passed legislation ([SB204](#)) to create local accountability pilots to support districts in rethinking accountability. It authorizes local providers to create student-centered accountability systems with local pilots for measuring the performance of the public schools operated by the participating local entities. There are new performance and outcomes-based models being planned and piloted across the United States, including in California, Colorado, Kentucky, and Vermont. There is urgency to advance better policies to enable and support responsiveness to student, family, and local needs.

References and Resources:

[Next Generation Accountability: Creating Performance Frameworks for Student Success](#), Aurora Institute, 2023.

[Colorado Local Accountability System Pilots](#), Colorado Department of Education, 2021.

[Equity Framework for High Schools](#), Pillsbury United Communities, 2022.