Consultation Summary Paper

DfE Consultation on Accountability: Publishing Headline Performance Measures on School and College Websites

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Opened 06/06/2014, closed 04/07/2014, Pearson lead: Julie McCulloch

A brief introduction to Pearson

Pearson is the world's leading learning company, with 40,000 employees in more than 70 countries working to help people of all ages to make measurable progress in their lives through learning. We provide learning materials, technologies, assessments and services to teachers and students in order to help people everywhere aim higher and fulfil their true potential. We put the learner at the centre of everything we do.

A summary of the consultation

The government recently announced reforms to the accountability system for primary and secondary schools and 16-19 providers, making progress the key performance measure. This consultation proposes that schools and colleges should be required to make their headline performance measures available on their websites in a standard format. The intention is:

1. to support students and parents in choosing best school or college for themselves or their children; and
2. to help students and parents to challenge the performance of their local institutions.

The consultation sought views on how to present the measures clearly whilst minimising the burden on schools and colleges.

A summary of the Pearson response

We are strongly in favour of ensuring that performance measures are made available as simply and prominently as possible to students and parents. In a system which enables and requires students and parents to make choices (or, at least, indicate preferences) about which school or college they attend, it is vital that they can do so based on clear evidence of the performance of that school or college.

In order to keep the data as easy to interpret as possible, and to ensure it focuses on the most important things, we suggested schools and colleges should be required to display only their institution's progress measure on their website. This data should be displayed in a clear, graphical format, and should be provided to the institution as a piece of html embedded code, which they will need to embed into their site in an 'iframe'. We provided visual mock-ups of how the data could be presented to make it as clear and comprehensible as possible.

Clicking on this image should take the user to a section of the gov.uk website where more detailed data is held, including other headline measures. This should be designed to enable users easily to find out more about the institution whose website they have just left, and to compare it with other local schools and colleges.

We also urged the government to ensure the raw data behind these measures is freely available, and to encourage individuals or organisations to use the data to build apps that interrogate the data in new ways. Doing this will cast new light on the information, and add to our collective understanding of school and college performance.